

# HOW TO PREPARE YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY

*Adapted from Athletes in Action website:  
<http://www.aia.com/getinvolved/notebook.aspx>  
This link has some other really great resources.*

## I. WHY ARE YOU QUALIFIED TO TESTIFY?

A. In 1 Peter 3:15, the Apostle Paul instructs us to always be ready "to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."

B. Your personal testimony is one of the most effective means you have for making such a defense of your faith in Jesus Christ. There are times when an individual is not willing to sit down and go through a Gospel tract or when doing so would be inappropriate. However, people are often more interested in knowing your story: how you came to put your faith in Christ and the difference that decision has made in your life.

C. There are numerous examples of individuals sharing their testimony throughout the New Testament. Who is giving the following testimonies and who is listening to them?

1. John 4:39-42 \_\_\_\_\_
2. John 9:24-34 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Galatians 11:13-2:21 \_\_\_\_\_
4. Acts 21:40-22:21 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Acts 24:10-16; 24:24 \_\_\_\_\_

D. What are some situations where you might be able to share your personal testimony?

## II. A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE OF A THREE POINT TESTIMONY

The Apostle Paul's testimony serves as a good example. When he shared his story, he presented a logical and simple defense for the hope within him. Generally he spoke of his life before Christ, how he came to know Christ, and his life since accepting Christ.

A. Notice the outline in Acts 21:37-22:21:

1. Acts 22:1-5: Paul shares about his life **before** accepting Christ.
2. Acts 22:6-11: Paul shares **how** he became a believer.
3. Acts 22:12-22: Paul shares how his life changed **after** accepting Christ.

B. Can you find a similar outline in Acts 26:2-29?

## III. HOW TO WRITE YOUR OWN TESTIMONY

As shown above, your testimony can logically be divided into three parts: before accepting Christ, how you accepted Christ, and after accepting Christ.

A. **Before:** This section covers what your life was like before you accepted Christ. The following questions may help you think through what you want to convey:

1. What was your life like? How can you communicate this in a way that will relate to the non-Christian? (Don't focus on the religious upbringing and side of your life)

2. What did your life revolve around the most? What did you get your security or happiness from? The non-Christian is relying on something external to give him happiness.

3. How did those areas begin to let you down? What were the unmet needs in your life? Some possibilities include: loneliness, lack of significance, lack of purpose, a sense of emptiness, fear of death, aimlessness, lack of peace etc.

4. How did you attempt to have these needs met? Some possibilities include: accomplishments, accumulation of wealth or things, drugs, alcohol, sex, finding fulfillment in work, education, athletics, etc.

5. Not until the end of this section you can bring up what your thoughts about God and the church had been before meeting the Lord.

**B. How:** This section describes the circumstances and events that caused you to consider Christ and the steps you took to become a Christian. Included in this section is a brief but clear presentation of the Gospel.

1. When was the first time you heard the gospel? Or when were you exposed to the truth about Jesus?

2. What were your initial responses?

3. When did your attitude begin to turn around? Why?

4. What were the final struggles that went through your mind just before you accepted Christ?

5. Why did you go ahead and accept Christ?

**C. After:** This section explains the changes that have occurred in your life since receiving Christ. This should relate back to the specific issues you discussed in the "before" section.

1. Specific changes and illustrations about the changes Christ has made.

2. What has changed in how you are motivated now that Christ is in your life?

#### **IV. IMPORTANT "DOS AND DON'TS"**

When writing and giving your personal testimony, there are some basic "dos and don'ts" which will make it more effective.

##### **A. "Do"s**

1. Keep your testimony concise. Three minutes is sufficient time to tell your story. (Read Paul's testimonies out loud. You will notice that none of them are more than three minutes!)
2. Begin with an interesting attention-getting sentence or brief glimpse of where you grew up, or something that happened to you as a child.
3. Be realistic.
4. Be positive from start to finish.
5. Emphasize the difference that Christ has made in your life.
6. You may consider using one scripture in your testimony.

##### **B. "Don't"s**

1. Don't use Christian terminology. For the most part it will be meaningless to a non-Christian. For example, words like born-again, saved etc.
2. Don't preach at people. Share your story with them.
3. Don't use negative statements about churches, specific denominations, other organizations or people.
4. Don't give the impression that the Christian life is without problems.
5. Don't be long winded. Keep your testimony concise.

## **V. PRESENTING YOUR TESTIMONY**

A. Remember, we are admonished to always be ready to give an account for the hope within us. Therefore, you should always be ready to share your testimony. The following suggestions will help you be prepared:

1. Write it out. Be willing to do several drafts of it after you get feedback from others on how clear it is.
2. Commit the main outline to memory.
3. Rehearse your testimony until it becomes natural.
4. Practice your testimony with a friend.

B. When the opportunity arises to share your testimony, remember the following:

1. Share your testimony in the power of the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to speak to the heart of those listening.
2. Be relaxed. Smile
3. Avoid nervous mannerisms.

## **VI. Helpful Hints**

- A. Write the way you speak – make the testimony yours
- B. Practice this over and over until it becomes natural.
- C. Time limit should be between three and five minutes