

Preparing Your Testimony

One of the most important parts of ministry on the field is being able to share your personal testimony. In 1 Peter 3:15, it tells us to “always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope you have”. Many ministry methods can be successful but sharing face to face with someone what Jesus Christ has done in your life to make you His own and draw you closer to Him in a personal relationship is very powerful.

Most Christians would agree with this, but many of them become fearful and hesitant when they think of actually doing it. Not knowing what to say or being spiritually unprepared often hinders them from looking for opportunities that the Lord has provided for them. **A personal testimony is an important ministry tool to be used of Christ to let others know how you came to *know* Christ in a real and personal manner and how *He* has affected your life!**

Discuss this with your group: What are common reasons that people have for not sharing about their relationship with Christ?

How to prepare your story

Write out your testimony using the following guidelines...

1. Before you became a Christian... consider themes such as salvation, healing, deliverance and family.
 - a) What was your life like? Do not focus on the things you did, but on the emotions you felt.
 - b) What was important to you then? How was this unsatisfying?
 - c) What was your source of purpose, security, happiness? How did these fail?
2. How you came to know Christ
 - a) When was the first time you heard the Gospel? First time you were exposed to Christianity?
 - b) What were the struggles you faced in your mind before accepting Christ?
 - c) What made you change your mind about Christ and what was most important in life?
3. After becoming a Christian...
 - a) What specific changes did Christ make in your life then or now?
 - b) Explain how you are motivated now and the effects it has on your life.

Writing It Out

1. Open with an attention-getting sentence or story.
2. Use the outline above to record your thoughts and important highlights of your experience.
3. Be specific about important events, but stay focused on staying within the timetable.
4. Include a Scripture verse or two that is relevant to your story.
5. End with a closing thought that brings a logical and finished conclusion.
6. After you have finished preparing and editing your story, practice delivering it by sharing your story with several team members and ask for help in revising it insuring that God receives all the honor and glory.

7. Review it often or even memorize it without being mechanical. Build confidence in sharing it now, so that you are confident in looking for opportunities to share it later.

Helpful Guidelines:

1. What to do:

- a) Give real life stories of attitudes actions and emotions you have experienced. Personal stories identify with the audience and make it real rather than theory.
- b) Limit your story to 3-5 minutes. This will keep the audience interested and help you stay focused on the essentials of your story.
- c) Consider the age group, spiritual status, setting and culture of your audience.
- d) Be genuine about it ~~ people know when you are being sincere.
- e) Be excited about sharing God's work in your life rather than fearful of saying something wrong.

2. What NOT to do:

- a) Do not make negative statements about the church or certain denominations.
- b) Avoid using difficult words such as '*redeemed*' or '*justification*'.
- c) Do not use vague phrases such as "*Jesus saved me*" or "*I asked Jesus into my heart*" without explaining what they mean.
- d) Avoid being *too* detailed about past lifestyles. Don't give the devil any credit. The purpose is not a sensational story about you, but to point others to Christ, showing the contrast between the past and present. Share less about your poor choices and more about **His** work in your life.