

Putting Together Your Testimony / Spiritual Story

"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." (1 Peter 3:15)

Anyone who has ever witnessed a significant event can hardly contain his/her desire to share what he/she heard & saw take place. Likewise, everyone who has genuinely come to know and surrender their life to Jesus has witnessed such an event—both 2000 years ago on the cross and in their very lives. The Apostle Peter tells us that our Heavenly Father wants each of His children to be ready to share that story—His story—with all who ask.

Sadly, many believers have culturally been trained to believe that their testimony (their spiritual story) is irrelevant or boring. But nothing could be further from the truth. For anyone who is genuinely a follower of Christ has been supernaturally "born again" (Jn 3:1-8)—it's the miraculous work of God. And often we don't realize just how precious and marvelous God's gift of salvation is until we take the time to prayerfully think through it and write it out.

In John 4:1-42, we read about a woman who likely saw herself as an outcast among her community. She has had 5 husbands and the man she was living with was not her husband. Consequently, she chooses to gather water for her daily needs at a time when she was sure she would not cross paths with anyone who knew her. Jesus finds her at the well and begins a conversation with her telling her about the "living water" that he offers all, and how, by drinking it, she will never thirst again. They speak of personal failures; they speak of proper worship. In the end, it seems her heart is deeply stirred and she runs back to town to tell everyone what she just witnessed. This hardened woman is now speaking of hope and life. Everyone in town is intrigued and go out to see and hear from this Messiah themselves. Then, it says in verse 39, "Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I ever did.'"

With those 7 short words, John makes it clear that God can use the testimony of even the most unlikely of people to produce much fruit.

For many, baptism will become their first formal declaration of authentic faith before the church and their family and friends. Therefore, it's important for you to know what you will tell those who ask, "Why are you getting baptized?" It's important that you are "prepared to give an answer for the hope that's within you" to everyone who asks both now and throughout your life.

Here is some guidance as you write out your spiritual story:

1 - Realize the power of your Christian testimony

First and foremost - remember - there is power in your testimony! Revelation 12:11 says, "*we overcome our enemy by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony.*"

2 - Remember that your Christian testimony is primarily about God, not you

Make Jesus/God the focus. Any stories that you tell should lead hearers to give greater honor to Christ and not you. Additionally, be careful how you describe past sins. It is better to make a quick allusion to a sin habit than it is to provide great detail.

3 - Remember that your story may lead someone to faith

So help them understand God's promises & Christ's work on the cross on behalf of all who will surrender their life to Him. The **object of our faith** isn't in an event we experienced (be that walking an aisle, praying a prayer, or a campfire confession). The object of our faith is in the work that Jesus did on the cross 2000 years ago when His death, burial & resurrection provided for our sins and gave us abundant life. (Some of God's promises concerning the gift of salvation being secured by Jesus Christ are found in the following passages of Scripture: 1 John 5: 11-12; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Peter 3:18; John 10:27-30; John 1:9-13; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 1 Timothy 2:5-6)

4 - Study an example of a testimony from the Bible

Read Acts 26:4-29. Here the Apostle Paul gives his testimony. His focus is on his life before Christ, then his faith in Christ, then how Jesus has changed his life.

5 - Spend time in thoughtful preparation

There are a few things to consider before you start writing your testimony. Think about your life before you met the Lord. What was going on in your life leading up to your conversion? What problems, needs or questions were you wrestling through at the time? How did those lead you to Jesus? How has life been different since you began to walk with Him? For some, this three-point approach is very effective in communicating your personal testimony. The outline focuses on **before** you trusted Christ, **how** you **surrendered** to him, and the difference **since** you've been walking with him.

Note: For those who are unclear on the date of their salvation

There are many who cannot recall the exact time when they began to follow Christ either because (1) they were very young, (2) they spent so much time working through questions that they didn't recognize when they actually surrendered their life to Jesus as their rightful King and Savior.

- Remember that while you may not remember the point at which you surrendered to Christ, focus more on why you are walking with Him today—Why are you will to daily surrender your life to Jesus?
- You might want to discuss some of the questions that you wrestled with during your journey and how they have been answered in Jesus or how you have learned to be content knowing that Jesus is the answer, whether He has yet revealed it to you or not.