

Chapter 12

How to Write Your Testimony

Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

—2 Corinthians 9:13 (NIV)

Six Easy Steps for Putting Together Your Testimony

There may be people who will argue about the existence of God, but no one can deny your personal experiences with him. No one can argue when you tell your story of how God has worked a miracle in your life or how he has blessed, transformed, lifted, and encouraged you, perhaps even broken and healed you.

These steps are designed to help you write your testimony. They can apply for long and short written or spoken testimonies. Whether you are planning to write down your whole, detailed testimony or preparing a ten-minute video version of your testimony, these steps and guidelines will help you communicate to others with sincerity and clarity what God has done in your life.

1—Testimony Guidelines

- Before you start writing, pray and ask God for help and the words to share.
- If you video your testimony, it must be no more than eight minutes long.
- In this case, it needs to be written out. (About one-and-a-half-to-two pages, no more than three pages, single-spaced with a twelve-font size in Times New Roman font.)
- Be honest.
- Have fun!

2—Study Examples of Testimonies

- Read over some testimonies to see how others have written theirs. When you see how they laid it out, it will help you focus on yours.

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

3—Spend Time on Thought 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?

4—Parts of the Story

There are four major parts to your story. Relax, and let us get started! Use a separate piece of paper to write down your answers.

1. The Old Me

Simply tell what your life was like before you surrendered to Christ. What were you searching for before coming to know Christ? What key problem, emotion, situation, or attitude were you dealing with? What motivated you? What were your actions? How did you try to satisfy your inner needs? (Examples of internal needs are loneliness, fear of death, and insecurity. Possible ways to fill those needs include work, money, drugs, relationships, sports, and sex.)

Start with, "I'm a believer who struggled with _____."

Ask yourself these questions and write the answers down.

- What was the insanity of my life before Christ?
- What are some of the circumstances that others could relate to?
- What was my relationship with God like before?
- What was my attitude to others like?
- What was my bottom?
- What did my life revolve around the most?
- What did I get my security or happiness from?

1. Your *experiences* and *changes* led you to give up the addiction.

- How were you converted? Simply tell the events and circumstances that caused you to consider.

Christ as the solution to the addiction: Take time to identify the steps that brought you to the point of trusting Christ. Where were you? What was happening at the time? What people or problems influenced your decision?

- How has your growing relationship with Jesus Christ influenced your recovery?
- (Below is only if you have used AFL as your source)

How did working on the program help you? (Be specific.)

Did a single step especially touch your heart?

2. The New Me

- How has your life in Christ made a difference?
- How has his forgiveness impacted you?
- How have your thoughts, attitudes, and emotions changed?
- Share how Christ is meeting your needs and what a relationship with him means to you now.
- What changes has God made in your relationships with others?
- What areas of your old life are gone, and how have they changed?
- What are some of the great benefits you have received from working the program? (This is only if you have used AFL as your source.)

4. Outreach: Why am I writing a testimony?

- What encouragement can I give a newcomer?

Important Tips to Remember

- Stick to the point. Your conversion and new life in Christ should be the main points.
- Be specific. Include events, genuine feelings, and personal insights that clarify your main point; it makes your testimony tangible—something others can relate to.
- Be current. Tell what is happening in your life with God now, today.
- Be honest. Do not 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

Avoid churchy words that alienate listeners and readers and keep them from identifying with your life when writing your testimony. Here are some examples.

Avoid using *born again*; instead, use;

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

Avoid using *saved*; instead, use;

- rescued
- delivered from despair
- found hope for life

Avoid using *lost*; instead, use;

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

Avoid using *Gospel*; instead, use;

- God's message to man
- the good news about Christ's purpose on earth

Avoid using *sin*; instead, use;

- rejecting God
- missing the mark
- falling away from the right path
- a crime against God's law
- disobedience to God

Avoid using *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

Hopefully, this helps you to write your testimony and never be ashamed to share the good in your life. You never know when your story will help someone else.

Thank you for finishing what you have started. God Bless!