

A privileged experience

One of the most exciting moments in the life of a Christian is when asked by an unchurched friend to give an explanation of the Christian faith. Such a privileged moment should not be thought of as an uncommon event in the life of a committed believer.

When the Lord said to His disciples in Acts 1:8, *“You will tell people about Me everywhere”*, He revealed to them their life’s mission on earth. Our “story-telling” is not to be a one-time isolated event in life. Telling others about Jesus is why we are here. We are to live our lives as His witnesses – “His-story” tellers.

Most people become Christians through friends who explain their faith to them in ways that are non-threatening, simple and clear, resulting in understanding.

What two things does the Lord instruct you to do that will make it possible for you to “be” an effective witnesses?

1 Peter 3:15 _____

God instructs us to always be ready (equipped, willing and available) to give an appropriate explanation of the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ to those who ask. This is called sharing your testimony. Your personal testimony consists simply of the facts surrounding your first encounter with Jesus, your subsequent conversion and ways your life has changed.

This session is dedicated to showing you how easily you can prepare your testimony (your story), expressing in simple and clear terms how the Lord drew you to Himself and the wonderful changes He has subsequently brought about in your life.

In this session we will look at:

- Biblical examples
- Preparing your story
- Outlining your story; and
- Ted’s story.

Biblical examples

The Apostle Paul was someone who was always ready to give an explanation of his faith in Christ. Wherever he went, no matter what was happening around him, he was constantly looking for opportunities to share his faith. The incident recorded in Acts 26:1-23 demonstrates Paul's readiness and capability to share his faith in Christ.

While reading this passage you will notice that Paul's testimony consists of three parts:

Part 1: Paul's life – **before** meeting Christ (v1-11)

Part 2: Paul's life – his **conversion** encounter with Christ (v12-18)

Part 3: Paul's life – his **post-conversion** life (v19-23)

Preparing your story

Your faith story is as unique as you are – there is no other story like your story. That makes your faith story very special, and, that makes your story worth telling.

The following is a list of things to consider that will help you in the preparation of your Good News story.

- a. Pray and ask God for wisdom before you write (James 1:5)
- b. Develop your testimony around a three point outline:
 - 1) State attitudes and actions *before* you became a Christian
 - 2) Relate your growing understanding and circumstances leading to your conversion encounter with Christ
 - 3) List changes in your attitudes and actions *after* you surrendered your life to Christ.
- c. Keep your testimony short (a maximum of one A4 hand written page).
 - 1) If you became a Christian as a child, emphasise point "b. 3)" above
 - 2) Be specific
 - 3) Give enough details to arouse interest
 - 4) Use Scripture only if it strengthens your testimony (don't preach)
 - 5) Edit and rewrite until it communicates simply, clearly and logically
 - 6) Be sure to define Christian terms that unchurched people might not understand. Where possible, refrain from using Christian jargon
 - 7) Read sample testimonies, if available, and listen to others give their testimonies to help you find ways to improve yours
 - 8) Memorise it
 - 9) Keep copies handy to give away when opportunities arise.

Outlining your story

List in point form:

A. Your attitudes and actions before you became a Christian

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____
- g) _____

B. Circumstances that led to your conversion

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____
- g) _____

C. Changes that took place in your life after receiving Christ – your new attitudes and actions.

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____
- g) _____

The next step is to string together all the above points into a smooth, free-flowing story that stirs interest in the minds of listeners. Invite your mentor to offer fine tuning suggestions. When you think your story is ready to go public, make copies and ask

close friends to read your story and evaluate it for clarity, simplicity and understanding.

When no other improvements can be made to your testimony, make copies and keep them on hand to use when the Lord gives you opportunities to share your story.

Ted's story

Some time ago at Southport in Queensland, Australia, the Lord ministered through me when I shared "my story" with Ted Hodgson, a cleaner at the Police Station. At that time I was in service as a police officer in that state.

Ted subsequently yielded his life to the Lord and followed the above suggestions in preparing his story.

He wrote:

As a child I went to church and Sunday school. I didn't really understand what it was all about. My past life was full of ups and downs with moments of joy and disappointment. There wasn't any real purpose in my life. I used to enjoy most forms of gambling very much.

A person I came to know at work told me about Jesus and His love for me. One day he asked me if I would like to invite Jesus to come into my life and I said, "Yes." So on that day I was born again (spiritually) and my whole life began to change.

Since that day I no longer have the desire to gamble. I read the Bible every day and I enjoy it very much. I try to obey God at all times and I have discovered that He answers all my prayers. I have been baptised and I now belong to a loving church family. I read a prayer that tells of how I feel about the Lord Jesus Christ. It reads:

*Lord Jesus Christ, my heart is yours,
My mind is yours; my whole being is yours,
You are my King, my Creator,
And my everlasting Lord, Amen.*

I am very happy in my new life and so glad that God accepted me into His family.

Ted Hodgson
(Ted has since gone to be with the Lord)

Summary

By God's grace and under His guidance, your readiness and willingness to tell your story can help and inspire someone else to take their own steps towards experiencing a new life in Jesus Christ.

When you prepare your testimony, remain "on the ready" to give an explanation of your faith, as the Lord creates opportunities.



