

Writing and Giving Your Testimony

Testimony defined: Your personal story of how you met Christ and why you trusted Him as your Lord and Savior. A testimony in its simplest form is really only a couple of sentences telling how and when you became a Christian.

A testimony for a public audience should include some interesting stories and a brief summary of how your life is different now that you have Jesus Christ in your life. Follow these simple tools below to write your own personal testimony.

1 Peter 3:15-16 says: "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...."

Writing out your testimony should help you be prepared to give an answer in any situation for the hope that you have.

To begin: A good public speaker always has an "attention getter". You don't have to tell a joke or do a dance or anything like that. The idea is that your opening statements should draw your audience in so that they are interested in what you have to say next.

Here are a few examples to get your mind thinking:

- You might say something like, "I'd like to tell you a story about the best thing that ever happened to me." This would certainly draw me in and make me want to hear more.
- You could walk in with a bag or mask over your face to represent the "masks" you wore before becoming a Christian. Just make sure to take the mask off at an appropriate moment during your talk.
- You might start by asking the audience a couple of questions where they raise their hand. This gets the audience involved in your story. For example, "Have any of you ever felt so lonely you just wanted to die?" Then say, "I had that feeling for a very long time." (Then go into the rest of the testimony describing the loneliness and how Christ took it away.) Or you could say, "Have any of you ever had a moment in your life when you were just blown away by the kindness of someone else toward you?" Then tell them that you had that experience. In the testimony, talk about the person who had a direct impact on your salvation and how you were blown away by that person's love.

Write an attention-getting introduction (only a few sentences at most):

Next, you'll want to transition into what life was like before you became a Christian (if you became a Christian early in life, you might want to cover this briefly and then discuss when you really took on your faith as your own/when your faith really began to mean something to you).

Remember; don't be ashamed of your past, share it to the glory of God-He has done a mighty work in you; but, you don't need to share all the intimate details (we don't want to glorify your past...for example you can say, "I used to drink or I got in trouble with the opposite sex" you don't need to say, "I got drunk every night doing this and that and man, me and this girl did the deal in the....." don't get specific; simply share what God has saved you from.

Also, if you have had a church experience, you don't need to call out the specific church by name. For example, you only need to say, "I grew up in the church, but now I realize Jesus wants a personal relationship." You don't need to say, "I grew up in the Catholic or Episcopal or Baptist church but now I realize..." Someone may be sitting in the audience that attends a certain denomination and you don't want to say that you cannot have an encounter with God at that kind of church.

Here are a few examples:

- "To understand better who I am today, you need to know a little about what I used to be like." Then go on to describe what you used to be like (angry, insecure, alcoholic, mean-spirited, whatever it was...).
- "As you can see, I'm wearing a mask today. I used to wear a lot more masks. I had a mask for when I was with the popular crowd, a mask for when I was with my parents, a mask I wore in front of my coaches, etc." Go on to describe briefly why you wore these masks.
- "I told you that I have felt at times like I was so completely alone that I wanted to die. Let me tell you more about that." And then describe why you felt so terribly lonely and what life was like during that time.

Write a transition statement and briefly describe what life was like for you prior to knowing Christ:

Now you need to give a few details about how you actually became a Christian. You should include things like how you knew you needed Jesus, how you knew you needed to thank Him for dying on the cross for you and to

receive Him into your life, who was influential in leading you to Christ, etc. (Or if you became a Christian early, explain how you decided to live for Him.)

Here are some examples of transitioning into that:

- "Even though I was so shy and insecure, I somehow was elected an officer of my FCA Huddle and went to an FCA Leadership Camp just like this one. It was there that I realized who Jesus really is." Then go on to describe how you made the decision to trust Christ.
- "I finally got tired of wearing the masks. I got tired of no one really knowing who I am. I got tired of hiding all the time. It was during that time that a friend told me what I was missing." Then go on to discuss the missing link and how you became a Christian.

Explain how and when you trusted Christ as your Lord and Savior:

If there is a verse that has meant something to you and you'd like to include it in your testimony, you can. Just make sure it fits in the spot where you put it.

Choose a verse to use in your testimony if you wish:

Finally, you will need to briefly explain what your life has been like since you became a Christian (or since you dedicated your life to Him). How has life changed? How is it different than before you accepted Christ? What have you learned?

Explain what your life is like now that you are a Christian:

Lastly, write a concluding sentence to wrap things up so that you don't end awkwardly. Leave the audience with a lasting sentence if possible.

Here are some examples:

- "So let me leave you with this thought. God tells us in Romans that we are heirs to His throne. That means that we are children of the King - princes and princesses. Realizing that my worth comes from God the Father instead of from what other people say about me has radically changed my life and allowed me to take off my masks for good."
- "I look back at how my life used to be and remember the pain of deep loneliness. God promises in Romans that He will never leave us or forsake us. I'm so thankful to Him that I will never have to be alone again."

Write a concluding sentence or remark: