

The God-Centered Life

Shaping a Personal Testimony

Introduction

A Christian's personal testimony is possibly their most powerful tool in witnessing or evangelism. A personal testimony is effective in all cultures, especially in our postmodern culture today. Your life story is always thought provoking, even to those usually unwilling to talk about religious matters. Stories have a way of breaking down barriers and helping us to connect with one another. You don't need to have all the answers to share your life story, and God consistently uses personal testimonies in bringing people to faith in Christ.

Three Major Components of a Testimony

- **Life before Christ** – (*In need of grace*)
 - **Coming to know/trust Christ** – (*The work of grace*)
 - **Life after Christ** – (*The overflow of grace*)
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Two Major Kinds of Testimonies

- **Salvation (Past)** – The focus of your story is on Christ; how you came to believe in Him and what effect He has had in your life.
 - **Situational (Present)** – The focus of your story is on how your relationship with Christ is currently impacting your life, specifically in relation to typical human needs, problems, and issues.
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Testimony “Do’s” and “Don’ts”

- Don't exaggerate details or worry that your testimony is not exciting enough to share.
- Don't be negative about other religions or in any matter if possible.
- Don't make yourself the star/hero of the story. Highlight God's love in Christ.
- Don't feel that you have to share your entire testimony at once if the situation warrants a delay.
- Don't pretend to be someone you are not. Be natural and authentic.
- Don't use confusing language or “Christianese” terms that can easily be misunderstood.
- Do share honestly about what your life was like before you came to know Christ.
- Do share how you came to realize you needed redemption and reconciliation with God.
- Do present the gospel clearly; utilize Scriptures like: Eph. 2:1-10, 1 Cor. 15:1-5, etc.
- Do share one or two positive and meaningful differences Christ is making in your life.
- Do develop multiple versions of your testimony for differing lengths of time.
- Do attempt to share your testimony in an orderly way—having the gospel as the focal point.
- If appropriate, do close your testimony with an invitation for the listener to trust Christ.
- Do remember that it is not your job to save anyone—that is God's work alone.
- Do remember that God is present and working while you share your testimony.