

Guide for Writing Your Testimony

Realize the Power of Your 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.

Study an Example of a Testimony from the Bible

Read Acts 26. Here the Apostle Paul gives his testimony.

Spend Time in Thought and 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 or needs were you facing at the time? How did your life change after that?

Start with a Simple 3-Point Outline

A three-point approach is very effective in communicating your personal testimony. The outline focuses on what you **discovered**, what you **decided**, and the **difference** that decision has made in your life.

Discovery:

Before we become a Christian, God is actively showing us our need for Him. We make discoveries along the way that draw us closer to God and show us our need for Jesus.

So...what did you discover about yourself or life in general that led you to trust in Jesus? Was it a sense of emptiness in life or the control of an addiction or the loss of a loved one? Or maybe you have always had an awareness of God and Jesus because you grew up in a Christian household.

Decision:

Once God brought you to the discovery that you need Jesus, how did you respond? How did you decide to trust in Jesus? Most important, you want to communicate that you expressed your repentance and trust in Jesus to God. If you remember details, you can mention the location, timing in your life, significant people that were part of the process for you, etc.

Difference:

This is the "after" part of the before-and-after story. How has that decision to trust in Jesus made a difference in your life? What is different now because of God's work in you? It is often powerful to refer back to the discovery part of your story. How has God changed whatever it was you discovered? Has hope replaced despair? Has purpose replaced emptiness? Has assurance replaced fear?

Important Tips to Remember

Stick to the point.

Your conversion and new life in Christ should be the main points. You should be able to tell your basic testimony in **300 words or less**. That may not tell the whole story, but it will tell enough for listeners to hear the core of your testimony.

Be specific.

Include events, genuine feelings and personal insights that clarify your main point. This makes your testimony tangible - something others can relate to.

Be current.

In the difference segment, tell what is happening in your life with God now.

Be honest.

Don't exaggerate or dramatize your life for effect. The simple truth of what God has done in your life is all the Holy Spirit needs to convict others of their sin and convince them of His love and grace.

Things to Avoid

Stay away from "Christianese" phrases. These "foreign" or "churchy" words can alienate listeners and readers and keep them from identifying with your life. Here are some examples:

"born again."

Instead use:

- spiritual birth
- spiritual renewal
- to come alive spiritually
- given a new life

"Gospel"

Instead use:

- the message of Jesus
- the good news about Christ's purpose on earth

"saved"

Instead use:

- rescued
- delivered from despair
- found hope for life

"lost"

Instead use:

- heading in the wrong direction
- separated from God
- had no hope

"repent"

Instead use:

- admit a wrong
- change one's mind, heart or attitude
- make a decision to turn away
- turn around
- a 180 degree turn from what you were doing

Example testimony (Pastor Dave's; 253 words)

My parents were both Christians as I was growing up and our family was very involved in church, so I had a lot of understanding about God even as a child. I was the kid in Sunday School that could answer the questions!

When I entered the middle school years, I discovered that although I knew a lot *about* God, I didn't really know Him in a relationship way. The same way I knew information about famous people, but had no relationship with them.

I realized that knowing information about God was not the point. God wanted to have a relationship with me. And for that relationship to exist, I needed to put my trust in Jesus. I needed Jesus to forgive my sins and give me a relationship with God. In the fall of 1990, laying in my bed one night, I told God that I wanted to have that relationship with Him and I knew that I needed to be forgiven for all the wrong things I had done. I expressed my belief in Jesus' death and resurrection and my trust that I would be forgiven because of Him.

Since then, I have continued to grow in my understanding of God, but I now also have a vibrant, active relationship with Him. I feel His presence with me and He is constantly working in me to make me more and more like Jesus. My relationship with God has given new life and meaning to all the information I know about Him!