

Testimony # 1- Preparing to Write Your Story

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the entire world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” Acts 1:8, 9

Seven Power Points about Sharing Your Story

1. The story of how God became real to you is one of the easiest and most effective ways of introducing a person to Jesus.
2. Witnesses tell what they’ve seen and heard, therefore our stories must be God-centred, not self- centred.
3. Remember that we are talking about a person who we are in love with and to whom we owe a great deal.
4. Our story declares strongly that God is alive; that He is interested in people and that He is able to penetrate their lives and assist them in a supernatural way.
5. A true witness is soul focused –*“A true witness delivers souls.” Proverbs 14:25a*
6. Your story, carefully prepared, given in the power of the Holy Spirit, is a vital and powerful tool that no one can deny and can often communicate more effectively than any other form of witnessing.
7. A careful thought through and prepared testimony empowered by the Holy Spirit can be of immediate and effective use in nearly every witnessing situation.

The Two Things we should talk About in Our Testimony

- According to 1 Chronicles 16:8, 9 there are two things we should talk about and make known to others- *“Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; Talk of all His wondrous works”*
 - ✓ The 2 things we should talk about are God’s Deeds and, His wondrous works as they apply in our lives
 - ✓ When sharing these two things in the power of the Holy Spirit we will find that this is a very effective tool.

Two Types of Testimony

There are two different kinds of testimonies. Both types introduce a person to the Person of Jesus Christ.

- *Thematic testimony* is the most under-utilised form of testimony it is based on a theme that is specific to the need of the person.
 - ✓ Conversation with the person may reveal a concern once evident in your life and of present concern to the other person. For e.g. you may be talking to someone who has been experiencing trauma as a result of a near death experience –if you have a testimony of how God delivered you from trauma share it, it is a thematic testimony.
 - ✓ The thematic approach is the most appropriate for those saved as children and those who have little memory of events prior to conversion or those who can't remember the exact sequence of events in the conversion experience.
 - ✓ Those who have been brought up Christian but had walked away from God at some point and come back, may want to use parts of the Chronological Worksheet as it applies
- *Chronological testimony* is the best known form of testimony it is the account of your relationship with Jesus from start up to the present time.

Things to remember when writing a Thematic Testimony:

- **When writing a Thematic Testimony**
 - ✓ Focus on a concern you once had.
 - ✓ Show how salvation has dealt with that concern.
 - ✓ Your concern may be fear of death, an addiction, a quest for self-worth or happiness or success or it may be a character flaw or something else.
 - ✓ You may want to talk about what you've been spared by having Christian parents and knowing Jesus from an early age.
 - ✓ Focus on a concern you once had and show how salvation has dealt with that concern. Your concern may be fear of death, an addiction, a quest for self-worth or happiness or success or it may be a character flaw or something else.
 - ✓ You may begin your testimony with –“I have discovered how not to worry”- “I have found a purpose for living”- “I am so happy because...”

Things to remember when writing a Chronological Testimony:

- **General Outline of Chronological Testimony**
 - ✓ Life before knowing Christ- (I was like this)
 - ✓ How and why you became a Christian- (But God did this)
 - ✓ Life since you've met Jesus- (And now I am like this)
 - **It's Important to talk about:**
 - ✓ Why you became a Christian and how.
 - ✓ What a difference Jesus has made!
 - **What made you decide to follow Jesus?**
 - ✓ Be honest and open. Was it fear, conviction, God's love, a deep need, guilt or something else?
 - ✓ People want to know why you placed your faith in Him and what He has done for you and how knowing Him has affected the quality of your life.
 - ✓ Tell what you've experienced and seek to identify with your friend's felt needs through your own felt needs that God has met.
 - ✓ How has He impacted your whole life, your values and your relationships?
 - ✓ Think about what or where you might have been without Him and use this to relate to felt needs in the same way as outlined above.
 - ✓ Your story helps a person to understand that Christianity is a relationship with a living person; that you have committed your life to Him on the basis of who He is and what He did on your behalf.
 - ✓ By telling your story you can lead a person to see that God revealed Himself in Jesus who became a man, died for on the Cross for them taking the punishment for their sin, rose victorious over sin and death and that His call to us demands a response.
 - ✓ Pray that the Lord will give you wisdom and guidance as you think through and write down your story so that people will be able to associate with your past and present experiences - James 1:5-6
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Do and Don'ts of Sharing Testimony

- **Do**
 - ✓ Memorize your story and practice it until you can tell it naturally
 - ✓ Relate to felt needs.
 - ✓ Use Scripture appropriately
 - ✓ Be specific
 - ✓ Be realistic
- **Don't**
 - ✓ Say you have no testimony
 - ✓ Talk about things that are not relevant to the hearer
 - ✓ Use generalities
 - ✓ Make negative comments about other church denominations
 - ✓ Preach or argue
 - ✓ Use Christian jargon
 - ✓ Exaggerate

Telling Your Story

- When telling your story one on one always ask permission to tell your story, ask, "Can I tell you how Jesus became real to me"?
- After sharing your story, ask, "Has anything like this ever happened to you before." Listen to the person's testimony or their admission that they have never been saved.
- When telling your story one on one or in a programme:
 - ✓ Be real
 - ✓ Make it no more than 350-500 words
 - ✓ Share with enthusiasm in the power of the Holy Spirit
 - ✓ Speak loudly and clearly in a natural, relaxed tone of voice
 - ✓ Avoid nervous mannerisms while you speak
 - ✓ Don't preach at people – remember you are telling your story. Any application should be done in a loving manner.
 - ✓ Smile - Show that Christianity is an inward change of heart
 - ✓ When sharing your story in a witnessing situation tell your story in a conversational way and relate to the felt needs of the person you are speaking with.

Note to Evangelist/Lecturer:

The worksheet is for those writing a Chronological Testimony. Those writing a thematic testimony should start with a blank piece of paper. They can use the guidelines above to help them. Some writing a thematic testimony may have walked away from God at some point, it may be helpful for them to use parts of Chronological Worksheet as it applies.

Let's Get Started

- Using the Testimony Worksheet (Testimony #2)
 - ✓ Write it in a conversation style which resembles the way you would talk to a friend.
 - ✓ Write in first person. Use "I" and "me". Emphasize that this is your personal experience, your story.
 - ✓ Choose the approach most fitting your experience.
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