

Learn to Share Your Personal Testimony

The following article is a slightly revised article from the July 2008 “The Gideon” magazine. It was written by Bonnie Devall of Louisiana for the Gideon International Auxiliary, but it works well for all true Christians.

Praise the Lord for calling us into The Auxiliary! What a privilege it is to serve God and to place the Word as He has allowed. There is another facet of The Auxiliary that I would like to talk about. Not only are we to be men and women who place the Word, we are to be men and women who Witness.

There is a testimony in the back of the book, *Share Jesus Without Fear* (a Gideon International publication), that reminded me of several things. First of all, I remembered that God loves the whole world. No sinner is beyond the reach of His love or beyond the cleansing blood of Christ, and there is no one to whom we should not witness.

Secondly, we cannot fail when we witness. You see, our responsibility is not to win the lost, but to simply share God’s love. It is God who brings men to salvation. Jesus said in John 6:44a, “*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him ...*” We can only fail when we do not witness.

Thirdly, I was reminded that many times, we do not realize the effect of our witness. We should never think that we are not “cut out” to witness, or that we do not have witnessing skills. God will take your words and actions and use them in His plan and in His timing.

Finally, I was reminded that there is a powerful witnessing tool that we each have, but that we seldom use. That tool is our own personal testimony. What better way to get across to lost people that God will change their lives than to tell them how your life was changed? You have a story to tell, and it is a story of God’s changing and saving power.

Witnessing is personal, face-to-face, one-on-one, and person-to-person. When you share your personal testimony, you show that your faith has substance, that there is a reality behind it. It is not an opinion or an attitude that has helped you, but a life changing encounter with the living God. You show that there really is a God who stands behind His promises - you are the proof of God’s grace! People will realize that if God changed your life, then He can change theirs, too.

Has anyone ever asked you, “Why are you different?” or “Why don’t you panic like everyone else?” The Apostle Peter tells us to, “...*be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.*” (1 Peter 3:15b)

It is not important that your testimony be graphic or dramatic; but it is important that your testimony be prepared. Not that you memorize it, but that it becomes a natural part of sharing your faith. Many people are not ready to be convinced that they need Christ, but they can often be led to talk about the Gospel after an inoffensive presentation of a personal testimony.

Your testimony doesn’t have to be complex; a simple testimony is probably more effective. When Jesus healed the blind man, his testimony was very simple: “...one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.” (John 9:25b)

As you share your testimony, it should have a “before,” a “how,” and an “after.”

Sharing the “Before”

First give a short sketch of what your life was before you became a Christian. Include what made you aware of your sinful condition and your need for Christ. (Give specific examples *only* if you feel comfortable in doing so.) Most people tend to rationalize why they don’t need Christ, so share with them how you used to justify yourself. Then tell them how you came to realize that there was only one justification - Christ’s finished work on the cross.

Sharing the “How”

Tell specifically how you came to Christ. Communicate the Gospel clearly and briefly. Tell how you came to understand what the penalty for sin is, and then share the Good News that Jesus has paid the sin debt for them.

Sharing the “After”

Share the benefits of salvation. People need to hear about the difference that Jesus has made in your life here on earth, and that now you have the assurance of eternal life with Christ. People often comment on the last thing you say, so if you end in this way, you have directed the conversation to the subject of eternal life. The door is then open for you to present the plan of salvation to them and to ask them the all-important question: “Would you like to receive Christ as your personal Saviour?”

If you have never done so, why don’t you write out your testimony? Begin to use it as part of your witness for the Lord, and trust in God to give the increase.