

HOW TO WRITE A TESTIMONY

Writing a testimony is very easy. In one sense, you already have it. Your testimony is nothing more than your story of coming to faith in Jesus Christ. It's the story of what you were (a sinner in desperate need of Jesus Christ), what you believe (the Gospel of Jesus Christ), and what you have become (a follower of Jesus Christ). All you have left to do is write it down.

There are three basic types of testimonies:

- (1) You became a Christian at a young age and have generally followed the Lord all your life.
- (2) You heard about Christ at a young age, but either resisted, rebelled, or have stayed immature in your faith until recently.
- (3) You became a Christian later in your life.

No matter which group you fall into, they're all wonderful testimonies of God's goodness, grace, and mercy. There is a very good chance someone listening to your testimony shares your experience and can be richly encouraged by your words.

Here are some tips to help guide you along the way:

1. **Pray:** Ask God to help you write a testimony that exalts His gracious saving work through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Ask that God might be pleased to encourage, or even save, someone through your testimony.
2. **Keep it short:** Keep your testimony simple and to the point (about 2-4 minutes). It can be personal and transparent, but stay away from long stories and unnecessary details. Short is better than long.
3. **Don't make it technical:** Use words and phrases that are simple, short, and free of "churchy" or "religious" terms. Remember, there may be non-Christians listening to you in the audience.
4. **Focus on the Gospel:** While your testimony is your story, it's also the public proclamation of what you're hoping and trusting in for salvation. Your testimony should be able to answer the following questions:
 - a. Who is Jesus?
 - b. What did He do to make salvation possible?
 - c. What is your response in light of this?

5. **Read it out loud:** As you write, practice reading it along away. Spoken word is different than written word. Since you will be reading your testimony out loud, the goal is to make it sound smooth, natural, and easy to understand.

Here are some concepts to help you structure your testimony:

Before:

What were you like before coming to Christ? What were the things that defined you and your character? Why did you need Christ and the grace of God given to you in the Gospel?

This section should be short. Many are tempted to give long stories and far too much detail about their life before coming to Christ, but the goal is simply to highlight your need of the Gospel. If you choose to give some of your story, just remember your story is not the point. The main purpose of your testimony is to reveal the great need you had/have for the Gospel.

For example:

If you came to Christ at a young age, perhaps there was a time when you disobeyed your parent(s), and your parent(s) seized the opportunity to teach you how that act of disobedience was sin. Perhaps this event made you realize you were a sinner and needed forgiveness.

If you heard of Christ at a young age, but either resisted or stayed immature in your faith until later, you could talk about how the gravity of your sin didn't impact you until recently. Perhaps there was an event that took place in your life, or a person spoke the message of hope to you, and you have now come into a fuller understanding of your sin and the great need you have for the forgiveness of Christ.

If you became a Christian later in life, perhaps you can speak of how no one ever taught you about sin and the need you have for forgiveness. Like the above scenario, perhaps a major event has recently taken place in your life that's caused you to think about eternal realities. Or perhaps a key person has come into your life and spoken the Gospel to you. Maybe you weren't necessarily looking for God, but this person made you aware of the great need you have, as a sinner, for the forgiveness of sin, as well as the salvation that's offered through Jesus Christ.

What happened:

How did you hear about Christ? What made you sense a need for Christ and the forgiveness that He offers? What did you learn about Jesus that gave you hope?

This section should be the focus of your testimony. Again, it should be light on story, but heavy on the Gospel.

Here is where you should talk about:

1. **Sin** (your need of forgiveness),
2. **Grace** (your unworthiness of forgiveness),
3. **The cross** (Christ's accomplishment of forgiveness),

4. **The resurrection** (the hope of forgiveness—that because Christ rose, forever defeating sin, Satan, and death, you now have the joyful hope and guarantee of resurrection life).

After:

What are you like now after coming to Christ? What are the new things that define you and your character, as opposed to the old things that defined your old way of life? While you've been richly forgiven in Christ, why do you still need Christ and the grace of God each and every day?

This section is incredibly important. It should highlight what your life now looks like as a follower of Jesus Christ. It's a good place to talk about how you'll never be perfect on this side of heaven, but by God's grace, you'll spend the rest of your life conforming more and more into the image of Jesus Christ.

Confession:

Since your testimony is not merely a story, but in the first place, a public proclamation of your hope and trust in Jesus Christ, we ask that you conclude your testimony with the following confession:

“I believe and testify that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He took on human flesh and lived a perfect life of obedience to His Father's holy will, that He died on the cross in my place, paying the full penalty for my sin, and that He rose again on the third day, securing my life in Him. This is my confession and this is my hope.”