

How to Write Your Spiritual Autobiography

Keep it Simple...stick to three points

This is very effective in communicating your personal testimony. Sticking to a simple outline helps focus on who you were **before** you trusted Christ, **how** you surrendered to him, and the difference **since** you've been walking with him.

- **Before:**

Simply tell what your life was like before you gave it to Christ. What were you searching for before coming to know Christ? What were/was the key problem, emotion, situation or attitude you were dealing with? What motivated you? What were your actions? How did you try to satisfy your inner needs? (i.e. loneliness, fear of death, insecurity. You may have tried something like work, money, drugs, relationships, sports, sex, etc.)

- **How:**

How did you decide to give your life to Christ? What were the events and circumstances that caused you to consider Christ as the solution to your searching? Take time to identify the steps that brought you to the point of trusting Christ. Where were you? What was happening at the time? What people or problems influenced your decision?

- **Since:**

How has your life in Christ made a difference? How has his forgiveness impacted you? How have your thoughts, attitudes and emotions changed? Share how Christ is meeting your needs and what a relationship with him means to you now.

- **Other questions to consider:**

If you had a time of “recommitment”, when and what was that like?

Was there someone(s) who has been particularly positively influential in your life?

Is there a particular section of Scripture that has been especially meaningful to you?

Where do you see yourself fitting in here @SEMC and other ministries?

Important Things to Remember

- Stick to the point. Your conversion and new life in Christ should be the main points.
- Be specific. Include events, genuine feelings and personal insights that clarify your main point. This makes your testimony tangible - something others can relate to.
- Be current. Tell what is happening in your life with God now, today.
- Be honest. Don't exaggerate or dramatize your life for effect. The simple truth of what God has done in your life is all the **Holy Spirit** needs to convict others of their sin and convince them of his love and grace.

Some Words You May Want to Explain...

It's easy to get caught up using "Christianese" phrases. However, many of them are "foreign" or "churchy" words that can confuse or even alienate listeners unintentionally. Be real. Use everyday language. If you choose to use words commonly said in church settings, take time to explain what they mean. It will help everyone listening to understand and buy into what you are trying to communicate.

Here are some examples:

"Born again" alternatives: spiritual birth, spiritual renewal, to come alive spiritually, given a new life

"Saved" alternatives: rescued, delivered, found hope for my life

"Lost" alternatives: heading in the wrong direction, separated from God, had no hope

"Gospel" alternatives: God's message to humankind, the good news about Christ's purpose on earth

"Sin" alternatives: rejecting God, missing the mark, falling away from the right path, a crime against God's law, disobedience to God

"Repent" alternatives: admit a wrong, change one's mind, heart or attitude, make a decision to turn away, turn around, a 180 degree turn from what you were doing

Lord willing this gives you a kick-start in prepping your testimony. Have a great time reflecting on where you've come from and where you are heading. Most of all, enjoy being used by God to offer everyone who listens the chance to find the same amazing grace you have. Give'm heaven!

Adapted from 'How To Write Your Christian Testimony' by Mary Fairchild (About.com)

Your Testimony: How To Prepare and Tell Your Story

I hope that the following page helps you as you prepare to write out your Testimony. I want you to realize that it is possible that not all of these questions apply to your specific journey to faith in Jesus, but do your best to fill in (either sentences or point-form) the following parts. Then once you have filled in all the points, begin crafting it into written, story, form.

Part 1: Before I Accepted Christ

1. What was my life like that will relate most to the non-Christian?
2. What did my life revolve around the most? What did I get my security or happiness from? (The non-Christian is relying on something external to give himself/herself happiness)
3. How did those areas begin to let me down?

Part 2: How I Received Christ

1. When was the first time I heard the gospel? (Or when was I exposed to dynamic Christianity)
2. What were my initial reactions?
3. When did my attitude begin to turn around? Why?
4. What were the final struggles that went through my mind just before I accepted Christ?
5. Why did I go ahead and accept Christ?

Part 3: After I Accepted Christ

1. Specific changes and illustrations about the changes Christ has made:
2. Why am I motivated differently?

Helpful Hints:

1. Write the way you speak; make the testimony yours.
2. Practice this over and over until it becomes natural.
3. Shoot for short – 3-5 minutes. At that length, it's easily something you can put into a conversation without it becoming a monologue.

An example: Look at Paul's testimony as you consider how to tell your story.

His life before (Acts 22:1-5)

- Paul describes what he thought and did before he became a believer.
- Your goal: to give specific, yet appropriate, examples of what your life was like (attitudes, needs, problems) before Christ.
- Remember that examples you give will establish you as a credible witness in the minds of non-Christians. However, avoid a religious focus. (You want to make it about Jesus and your need for Him.) Don't spend a great amount of time talking about church activities or denominations before your life began to change. Likewise, avoid being explicit and sensational in speaking of drugs, immorality, crime or drunkenness.

How (Acts 22:6-11)

- Paul explained how he became a believer.
- Your goal: to allow the listener to walk away with a clear understanding of how you became a Christian and how he or she can trust Christ as the payment for their sins.
- Be careful not to use clichés and church language. Talk in terms they'll understand.

After (Acts 22:12-21)

- Paul explained how becoming a believer changed his life.
- Your goal: to explain specific ways Christ has changed your life -- to show that having Christ in your life really does make a difference!
- Avoid using general statements such as “I have so much peace now.” Be specific. It is the Holy Spirit’s responsibility to draw someone to Christ, but you want to communicate your story in such a way to show the listener that your life is different and more meaningful with Christ.