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How to Share Your Personal Testimony

The Power of a Personal Testimony

- To overcome the enemy

    1. And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the *word of their testimony*; and they loved not their lives unto the death (Rev 12:11)

- Your testimony is powerful in the light of the great battle between good and evil.

    1. "Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience…. These precious acknowledgements to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christ-like life, have an *irresistible power* that works for the salvation of souls"[1]

Why a Testimony?[2]

- **It has authority.** You may not be able to answer many questions about the Bible; however, you are the only authority in the area of your experience with Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord.
- **It communicates.** It reaches out and expresses to people your very heart and life. You are not talking merely in theological terms, you are speaking about the things in life with which you are familiar. You are telling others what you have experienced with Jesus Christ.
- **It relates.** As you talk about your experiences with God, you are relating with people whose lives are like yours and who are seeking to understand the change that Jesus has brought about in your life.

Paul's Testimony

- Paul gives his testimony in Acts 22:1-16 and 26:9-23. He used a simple three-point outline:

    1. I have not always been a Christian
    2. but God showed me my need of Jesus Christ and I committed my life to Him
    3. and now my life is different

Three Main Elements of a Testimony[3]

- My life before I became a Christian
- How I became a Christian
- What Jesus Christ now means in my life

Note: Your testimony is not about the doctrines of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, it's first and foremost what Jesus means to you.

Guidelines[4]

- *Realise what is at stake: the destiny of the souls of men.* You are representing Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:20). If this is so, then your testimony is very important.
- *Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and guidance in preparing and presenting your testimony.* Because you may have a very brief encounter with a person, it is necessary for you to seek the Holy Spirit's leadership in saying the right things in the most attractive way.
- *Begin with an interesting, attention-getting sentence and close with a good conclusion.* Include relevant, thought provoking facts and experiences.
- *Give it in such a way that others will feel associated with you.* Emphasize those areas in your experience that you share in common with your prospect. Use elements from your experience that will enable them to see themselves in your life. Don't hesitate to mention a traumatic experience: accident, loss of a loved one, loss of a job, etc. The mention of these may draw you closer to your prospect and arouse their comments.
- *Be specific.* People remember specifics. Instead of saying: 'It is wonderful to know the Lord,' tell them what is wonderful. You could say: 'It is a wonderful feeling to go to bed at night knowing that if I don't waken in the morning, I will wake up in the resurrection.'
- *Be kind and tactful.* Never appear self-righteous. In deciding what to say, consider the background of your prospect.
- *Other positive factors to weave in your testimony* include the love and harmony that Christ can bring into the home and family, the relief from guilt that comes with forgiveness (Ps. 32:1, 2), the fortitude with which a Christian can face old age, terminal disease, or even death, etc.
- *You should always have a general outline already in your mind.* If you have an outline you can tailor your testimony to fit any situation: from giving it in 2-3 minutes to sharing it in an hour or more. You never know when or for how long you may be called on to give a testimony. Your testimony should <u>generally</u> be around 2-3 minutes.

Don'ts in Giving Your Testimony[5]

- *Don't glamorise sin* by telling about its pleasures or how wicked you used to be, or how you 'got away with it.' You may however emphasize the emptiness, guilt and misery you experienced as a result of sin. Note: A sinful past is not necessary for effective witnessing.[6]
- *Don't use Christian jargon.* Words such as "born again," "convicted," "converted," or phrases like "I walked down the aisle," "I was lost," or "I had a glorious experience" are meaningless to people who are unfamiliar with church vocabulary. Use words and phrases that will help others understand your testimony.
- *Don't speak critically or negatively about any other individual or group.* You are here to talk about Christ and try to lead a person to a saving knowledge of Christ.
- *Don't give the impression that the Christian life is a 'bed of roses.'* Some people give the impression that accepting Christ brings an end to life's problems and difficulties. If you have been a Christian for some time, you know that that is not true.
- *Don't give a bragamony.* Bragging about personal accomplishments does not glorify God. Paul said in Phil. 3:7, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted as loss for Christ." Boasting should be about Jesus Christ and what he has done. We don't have to give a long list of our sacrifices.

Practise Your Testimony[7]

- Identify the three points that should be included in your personal testimony
- Write out your testimony
- Read your testimony to a close friend and ask what he/she honestly thinks about it. Is it appealing? Too long? Does it elevate Jesus? Etc.
- Then share it with those the Lord brings along your path. Read 1 John 1:1-3. In these verses, John literally shares his testimony. Those things he had seen and heard, he shared with others.
- Some feel that preparing one's testimony is too mechanical. Actually, as you share your testimony and relive the experience, God through the Holy Spirit can give your testimony a new thrust, a new dynamic and a new meaning - refreshing your heart and life.

A Sample Testimony

As a young man I came from a broken home. My father left my mother before I was born. In my early childhood - during the Depression - my mother sought security. She met and married a man whom she thought would offer the security she so desperately needed. Their marriage was good for the first two years, but after losing his job, my stepdad turned to alcohol and became verbally and physically abusive. My mom held out for a few more years, but after 5 years of marriage and abuse, she filed for divorce. With all the turmoil at home, I turned to gangsterism, where I found acceptance and escape. This led me down a path of stealing, violence and drugs.

One day, after a major gang fight, I landed up in hospital with severe injuries. A very close primary school friend by the name of John visited me. We spent time catching up on the past. What stood out for me was that John was so content, so at peace. 'What drug is he on,' I thought, but dared not ask. As he was about to leave, he asked if he could offer a prayer. No one ever asked me that question before. I hesitantly agreed. His prayer was so simple and sincere. I just knew he was a genuine Christian. I longed for what John had. After his prayer he left the book *Steps to Christ* for me to read during my hospital stay. John said it would answer many questions about God. After he left, I paged through the first few chapters and decided to read the first one since I had nothing else to do. I was riveted. I read through the second and third chapters. As I read, God began speaking to my heart. I realised that I was a sinner in need of His saving grace. I invited Jesus into my life and a peace flooded my soul. I knew my sins were forgiven.

That was the best decision of my life. I have such a sense of joy and fulfillment now. I cannot say that my life is perfect and that I have not made any mistakes, but I do know that I am daily growing into Jesus' likeness. One thing I can certainly say, having walked with Jesus these past 2 years, is that He is **always** faithful. He has helped, guided and blessed me. Now my life has *real* meaning.

Endnotes

1 Desire of Ages, p. 347

2 Taken from website: http://www.parkheightsbaptist.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/My-Personal-Testimony.pdf. Last accessed Sept 2013.

3 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Witnessing for Christ. Hagerstown: Review & Herald, p. 47.

4 Taken from website: http://www.makeitclearnow.org/soulwinning.html - last accessed Sept 2013; and Witnessing for Christ, pp. 47-49.

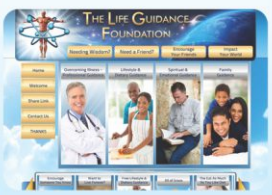
5 Ibid

6 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Witnessing for Christ. Hagerstown: Review & Herald, p. 44

7 Taken from website: http://associate.com/texts/About_Your_Testimony.html. Last accessed Sept 2013.

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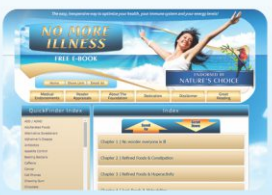
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Sharing Your Personal Testimony

Worksheet

Write out your testimony

1. MY PAST. Briefly describe your life before you met Jesus.

2. HOW I FOUND JESUS. How you found Jesus or how He found you.

3. MY LIFE NOW. How blessed you have been since you gave your life to Jesus.