

HELP FOR WRITING YOUR TESTIMONY

What is the purpose of a “testimony”?

A testimony is “A declaration by a witness under oath, as that given before a court or deliberative body.” When a person testifies to something, he is giving evidence or proof for something. He is verifying the truth.

When you give your testimony, you are verifying the truth of the gospel and the Lord’s greatness as Savior. Your testimony is a declaration by a first-hand witness of Jesus’ greatness as a Savior.

Ultimately, the purpose is to glorify God. Strive to show everyone how great God is by showing how wonderfully He saved you.

How can I fulfill this purpose?

The same question re-worded is, “How can I successfully testify to Jesus’ greatness as a Savior?”

First, you should focus on the gospel. You should try to *make the gospel clear to people*. In order to make the gospel clear you must describe who Jesus is and what He has done for you in regard to your salvation.

Second, you should *explain how you came to know, love, trust, and commit yourself to Jesus Christ*. Tell how you personally came to understand and embrace the gospel. You may include such things as...

- × The belief system you had growing up from which God saved you.
- × Particular people God used to help you understand the gospel.
- × Circumstances God used to help you understand your sinfulness, your need of salvation, God’s power to save through Jesus Christ, etc.
- × How God changed your perception of Him.
- × What God initially used to cause you to seek out Jesus Christ.

Is there a particular outline I should follow in my testimony?

No. You can choose your own outline. If you have difficulty with it, here is a suggested pattern to follow...

First, describe your life before salvation.

- × What was your belief system?
- × How was God using the people and/or circumstances to prepare your heart to receive the gospel?
- × What obstacles did Christ overcome to save you?
- × Looking back on your pre-salvation days, how can you see God’s grace, faithfulness, power, wisdom, love, etc.?

Second, describe how you became a Christian.

- × What people and/or circumstances did God use to help you understand the gospel?
- × How did you come to understand your sinfulness?
- × How did you come to understand who Christ is?

Third, describe your life since you became a Christian.

- × What changes has God brought about in your life?
- × What is your commitment to Christ like now?
- × Why do you want to be baptized?
- × What does Christ mean to you now?
- × In what ways do you seek to serve Christ now?

Are there things I should avoid when I give my testimony?

Yes. There are some things to avoid which will allow your testimony to be most effective in glorifying God.

First, you should avoid particular phrases that are confusing to people. Remember, you are trying to help people understand the gospel. Avoid phrases that make it hard for people to understand the gospel. Here are some examples...

- × "I've always believed in God." This statement is confusing because the Bible says a person who believes in God is saved. So, the statement, "I've always believed in God," sounds like "I've always been saved." You could say instead, "I've always believed that there is a God, though I didn't trust Him for my salvation."
- × "I accepted Jesus into my heart." This statement is confusing because it isn't a phrase used in Scripture to describe one's acceptance of the gospel though that is how everyone uses it today. What does it mean to accept Jesus into one's heart? Does it mean you have accepted that Christ is your Lord and Master? Does it mean that you have accepted His free gift of eternal life? Does it mean that you have entered a relationship with God because your sin has been washed away? Does repentance and faith have something to do with it?

Second, you should avoid vague comments such as...

- × "I went to church one Sunday even though I didn't like church, but *the speaker was really good.*" What did the speaker say that was really good?
- × "My life began to change as I went to church each Sunday." You would want to explain how your life began to change.
- × "God has helped me through the difficulties of life." How has God helped you? What were the difficulties of life? Many unbelievers talk about how God has helped them through the difficulties of life. Therefore, it's important to give details so that your testimony is better than that of an unbeliever.

Third, you should avoid focusing on yourself. Your goal is to tell people how great God is, not how you have had "quite a journey through this life." One practical suggestion is to write out your testimony and then go back through it modifying comments in order to give more glory to God. Count the number of "I" statements and the number of "God" statements.

Fourth, you should avoid glorifying Crossway Church or any particular people. It is not wrong to mention how God used the people at Crossway or the teaching from the pastors, but make sure God gets the glory. If God used Crossway, its pastors, or anyone else, it is only by God's grace! You can express thanks to God for Crossway and particular people, but as you do, give God the credit.

What if I need help in preparing my testimony?

You can always ask one of the elders at Crossway to help you. You could try to arrange a time with Craig to go over it with you. You could also type out your testimony and email it to one of them asking for help.