

We each have a story, it is our story. Today we consider how we might tell that story in a way that highlights what Jesus has done in bringing you to himself.

One of the most effective ways that we can share our faith in Jesus is by telling our story. Why effective? For several reasons: a) your story is important; b) you know your own story, so it is easy to tell; c) it is a little more difficult for someone to reject your story: ‘that didn’t happen!’ (a bit arrogant to tell you that what happened to you, didn’t happen!); and d) people like to hear stories – they are engaging and often easy to relate too.

That said, it is helpful to be clear and thought-out in the way that you tell your story. Let’s consider how we put together a helpful Christian testimony.

### A ‘Christian’ Testimony

Your ‘testimony’ is your life story – what has happened and perhaps what you value. Your ‘Christian testimony’ is the story of Christ and what he has done in your life.

**As such for your *Christian* testimony to be helpful, it should be a testimony to Jesus using you as the example!**

*Question: Can you think of any examples in the Bible of s Christian testimony?*

The Apostle Peter helpfully challenges Christians to be ready to speak about Jesus when he says:

*‘Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have’ – 1 Peter 3:15*

A keyway of being ready to speak about your hope, is to know how to talk about Jesus personally and convincingly (under God). What this looks like will vary from person to person:

- It could be about your journey in becoming a Christian (also known as a ‘conversion story’).
- It could be a way in which God has shown up, moved or worked in your life.
- It could tell of a great struggle you experienced and the story of how God helped you through it.
- It could involve different incidents that make far more sense to you after reflecting on them.

### Writing a ‘Christian testimony’

Whilst it is your story (and therefore you should know it best), it is helpful to write out your story—not for the purpose of memorizing or sharing it verbatim, but because it helps to put into words some of the important and interesting details of your relationship with Christ.

There are some brief tips. It is helpful to:

- be personal, not preachy.
- use the Word of God (a verse that means something important to you).

- remember that the *outcome* is more important than the *process*. (The end result should be more emphasised than the journey to get there!)
- keep it short (if written, not more than 500 words).
- consider using a prop (that is easily obtainable – so that you can give your testimony anywhere e.g. napkin, pen/pencil/glasses, keys etc.)
- have a good opening sentence.
- have an invitation or a challenge (e.g. tell others)
- be honest.
- ***Above all...be Christ-centred. Keep Christ central (remember it is a testimony to Jesus using you as an example).***

In formulating what you could say, there are some questions that might be helpful to answer for yourself (adapted from the questions the *Navigators*<sup>1</sup> ask):

1. Before you met/knew Christ, what were some of your needs, what was lacking, or what was missing in your life?
2. What solutions for your life did you try that didn't work?
3. What were the circumstances that caused you to consider Christ?
4. What was it/is it about Christ that you most value? (helpful in making sure you cover what he did for you)
5. How did you come to place your trust in Christ (and this is a good place to think about how the gospel has impacted you)?
6. Can you think of an example of how Christ met your needs or how he is now contributing to your life?

### Structuring your Christian testimony

Here are some suggestions about how to structure your Christian testimony<sup>2</sup>:

#### 'Before and After' Model

Before:

How:

After:

Invitation:

#### 'Always Believed' Model

The Present:

The Past:

The Gospel Facts:

Invitation:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.navpress.com>

<sup>2</sup> These structures are thanks to Stephen Abbott, *Guidelines for sharing YOUR story!* 1995.

*A comment about the invitation.* As you lay out what Christ has done for you, it will quite naturally lead to the question of 'what next?' or 'so what?'. If the person you are giving your Christian testimony to is interested, moved or called then it would seem strange to stop there and not issue an invitation to find out more - i.e. 'Well that is my story, would you like to hear more?'. Perhaps the invitation should actually be a challenge - i.e. 'Given what I have told you, can I invite you to consider what Jesus has done for you?' or 'Would you like me to help you become one of Jesus' mates as well?'

Most of the time, an invitation and challenge will lead first to further questions. Praise God. What a great conversation to continue.

And in time, God willing, to the person accepting Jesus as their Lord.

### **Prayer**

And of course, remember at every step you are not alone. You are telling the story of what God has done through Jesus in your life. Christians can speak about their faith knowing that the Holy Spirit will be interceding for them.

So, pray that God will work through you in what you say. Pray for opportunities to share your story. Pray for those who you tell your story too, that they might be open to Jesus and one day have their own Christian testimony.