

## **Your Testimony: How To Prepare and Tell Your Story**

### **Before I Accepted Christ (or gave Him control of your life)**

1. What was my life like that will relate most to the non-Christian?
2. What did my life revolve around the most? What did I get my security or happiness from? (The non-Christian is relying on something external to give him happiness.)
3. How did those areas begin to let me down?

### **How I Received Christ (or gave Him control of your life)**

1. When was the first time I heard the gospel? (Or when was I exposed to dynamic Christianity)
2. What were my initial reactions?
3. When did my attitude begin to turn around? Why?
4. What were the final struggles that went through my mind just before I accepted Christ?
5. Why did I go ahead and accept Christ?

### **After I Accepted Christ (or gave Him control of your life)**

1. Specific changes and illustrations about the changes Christ has made:
2. Why am I motivated differently?

### **For Those Raised as a Christian**

1. Some have no memory of a “Before Christ” time in their lives. Share why you are a Christian today and what that relationship means to you.

### **An example: Look at Paul's testimony as you consider how to tell your story.**

His life before (Acts 22:1-5)

- Paul describes what he thought and did before he became a believer.
- Your goal: to give specific, yet appropriate, examples of what your life was like (attitudes, needs, problems) before Christ.
- Remember that examples you give will establish you as a credible witness in the minds of non-Christians. However, avoid a religious focus. (You want to make it about Jesus and your need for Him.) Don't spend a great amount of time talking about church activities or denominations before your life began to change. Likewise, avoid being explicit and sensational in speaking of drugs, immorality, crime or drunkenness.

How (Acts 22:6-11)

- Paul explained how he became a believer.
- Your goal: to allow the listener to walk away with a clear understanding of how you became a Christian and how he or she can trust Christ as the payment for their sins.

- Be careful not to use clichés and church language. Talk in terms they'll understand.

After (Acts 22:12-21)

- Paul explained how becoming a believer changed his life.
- Your goal: to explain specific ways Christ has changed your life -- to show that having Christ in your life really does make a difference!
- Avoid using general statements such as "I have so much peace now." Be specific. It is the Holy Spirit's responsibility to draw someone to Christ, but you want to communicate your story in such a way to show the listener that your life is different and more meaningful with Christ.

**Acts 22** <sup>1</sup>"Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense." <sup>2</sup>When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet. Then Paul said: <sup>3</sup>"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. <sup>4</sup>I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, <sup>5</sup>as the high priest and all the Council can themselves testify. I even obtained letters from them to their associates in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

<sup>6</sup>"About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. <sup>7</sup>I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'

<sup>8</sup>"Who are you, Lord?' I asked. "'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. <sup>9</sup>My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

<sup>10</sup>"What shall I do, Lord?' I asked. "'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.' <sup>11</sup>My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me. <sup>12</sup>"A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. <sup>13</sup>He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him.

<sup>14</sup>"Then he said: 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. <sup>15</sup>You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. <sup>16</sup>And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

<sup>17</sup>"When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance <sup>18</sup>and saw the Lord speaking to me. 'Quick!' he said. 'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because the people here will not accept your testimony about me.' <sup>19</sup>"Lord,' I replied, 'these people know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. <sup>20</sup>And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'

<sup>21</sup>"Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.' "