

Mother of God Community
Sunday Night Prayer Meeting
April 28, 2013

How to Prepare a Personal Testimony

Angelica James

1 Peter 3:15 “Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, *always being ready* to make a defense to everyone who asks you to make an account for the *hope* that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”

First of all – PRAY and let the Holy Spirit guide you as to which parts of your personal witness to focus on as you share with a group / individual.

There are 4 basic elements:

1. Share about your past. (*This should be short, just to give a quick sense so as to contrast the change God made after he came into your life*).
 - What was your life like before you knew Jesus in a “personal” way?
 - What was important to you?
 - What struggles did you have?
2. What led you to a personal encounter with (and decision to follow) Christ?
3. How did this experience change your life? *This and #4 should comprise most of the testimony. The thing to highlight is evidence of God's life in you.*
(give specific examples)
 - Desire to pray and read scripture.
 - Desire to end bad habits.
 - Having a new spiritual awareness (see God work in your life, hear his voice, taste his goodness, ...)
 - A desire to share your experience with others,
4. How do you see the Lord working in your life now?
 - People need to know that the Lord is living and active today!

Other tips:

- Be simple and concise. Try to shoot for 3-4 minutes. You can add more details as time permits.
- It is helpful to use one or two scriptures – but not too many.
- Avoid spiritual jargon. Realize others may not know what “saved”, “baptized in the spirit” or other terms mean and you may not have the time to explain it – be simple.
- Practice sharing with others – in your small groups, with family members, at Prayer Meeting etc.
- Read Acts 22 and 26 where St. Paul gives us a great example of a concise but powerful personal testimony.

Other Thoughts – Why Give a Personal Testimony

Don James

Realize our witness is probably 1 small step on a person's journey to conversion.

We are not trying to bring someone to conversion immediately based on our testimony. We are not trying to prove God's existence or present apologetics where we have to reason with people. *We are simply trying to present what God has done in our lives and do it in a way that points to the grace that comes to us when we give our lives to Christ.* We want others to know God's love and salvation, so our witness needs to present these.

If we want others to follow Christ, we must show WHY we chose to do so.

Since we are hoping to point others to conversion (the choice to follow Christ), the obvious question that comes to mind is *why did we choose to follow Jesus?* How did we come to the point where we chose to believe the gospel message and follow Christ? Our goal is to highlight the life of God within us and that they can receive the same grace. So we need to present in a simple way, the before and after snapshot of *a life changed by God* so as to stir their own hunger for God. If we spend too much time with the before, we may not have much time to show them the reality of God's work in our lives. So, as already stated by Angelica, we should include:

(a) An brief snapshot of what our life was like before our decision (*this should be very short*)

(b) How we came to the decision to follow Christ (most likely someone else's witness and some form of revelation where we were internally convicted of the truth of the gospel, not just because of someone else's word – but because God revealed himself to us in some way).

(c) Signs of the New Life (the changes in us after conversion). Highlight this because it shows the life of God in us, the reality of his desire to relate with us, the love that heals our soul. This is what people need: an experience of God can go further than a convincing argument.

Our witness should present the gospel message in some simple way.

Everyone needs to reach a point where they realize that they were created for a relationship with God, but that they, like everyone else, are a sinner in need of a savior, and that Jesus died to reconcile us and restore us to that relationship with God. When talking about what led us to make a decision for Christ, we can mention how we were convicted of the truth of the Gospel.

Be aware of what God has done throughout your life.

God may have taken us through situations that are similar to what those we talk to may be experiencing. These points in our life could be the opening God gives us to talk to others about him. In these cases, start with what you share in common to show the grace of God that is available to them. That may lead later to giving your conversion story, but the main thing is to point them to Christ. If the person has expressed a need or difficulty, always ask if you can pray for them and if they say "yes", pray right then and there for their situation. That shows love and often touches a person and helps them to open up to God, and that is what we are trying to stir, an openness to God.