

Preparing a Three-Minute Testimony

Easy Steps to Share Your Testimony

The Reason In 1 Peter 3:15, we are called to "...sanctify (set apart) the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear..."

One of the most effective ways to be ready to give that defense is to be prepared ahead of time in case someone asks you why your life is different than theirs or what makes you different than others they know or in case God just brings someone who needs to hear.

You may have heard it said that you are a living letter for Jesus, a letter written not with ink and paper but crafted by the Holy Spirit on the pages of your heart and life, (2 Cor 3:3) and your letter may be all of the Gospel that someone may ever read. Sometimes you share by your everyday life and sometimes with words! The three-minute testimony has much benefit.

The three-minute idea causes thoughts to be concise and keeps in mind the listener and how long they might be attentive, and it helps in leaving out things that are not critical to your story.

The Purpose In preparing a brief and precise account of your own personal story of conversion and why you have hope, you have the help you need to share the interesting details of how, when, and why simply and clearly you gave your life to Christ. This serves as a "door opener," not to be used to "convince" someone they need Jesus, but a means of getting people interested in thinking about Jesus and creating an openness to talking about Him after hearing what He's done for us.

A Biblical Example In Acts 25 and 26 we find the Apostle Paul being brought before King Agrippa and the king said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." As Paul spoke, his words were simple, logical, and clear indicating his life before he met Christ, how he met Christ and what his life was like after Christ. He stood there to give a defense of the hope that was in him. His account of his conversion takes about three minutes to read aloud. You might read this account and use it as a guide for writing your own account of things.

The Contents – there are four main parts to your three-minute testimony

1st Minute – Before meeting Jesus – a brief general statement of what your life was like before you met Jesus. These are general facts, no gross details necessary. I was addicted, I was an alcoholic, etc; these actions stemming from deep inner unmet needs. Things like – no purpose, no friends, feeling unloved, loneliness, meaninglessness to life, fear.

2nd Minute – How you met Jesus – this is where you would state the events and circumstances that brought about your conversion; the steps you took, a verse of Scripture that hit home, if something miraculous happened or perhaps the answered prayer. Paul's witnessing of the brilliant light while traveling is an example of that.

You would want to include the gospel here – all have sinned, sin's penalty, Jesus paid that penalty, must receive Jesus.

3rd Minute – After meeting Jesus – again a brief description of how your life has changed, what a difference He has made in your life, how He has filled the deep needs you had prior to becoming a Christian. Perhaps how you’ve found purpose in life in living for Jesus, and how you’d never change or go back to the old way of life. You might share how life isn’t perfect and never will be, and there are difficulties – like Paul experienced, but instead of bitterness there is joy, instead of emptiness there is life, instead of fear there is peace, but that there are no regrets for having made this decision. Most importantly that you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you know that you have eternal life.

Call to Action – Ask them to take some form of action with you, perhaps it’s to attend church with you. You might even agree to pick them up and take them with you or meet them there. You might ask them how you might pray with them and even better ask them if they would pray with you to accept Jesus.

The Prayer to God: I confess that I am a sinner, I am in need of a Savior, forgive me for my sins, come into my heart and fill me with Your Holy Spirit.

Helpful Hints to Writing

Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you as you compile your testimony.

It’s not necessary to memorize the whole thing word for word, but perhaps memorizing key words and their order so your account is fluid and transitional.

Keep within the three-minute time limit

Boldly speak about Jesus because He is the most important element of your testimony.

You might consider beginning your testimony with an attention getting sentence or story.

Be positive all the way through your account from beginning to the end and perhaps include the humorous too.

Be accurate – edit and rewrite if necessary.

Make it sound conversational. Avoid literary sounding statements. Use informal language. Share about what happened to you, don’t preach about what should happen to them. Say “I” and “me,” not “you.” This helps keep the testimony warm and personal.

Avoid religious words, phrases, and jargon. Don’t assume the listener knows what you mean by terms such as sin, accepted Christ, or even Christian.

Generalize so more people can identify with your story. Don’t name specific churches, denominations, or groups. Avoid using dates and ages. Include some humor and human interest. When a person smiles or laughs, it reduces tension. Humor is disarming and increases attention.

One- or two-word pictures increase interest. Don’t just say, “Bill shared the gospel with me.” You might briefly describe the setting so a person listening can visualize it.

Explain how Christ met or is meeting your deep inner needs, but do not communicate that all your struggles and problems ended at conversion. Sound adult, not juvenile. Reflect an adult point of view even if you were converted at an early age. Avoid dogmatic and mystical statements that skeptics can question, such as, “I prayed and God gave me a job,” or “God said to me.” Simplify—reduce “clutter.”

Remember that it is a privilege and an honor to share the things that Jesus has done for you with someone, to make the defense and give an account for your hope and faith. This is the work that God’s Word goes forth to accomplish and doesn’t come back void in its mission.

Remember too that the accuser of the brethren – Satan – has been cast down and, “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.” Revelation 12:10-11