

3. Use terminology non-Christians understand.

Be sensitive to the fact that your audience may not be familiar with terms or concepts that are used regularly by Christians. For example, many people who have not attended church do not know the difference between the Old and New Testaments. Words and phrases like born again, redeemed, saved, Calvary, righteousness and atonement may be unfamiliar.

4. Use the Bible but don't try to teach the entire Bible.

Use Scripture because God's Word produces life in the hearts of sinners, "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11). We want to use God's Word because He promises to produce fruit with it. But be cautious not to use more than a few verses. People who are not familiar with the bible may get overwhelmed.

5. Avoid mentioning church denominations.

God does not save people from particular denominations. He saves people of all denominations. To mention a church denomination may put someone on the defensive and may make someone want to debate you instead of listen to you. It creates gap. The listener may perceive that you are saying that he or she is a sinner because they belong to a particular denomination. The Bible tells me I'm a sinner because of who I am in my humanity. Mentioning a church denomination only hinders. It doesn't help.

6. Use a strong opening line and a finish with a strong closing line.

Begin with a strong opening line to gain attention. Instead of thinking about the events of today or the plans for tomorrow, you compel your audience to focus on the moment. For example, create interest by saying, "I'm one of those people who ended up at the top of the ladder and the bottom of life." Likewise, use a strong finish. Capture your testimony in a few sentences. For example, "You can see from my experience, He has not only added years to my life, He has added life to my years."

7. Keep it short.

The goal of a well-prepared testimony is to give it in five to seven minutes.

Conclusion: Prepare it carefully and give it prayerfully.

After listening to your testimony, the audience should clearly understand how to trust in Jesus Christ alone as Savior. The process of preparing your testimony may take hours. Write it out, share it with a Christian friend, incorporate feedback, and write it again. A story God could use to bring someone to Christ deserves to be well prepared.

Not only is it well prepared, it is prayerfully given. Despite how clearly and effectively you say it, unless God causes the listener to see his need, he will never come to Christ. John 6:44 explains, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him." It is a motivation to pray consistently when one is aware of that fact. Prepare as though it all depends on you; pray as though it all depends on God.

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We thank the Lord for partners like EvanTell, Inc. that have dedicated their focus on equipping others to share the gospel. Preparing your testimony is part of a training session called "You Can Tell It." CASMI would love to talk with you about hosting this seminar in your church or with a few friends to better equip more believers to be sharing the gospel. EvanTell has a great website where you can learn more about their resources. Thank you for supporting our work and we pray that God will give you new boldness as you share the gospel with your zipper purse.

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3 Parts of an Effective Testimony



The Gospel. Clear and Simple.®

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:19-20

EvanTell is connecting believers to the life-changing Great Commission through proven evangelism tools and training. For over 35 years, EvanTell has been helping believers overcome their fears and gain new confidence in sharing Christ through clear and simple evangelism resources

3 Parts of an Effective Testimony

by Dr. R. Larry Moyer

I have heard many interesting testimonies. By the end of each story, I felt motivated and encouraged toward a relationship with God. However, the majority of time the stories were not organized in such a way that a listener could understand specifically and clearly what it means to trust in Jesus Christ alone as Savior.

An effective testimony should explain how to get to heaven. If I understand how God brought you to Christ, I will understand how I can come to the Savior.

How does a person tell his story in such a way that a non-Christian might say, "God used your testimony to bring me to the Savior"?

To answer that question, Let's first examine how to structure your testimony to increase its impact.

HOW DO YOU STRUCTURE YOUR TESTIMONY?

A well-structured testimony tells three things about you. First, It describes what your life was like before you came to Christ. Second, it explains how you came to understand the gospel and to trust Christ. Third, it tells of the difference He has made since. Let's talk about those three areas.

1. Where were you before you came to Christ?

What was your life like before you trusted in Jesus Christ? What were your thoughts about God? Did you think you got to heaven by living a good life and doing the best you could Him? Or did your family rarely mention spiritual things? What were your thoughts about yourself, the Bible, church, or even Christians? Did you feel hopeless? Did things you thought would bring happiness leave you feeling empty? Where you from a religious family that had a reverence for God but no relationship

As you explain where you were, do it in such a way that a non-Christian in a similar situation could say, "That's me."

As a word of caution, when preparing your testimony, be careful. If you have had a particularly difficult history, prayerfully consider how much detail about your past sin to include. Strive to achieve a proper balance between your sin and God's grace.

2. How did you come to understand the gospel and trust Christ?

What circumstances prompted you to start thinking about spiritual things?

What did God use to get your attention? Was it like a whisper in your ear or a billboard in front of your face? Did God use the invitation of a friend to a special church service, a tract, relationship difficulties, or feelings of loneliness? What events and people did God use to introduce you to the Savior? As succinctly as possible, summarize how God brought you to Christ.

Notice I said, how not when. I cannot come to Christ the same moment you did because that moment is forever past. But I must come to Christ the same way you did-by faith, because there is not other way to God. So emphasize the how, not the when.

This is the most important part of your testimony. Make your story so clear that your listener would have no questions what he or she must do to get to heaven. As you explain how you came to understand the gospel and trust Christ, four things need to be stressed.

- a. We are sinners-explain how you came to see yourself as a sinner before God.
- b. The penalty for sin is death-explain how you came to understand that sin's eternal consequence is being separated from God forever.
- c. Christ died for us and rose again-explain how you came to understand that He took the punishment for your sins. He died in your place and rose again the third day.
- d. We can be saved through faith-explain how you came to understand that eternal life is a free gift that is received by trusting Christ alone to save you.
(Refer to the Bad News – Good news tag)

3. What difference has He made now?

When you contrast where you were before you came to Christ to where you are now, what stands out in your mind? How has your perspective changed?

As a Christian, your behavior may have improved dramatically. It may be apparent to others that you are different. However, as you explain where you are now, resist the temptation to make your improved behavior the primary emphasis.

The emphasis should not be on how much less you sin, but on how Christ has dealt with your sin issue. He has dealt with your past, present, and future sin. Explain that you now know with certainty that if you were to die you'd go to heaven. After all, that is the reason Christ died for you – so that a sinner who would otherwise be forever separated from God, you could be brought into an eternal relationship with Him.

Get a worksheet and summarize these three aspects of your testimony. Write your testimony out and get a well-organized presentation.

Now having thought through the structure of your testimony, what are some additional suggestions to increase its effectiveness?

7 Suggestions to make a Testimony More Effective

1. Be Clear: Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again.

The gospel can be summarized in ten words-Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:3,4) His death was a satisfaction, a once-for-all payment by which the wrath of God against our sin was satisfied. God accepted His Son's blood as a substituted for the blood which we should have shed. Because His perfect Son took a sinner's place, God now has a basis on which He can pardon instead of punish each one of us. His resurrection on the third day proved that sin and death had been conquered and His claims to be God were true.

2. Be Clear: Eternal life is received by trusting Christ alone to save you.

In light of the fact that Christ died for me and arose, what is God asking me to do? The book of John, which tells us how to get to heaven, uses the word *believe* 98 times. We are told in John 20:31, "These are written that you may believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in His name."

The words believe means to trust, depend, rely on. God asks us to come to Him as sinners, recognizing Jesus Christ died for us and rose again and to trust in Christ alone to save us. Stay away from terminology like "invite Christ into your heart," "accept God" or "give your life to Jesus." Not only are those confusing terms, they do not accurately convey what the Bible means by believe-to trust in Christ alone as your only way to heaven.

Notice I said Christ alone. When Christ died on the cross, He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Since He made the full payment-not the down payment for our sins, we must trust in Christ alone to save us.