

Conclusion

You have now completed your testimony. I think you will discover that it will become one of the most invaluable resources you possess in witnessing to others. Because it is so personal, and because it is uniquely yours, no one can argue with it or deny that it happened to you. As you learn to relate your story with confidence, others will be amazed at the assurance you have of Christ's reality today.

Now that you have written your testimony, you must learn to use it verbally. Here are some suggestions which may help you:

- ❶ ***Read the testimony several times aloud until all three sections flow together, and you are very familiar with what you have written.***
- ❷ ***Practice saying your testimony aloud to yourself. Do not memorize what you have written word for word. This makes your narration sound artificial and unspontaneous. You may want to memorize certain key phrases to help you remember the flow of your story, but you should not give your testimony exactly the same way twice.***
- ❸ ***After you have said your testimony several times alone, try giving it to another Christian—perhaps your pastor, Christian leader, or a mature Christian friend. Ask the other person to critique your presentation and make suggestions for a clearer delivery.***
- ❹ ***Pray that God will give you the opportunity to use your testimony with a non-Christian friend or acquaintance. Pray also for boldness to take the opportunity when it arises. Don't procrastinate.***
- ❺ ***Launch out in faith, even though you may not feel your story is perfected. Remember God the Holy Spirit is at work both in the heart of your hearer and in your presentation. Without God, the most eloquent delivery will be fruitless. With Him, the most stumbling speaker can be used to draw others to the Savior.***

*And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken to thy servant; but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? **Now Therefore, Go and I will be with thy mouth, And teach thee what thou shalt say.***

Exodus 4:10-12



Appendix

EXAMPLES OF THREE TESTIMONIES

Example of a Poorly-Written Testimony

Before Christ:

When I was young, my parents taught me to go to church. I wasn't very interested in church, and when I was in my early teens, I dropped out. I wasn't a very good student in school and was bored with life. I had a hard time figuring out what life was all about. Then I started to drink and run around with bad company. My drinking caused lots of problems. After high school I worked for about 6 months and then joined the military. While in the military my drinking problem got me into trouble, and I began to cry out to God to help me.

Analysis:

Too general—no specific incidents to illustrate problems

Not touching any “open nerves”

Conversion Experience:

One Sunday morning I went to the base chapel. There, for the first time in my life I heard the Gospel and was born again. I remember that the preacher said God could help a person with his problems, and anyone with as many problems as I had really needed God's help. In fact, if Christ had not washed me in His blood, I might have committed suicide. Anyhow, I thank God that He saved me and gave me eternal life.

Analysis:

Gospel unclear—the hearer would not know how to receive Christ from this account

No Scripture verses used

Too much religious jargon was used—i.e., “born again,” “washed in the Blood,” “saved,” etc.

After Christ:

When Christ came into my life, He sure made a difference. He solved all my problems and I never have had a bad day since. I sure would recommend Christ to you. He can save you just like He did me. Remember God loves you! Praise the Lord!

Analysis:

Too general—no specific solutions mentioned

Too idealistic—even Christians sometimes have a bad day

Too preachy—need to confine story to your own experience and not push the need for salvation

Example of a Well-Written Testimony

Before Christ:

My earliest childhood memories are of church and Sunday School each Sunday morning. But as the years went by, I realized that the life I was living during the week fell far short of what the church had taught me and what I knew was right. By the age of 14, I had stopped going to church altogether and had begun to run around with some teenagers who, like I, had no time for God. I began to drink and developed a serious problem with alcohol that progressed from bad to worse as I grew older. By 17, alcohol had put me in jail for the first time. At 18, a group of friends wanted to commit me to an institution for alcoholics. At 19, I was back in jail for the second time as the result of alcohol. Although I had graduated from high school and joined the Air Force, the military discipline had not helped my problems at all. In fact, they seemed to have become worse. I drank because I desperately wanted to anesthetize myself from the loneliness and lack of purpose that filled my heart. Each time I left a party, I would go home dreading the loneliness I knew was waiting for me. Those were the worst moments of my life. I could see no meaning at all to existence and felt that if I could find no answer, perhaps the best thing would be to end my own life.

Analysis:

Specific

Covers all major periods of his life before Christ

Strikes “open nerves” such as loneliness, lack of purpose, searching for direction

Conversion Experience:

In this state of loneliness and depression, I began to pray—asking God to help me find Him if He really existed. Then one day I picked up the base newspaper and read an interesting advertisement. It told of a minister who was coming to speak at our military chapel. Somehow I felt that this might be the answer to my prayer. The next Sunday morning I was sitting in the front row listening to him tell an amazing story.

