

V. Practical Tips:

- A. Maintain good communication skills and appearance**—it portrays confidence! Have good eye contact and be aware of your body posture. Don't doubt your own testimony!
- B. Understand the difference between a talk & a testimony**
 - 1. A testimony shares personal experience, a talk teaches.
 - 2. Avoid saying, "What I'm going to talk about is..." or "My talk is on..."
 - 3. As you get comfortable sharing your personal testimony, you may have the tendency to want to share more of your "wisdom", teach them what you have learned, etc. Avoid this.
- C. Have a right attitude in your speech.** Nothing we say has the power to change people. Change comes from the action of the Holy Spirit!
- D. Tell the truth.** Don't manipulate facts or embellish/exaggerate stories to make them more "exciting."
- E. Be open to feedback.** Guard against oversensitivity, being offended, and/or self-condemnation.
- F. Encourage** the other person, be constant in affirmation.

VI. Doing It:

- A. How to Begin?**
 - 1. Start with your faith: Saul or Timothy?
 - 2. How about significant people and/or moments in your life
 - 3. Write it down!
- B. Writing it down** forces you to articulate it
 - 1. Two hand-written pages (approx. 200 words)
 - 2. 5-7 paragraphs
 - a. Introduction: Growing up my faith was like . .
 - b. Body: before, conversion, after . . .
 - c. Conclusion and Call
- C. Share it!**

Developing Your Own Personal Testimony

I. Objective: Develop a powerful story of how God has worked in your life. God is working in all of our lives. When you tell someone your testimony, you let Him work through you, so He can work in others. This is Evangelization 101!

II. The Basics:

- A. What is a testimony?** An account of a specific time or way the Lord has worked in your life.
- B. Why use testimonies?** To help people understand that God is at work in our lives today. A testimony can't be argued with. No one can say, "You didn't experience that."
- C. When can we use testimonies?** Anytime. They are a great way to tell others about your relationship with God.
- D. How Long should my Testimony Be?** A good starting goal can be to develop a testimony that is 3 minutes long. This helps make it concise and helps you stick to your point. Of course the length can vary depending on the circumstances.

III. Developing a Personal Testimony:

- A. Important to remember:** A personal testimony magnifies and glorifies the Lord.
 - 1. God is the main character, what He has done in your life
 - 2. A testimony renews His grace in us, and in our audience
- B. Basic Content Rule of Thumb:**
 - 1. 20% What my life was like before this conversion
 - 2. 20% How God worked in your life and the change
 - 3. 60% What my life has been like since this change took place
 - a. Should be prayerful, redemptive, upbeat
 - b. Should convey a personal relationship with Jesus

IV. Three Parts of an Effective Testimony:

A. Part one: Before—this is a picture of the situation in your life before your conversion point.

1. Start with a good beginning:
 - a. Start with your name & who you are
 - b. Simply state what you are sharing about (e.g. “I’d like to tell you about how the Lord has changed my relationship with my dad”); or just start (e.g. “When I was in high school...”)
2. Give concise detail of the situation in the past:
 - a. Too many details distract
 - b. Avoid glorifying sin and problems. Story telling and details can do this.
3. Own up to your own mistakes—this is your story:
 - a. Don’t condemn or blame anyone else; we don’t want to model excuses or rationalization.
 - b. Don’t overdo your mistakes. Most people will connect with your past. We want them to remember God’s work, not how we were hurt.
4. Guard against trying to give so many different ways God worked that no main point is ever made.

B. Part two: Conversion point—this is how the Lord worked in your life and the grace/change/decision that took place.

1. This is the most important part. Most people want (need) to know how to surrender to Jesus and His will in their lives. Sharing how you surrendered can help them.
2. Conversion can be difficult at times to articulate. Some questions to ask yourself:
 - a. What circumstances caused you to turn to God?
 - b. What did people say (do) that caused you to turn to the Lord?

- c. What was the central issue of why you said “yes” or surrendered to the Lord?
- d. What did you say? What did you do?
- e. What did you hear the Lord say to you?
- f. What did the Lord do (what did you experience the Lord doing? saying? etc.)?

C. Part three: Afterward—this is a picture of your life now.

1. We need to maintain a balance between the following:
 - a. The truth is that once Jesus touches you, you are not the same; my life is different (better, more complete, joyful, more peaceful).
 - b. Yet even though God has worked in your life, you are not perfect, nor is your life perfect. You still have struggles and problems sometimes (you are still human). Now you know Jesus is there for you when you do struggle, and you turn to him.
 - c. We do NOT want to portray a before/after effect, “I had a problem, I met Jesus, once you know Jesus you never have any problems.”
2. Use phrases that help to process the idea and maintain this balance:
 - a. “That day began something for me...”
 - b. “That was the first step for me...”
 - c. “I was not the same after that day. I began to...”
3. Give concrete differences in your life.
4. End with a strong conclusion.
 - a. Give a short summary – “God showed me how to forgive”
 - b. Express invitation – “He can do the same for you”
 - c. The “Call” – the whole testimony leads to inviting THEM to experience what you have.