

Sharing Your Testimony

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A time-honored, effective method of evangelism is the giving of your personal testimony. No big deal. Just telling about your spiritual pilgrimage. How you found bread as a beggar.

The skeptic may deny your doctrine or attack your church, but he cannot honestly ignore the fact that your life has been cleaned up and revolutionized. He may stop his ears to the presentations of a preacher like me, or the pleadings of an evangelist, but he is somehow attracted to the human-interest story of how you—John Q. Public—found peace within. Believe me, the steps that led to your conversion and the subsequent ramifications are far more appealing and appropriate to the lost than a pulpit exposition of [John 3](#) or [Romans 5](#). If you have not discovered the value of telling others how God rearranged your life, you've missed a vital link in the chain of His plan for reaching the lost.

On six separate occasions between Paul's third missionary journey and his trip to Rome, he stood before different audiences and presented Christ to them ([Acts 22-26](#)). Six times he stood alone. Six times he addressed unbelievers, many of them hostile and rude. Do you know the method Paul used each time? *His personal testimony*. That's right, each time he spoke he simply shared how his own life had been changed by the invasion of Christ and the indwelling of His power. Not once did he argue or debate with them. He didn't try to preach a sermon. Why? Because one of the most convincing, unanswerable arguments on earth regarding Christianity is one's personal experience with the Lord Jesus Christ. No persuasive technique will ever take the place of your personal testimony. I challenge you to give serious thought to analyzing and then presenting the way God saved you along with the exciting results of His presence in your life.

Now I'm not talking about some stale, drag-it-out verbal marathon. We have all yawned and groaned as others rambled and preached their way through their so-called testimony, which was about as fresh, appealing, and tasty as warm, week-old lettuce. That kind of testimony never attracted anyone! I'd like to help you carry out the project of preparing your testimony so it might become an effective, powerful missile launched regularly from your lips into the ears of the unsaved. Consider these five suggestions:

1. You want to be listened to, so be interesting.

No one, no matter how gracious, enjoys being bored. It's a contradiction to talk about how exciting Christ really is in an uninteresting way. Work on your wording, your flow of thought, your key terms. Remember, the person isn't saved, so guard against religious clichés and hard-to-understand terminology.

2. You want to be understood, so be logical.

A casual yet logical presentation can be compelling. I suggest that you think of your salvation in three phrases, and construct your testimony accordingly:

- a. before you were born again—the struggles within, the loneliness, lack of peace, absence of love, unrest, and fears;
- b. the decision that revolutionized your life; and

- c. the change, the difference He has made since you received Christ.
3. **You want the moment of your new birth to be clear, so be specific.**
Be extremely careful here. Don't be at all vague regarding how you became a Christian. Speak of Christ, not the church. Refer to the decision you made, the moment of time when you received the Lord. Be simple and direct. Emphasize faith more than feeling. Try your best to describe precisely what you did or what you prayed or what you said. This is crucial!
 4. **You want your testimony to be used, so be practical.**
Be human and honest as you talk. Don't promise, "All your problems will end if you will become a Christian," for that isn't true. As you speak, try to think as an unbeliever thinks. Refuse to pick theological lint. Restrain yourself from plucking the wings off religious flies. Theoretical stuff doesn't attract his attention as much as practical reality. It's okay to admit to some continuing struggles. The secret now is He lives inside.
 5. **You want your testimony to produce results, so be warm and genuine.**
A smile breaks down more barriers than the hammer blows of cold, hard facts. Be friendly and sincere. Let your enthusiasm flow freely. It's hard to convince another person of the sheer joy and excitement of knowing Christ if you're wearing a jail-wardenlike face. Above all, be positive and courteous. Absolutely refuse to argue. Nobody I ever met was "arm wrestled" into the kingdom. People must be charmed into righteousness.

Give further thought to this. Ask God to open your lips and honor your words . . . but be careful! Once your missile hits the target, you'll become totally dissatisfied with your former life as an earthbound, secret-service saint.

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