

APPENDIX T: THE TESTIMONY WORKSHEET

1 Peter 3:15 tells us, “always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.” Your personal testimony, the story of what God has done in your life, is one of the best ways you can do this. Although people can try to argue about the veracity of Christianity’s claims, no one can argue with what Christ has done in your life. It has been said that “a man with a testimony is never at the mercy of a man with an argument.” People are often very interested in what the God of the universe is doing on a personal level and they want to know what He is doing in your life.

A testimony is most effective when it is concise, to the point and organized (see Paul’s personal testimony in Acts 26 for an example).

How to organize and write your personal testimony.

Ask the Lord to guide you as you write (James 1:5).

Prepare it in such a way that you can give it to groups or individuals. Keep it concise and emphasize a personal commitment to Christ.

Consider your typical audience (those you will most often be communicating with) and write it in a way that will relate to them.

Try to keep it within a 3 minute time limit (see Paul’s example again in Acts 26).

Be realistic and honest about what you include.

Keep it focused: Avoid a “religious” approach - do not spend much time speaking about your church activities. Avoid inappropriate details about your past. Avoid mundane details about how you grew up. Stick to a theme.

Avoid the following terminology:

Do not make statements that reflect negatively on churches, other organizations or people.

Avoid mentioning denominations.

Explain vague terms such as joyful, peaceful, happy and changed when you use them.

Explain Biblical words such as saved, born again, converted and sin when you use them (be careful not to speak “Christianese”).

Write out your testimony with these key components:

Begin with an attention getting sentence or short story.

Use a 3 point outline containing the following (your personal examples will go a long way towards establishing your credibility with your audience so be real and honest but also be appropriate):

1. What was your life like before Christ?

- a. What were your attitudes, needs and problems?
- b. What did your life revolve around? What was most important to you?
- c. What did you look to for security, peace of mind and happiness and in what ways did those leave you unsatisfied?

2. What led you to put your trust in Christ?

- a. Be very honest about how you came to that decision.
- b. Do your best to summarize the gospel at this point and how you responded to the gospel.

3. What happened after you received Christ?

- a. Contrast who you were before with who you are now and focus on the change God has produced and is continuing to produce in your life.

Only use phrases, questions and examples that are natural and won't make your audience tense or uncomfortable.

Be positive from start to finish.

Keep the emphasis and focus on Christ throughout your testimony.

Be specific. Give enough details to arouse curiosity (but remember to be appropriate and to not overemphasize your sin - keep the emphasis on Christ).

Be natural. Do your best to help people understand and know you.

Be accurate and honest.

Include relevant thought provoking experiences.

Use 1 or 2 scripture references but only when they relate directly to your experience and fit naturally in your testimony.

Don't end your testimony with a verse but rather keep scripture in the body of your testimony.

End with a well thought through closing.

Edit your testimony and rewrite it as much as needed to get it just right. Then memorize it so you will "always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you." Then use it often!

Write out your testimony on the next page and then edit and memorize. Time yourself to see if you're close to the 3 minute target. Look for opportunities to use your testimony in evangelistic conversations. Also ask the person discipling you to schedule a time for you to share it publicly.

Write out your personal testimony!

Write an attention getting sentence or paragraph.

What was your life like before you received Christ?

What led you to put your trust in Christ, why did you give Him complete control of your life and how did you make the decision (briefly summarize the gospel)?

What happened after you received Christ, what changes have you seen in your life?

Write a good closing.

Now, review the presentation notes in appendix P and tell your testimony boldly!

Testimony Evaluation:

Evaluator: Evaluate AFTER the talk and be honest, descriptive and encouraging.

Did the testimony begin with an attention getting intro? How could this improve?

Did the person clearly and appropriately describe their life before Christ? How could this improve?

Did the person explain how they came to the point of putting their trust in Christ? How could this improve?

Was the Gospel clearly described (God's love, man's sin, Jesus' payment, personal need, point of decision)? How could this improve?

Did the person clearly describe how Christ has changed their life and how their life today contrasts with their life before Christ?

Did the testimony end on time? How long was it supposed to go and how long did it go (if it was a typical 3 minute testimony, did they do it in 3 minutes)?

How was their presentation (smile, voice projection, tone, pace, body language, eye contact, etc.) and what could improve?

Did the speaker speak passionately and boldly and how could they improve?

Were there any distracting mannerisms or filler words (uh, um, OK, right, like, etc.) that should be avoided next time? List them (mannerisms and/or filler words):

How can this person improve as a speaker?

What was your favorite part about this testimony? What struck you?

How would you like to encourage this person about their testimony?