He told how as a young man he had searched for the same meaning and direction in life that I was so desperately searching for now. He opened the Bible and explained that because of sin, man was separated from God and could never have purpose and happiness in life apart from Him. He said, however, that God still loved man and had sent His own Son, Jesus, to die and pay the penalty of man's sin so that man could again be reunited with God. He shared one verse in John 1:12 which said that, "To as many as received Him (Jesus) He gave the power to become sons of God." He explained that this verse meant that all one needed to do was to ask Christ into his life—to receive Him—and Christ would come in and give direction and power and purpose. That day as the pastor closed in prayer, I silently prayed something like this:

Oh God, I know I am a sinner. Please forgive me and come into my heart. Make me the kind of man you want me to be. Thank you. Amen.

Analysis:

Specific narrative—tells exactly what happened

Relates the Gospel clearly, using the pastor's message as the "third person" method of telling the story

No religious jargon used

Uses Scripture and references—scripture explained as to meaning

Gives sample prayer so hearer will know how to pray and what to pray if he desires to do it himself

After Christ:

When I prayed that prayer, nothing spectacular seemed to happen. There were no flashes of lightning nor angels rocketing off the walls. I had no strange feelings or sensations. Within the next few weeks, however, I realized that something was indeed different. For the first time in my life I had a sense of peace and purpose and meaning. As I began to read the Bible, I discovered that God had a wonderful, unique plan for each person's life and that Christ was alive and real and leading me into that plan—day by day. My loneliness and emptiness were replaced by quiet joy. I still had problems and bad days, but now I knew God was with me in each situation helping me through. My drinking problem was solved because now there was no need to escape from reality as I had tried to do before through alcohol. I guess 2 Corinthians 5:17 best sums

up what happened to me when it says: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature... Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new.” I can honestly say that I would not trade one hour of my new life with Christ for all the years I spent without Him. He has truly met the deepest needs of my heart.

Analysis:

“Open nerves” now closed—specific solutions for the problems mentioned in Section 1

Realistic—salvation not an end to all problems

Good use of Scripture and references

Sticks with personal pronouns—not preachy

Example of A Phaseback Testimony

May 17, 1950, and Greenville, South Carolina will always be the most important time and place in my life.

I am the oldest of three children. I was born in Long Beach, California, at the end of World War II.

I’ve lived in five or six major cities in the United States. I graduated from college in 1969 with a Bachelor of Architecture and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Army Corps of Engineers. I am a Vietnam War Veteran. I’ve worked for a large architectural firm and in 1978 made a career change and have been working as a corporate officer in a large real estate development firm in Atlanta until now. I am married and have two beautiful girls. I’ve renovated a house, been involved in major art and photography that has been published, worked with great architects, television personalities, and governments officials. I am a musician and have played in a large dynamic church’s orchestra, and I enjoy athletics.

Life has not been dull to say the least and I expect even greater experiences to occur before life ends. But—considering all of this, I can still say that the most important thing that has ever happened in my life occurred about thirty-five years ago.

This day was when I began to learn to know God.

This day in South Carolina was like any other, except it was the day when I prayed and asked The Lord, Jesus Christ, to come into my life.

I had been having some discussions with my parents about life and death and my parents (specifically my mother) explained to me that the Bible said that the only way that a person could know God and escape an eternal judgment at death was by having a personal relationship with Jesus. They explained that we are prevented from really knowing God

because our failure and disobedience to Him places a barrier between God and us. They went on to explain that our Creator loved us so much and wanted us to know Him. They further explained that because of God's love, He provided a way that this relationship could be restored. That was through the Lord Jesus Christ. As we talked, I came to understand that all I had to do was believe that what God said in His word was true, pray to Him, confess my sinful condition, accept His forgiveness and ask Him for this special relationship with His Son, Jesus. You see, Jesus came down to earth for only one reason. He was crucified to pay the price for our sin and give us the opportunity to have this relationship with God.

He wasn't just another prophet, but He demonstrated that He was truly God by performing phenomenal miracles which are recorded in history, fulfilling historical prophecies and coming back from the dead.

What was so great to me was that as I simply prayed to God in this way all my sins were forgiven, and I would not have to go to hell. As a young boy, that was great.

Since that day, my life and I haven't been perfect. Just because you take care of eternity and have the opportunity to know God doesn't mean that things are always going to be ideal. We are all subject to the same struggles and difficulties which occur, but let me tell you how that one decision as a child has helped me:

I have been able to see the beauty of how the Creator has not only molded the universe but has given us a plan by which to live.

I have been able to be comforted by God's Holy Spirit showing me answers to life's problems in the Bible.

I have been able to go to the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer, and by confessing my sin, I know it is forgiven.

I have seen Him guide me in major decisions in life so that I could be more successful following His will.

When I think about how my life could have been, I am so appreciative that at that time and place, the eternal questions about life were settled. Even though I believe God would wish that this type of experience occurred early for everyone, it usually does not.

Can you think of a time and a place where this has happened to you?