

PREPARING AND TELLING YOUR STORY

A well prepared explanation of what Christ has done in your life can be a powerful tool of God's Spirit in nearly every kind of witnessing situation. It should be our desire to present Christ in clear and attractive ways which thoughtfully engage those who hear. As you prepare to share your personal story of faith in Christ, and the difference He has made in your life, there are three things to keep in mind. First, pray that God would empower you to communicate the essence of Christ's gospel with simplicity and clarity. Second, seek to give solid reasons why those who hear would want to place their faith in Christ. And third, make clear "how" someone can place their trust in Christ.

Key Verse: 1 Peter 3:15-16

1. What are the benefits of having prepared a well thought through testimony?
 - It is versatile and can be used in a variety of situations—from sharing with an individual to speaking before a large group.
 - It can be more effective than a longer presentation that can fail to take into account the personal issues related to faith in Jesus.
 - A well organized personal story avoids extra material that could distract from the main issue of personal commitment.
 - Limiting your story to about 3 minutes will force you to be concise and selective, greatly improving the clarity of what you want to get across.
 - Your story can be one of the most influential tools the Holy Spirit can use to peak someone's spiritual interest and point them to Christ.

2. Biblical example – Paul and His Story
 - Acts 22:1-21
 - Acts 26:1-23
 - Galatians 1:11-24

3. Do's and Don'ts of preparing and telling your story

DO:

 - Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and guidance as you write (James 1:5,6)
 - Begin with an interesting attention-getting sentence
 - Follow a three point outline:
 - 1) Describe your life before knowing Christ
 - 2) Explain how you came to trust in Him (be specific)
 - 3) Share the impact Christ has had on your life and outlook (changes He has made – what He means to you now)
(If you trusted in Christ as a small child, emphasize the final point.)
 - Think through a clear conclusion
 - Give enough details to arouse interest
 - Use one or two related Scripture verses
 - Edit carefully and rewrite before final draft
 - Make it something you can present in 3 minutes

DON'T:

- Use Christian jargon such as: “saved,” “convicted,” “converted,” “born-again,” and “sin.” Though these terms are meaningful to us, they are often misunderstood and therefore ridiculed by non-Christians.
- Be too wordy, beat around the bush, or over-emphasize how bad you used to be
- Speak in glittering generalities with words like “wonderful,” “glorious,” etc.
- Give the impression that the Christian life is trouble-free
- Mention church denominations, especially in a derogatory way
- Speak critically or negatively about any other group or individual
- Preach or press for a decision. Simply share what Jesus has done in your life.

4. Basic Outline for preparing your testimony

Before I Accepted Christ (or gave Him complete control)

- a. What was my life like that will relate most to the non-Christian?
- b. What did my life revolve around? From what did I get my happiness or security? (Remember, the non-Christian is relying on something external to give him happiness and meaning.)
- c. How did those things let me down?

How I Received Christ (or gave Him complete control):

- a. When was the first time I heard the gospel? (Or when was I first exposed to dynamic Christianity?)
- b. What were my initial reactions?
- c. When did my attitude begin to change? Why?
- d. What were the doubts or struggles that went through my mind just before I accepted Christ?
- e. Why did I accept Christ?

After I Accepted Christ (or gave Him complete control):

- a. What are the specific changes Christ has made in my life?
- b. Are there any illustrations that would be helpful?
- c. Why am I motivated differently?