

STAGE: WITNESS

CRAFT YOUR TESTIMONY

LEVEL 1 — COMPREHENSIVE EXPANDED EDITION

Real Testimonies. Radical Transformations.

Complete Guide to Crafting a Powerful Personal Testimony: From Your Story to Gospel Witness

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Level 1 — Craft Your Testimony

Comprehensive Expanded Edition. Complete Guide to Crafting a Powerful Personal Testimony: From Your Story to Gospel Witness. Master the Art of Sharing Your Faith Story — Including Three-Minute Testimony Format, Jesus-Centered Structure, Multiple Examples, Templates, Practice Exercises, and Advanced Techniques for Maximum Gospel Impact. For New Believers Learning to Share Their Story, Christians Wanting to Be More Effective Witnesses, and Anyone Ready to Turn Personal Transformation into Gospel Witness.

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INTRODUCTION

Your Story Matters

Your personal testimony is one of the most powerful Gospel tools you possess.

Why?

Because it's:

- Undeniable (it happened to you)
- Personal (you lived it)
- Powerful (God changed you)
- Relatable (others see themselves)
- Authentic (it's real, not theory)

Your testimony is the bridge between skepticism and faith for many people.

The Power of Personal Testimony

People believe their own story more than anyone else's.

When you share your testimony:

- Skeptics hear reality, not theology
- Struggling believers gain hope
- Seekers see practical Gospel power
- Communities are built
- Faith multiplies

Your transformed life is proof the Gospel works.

PART ONE — TESTIMONY FOUNDATIONS

What Is a Testimony?

A testimony is your story of encountering and following Jesus.

It includes:

- Your life before faith
- How you met Jesus
- How Jesus changed you
- Who you are now
- Why it matters

But it's more than just sharing facts. **It's inviting others into your spiritual journey.**

Biblical Basis for Personal Testimony

The Bible is full of testimonies:

Psalm 107:2:

“Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story — those he redeemed from the hand of the foe.”

The redeemed are commanded to tell their story.

Revelation 12:11:

“They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”

Personal testimony is identified as a weapon that defeats spiritual darkness.

Why Your Story Works

Personal stories have power:

1. They're Undeniable

No one can argue with your personal experience. They can debate theology. They can't debate what happened to you.

2. They're Relatable

People see themselves in your story. If God worked in someone like you, God can work in them.

3. They Demonstrate God's Power

Your changed life is evidence God is real and powerful.

4. They Create Hope

People in struggle hear: “God changed this person. God can change me.”

5. They Overcome Skepticism

Intellectual arguments are met with intellectual counters. Personal transformation speaks louder than arguments.

PART TWO — DISCOVERING YOUR STORY (EXPANDED)

Reflecting on Your Journey

Before you craft your testimony, reflect deeply on your journey.

Reflection Questions

About your life before Jesus:

- What was I looking for?
- What filled my time and thoughts?
- What problem couldn't I solve?
- What emptiness did I feel?
- What did I think would make me happy?
- How did I feel spiritually?
- What lies did I believe?

About your turning point:

- How did I first hear about Jesus?
- What convinced me?
- What was the moment I decided?
- Who influenced me?
- What was I afraid of?
- What gave me courage?

About your life after Jesus:

- What immediately changed?
- What changed gradually?
- What freed me?
- What brought me peace?
- What gave me purpose?
- How do I see life differently now?

Identifying Your Turning Point

Your turning point is crucial. **It's the hinge of your story.**

The Turning Point Should Be:

- **Clear:** A specific moment or event (not vague)
- **Real:** Actually happened, not idealized

- **Decisive:** A genuine decision point
- **Significant:** Changed the trajectory of your life
- **Understandable:** Others can grasp what happened

Examples of Turning Points:

- Moment you prayed and received Christ
- Moment you finally surrendered control
- Crisis that drove you to faith
- Conversation that changed your mind
- Event that broke you open to God
- Realization that changed everything

The Before Picture

Paint a clear picture of your life before Jesus.

Don't:

- Glorify sin
- Be inappropriately explicit
- Shame yourself excessively
- Make it all dark and terrible

Do:

- Be honest about the problem
- Show the emptiness or pain
- Help people understand your need
- Paint a relatable picture

What to Include:

- **Emotional state:** How did you feel?
- **Spiritual state:** What were you seeking?
- **Behavioral patterns:** What consumed your time?
- **Relationships:** How were they affected?
- **Purpose:** What gave you meaning (or didn't)?

The Turning Point

This is your hinge moment.

Essential Elements:

- **What triggered it:** Event, conversation, crisis, realization

- **What you were thinking/feeling:** Your mental and emotional state
- **The decision:** What you chose
- **The transaction:** What happened (prayer, commitment, etc.)
- **The moment:** When you knew something changed

Example Turning Point:

“I was at my lowest. Three failed relationships, a career I hated, emptiness I couldn’t fix. My mom invited me to church — I almost didn’t go. But something in me knew I had nothing to lose. That Sunday, the pastor talked about Jesus loving me just as I was. And in that moment, I realized I’d been trying to fix myself my whole life, and I was done. I prayed right there and asked Jesus to take my life. I felt this weight lift. It sounds dramatic, but it was the most real moment of my life.”

The After Picture

Show how Jesus changed you.

What to Include:

- **Immediate changes:** What shifted right away?
- **Relational changes:** How did relationships change?
- **Perspective shifts:** How do you see life differently?
- **New direction:** What purpose emerged?
- **Character development:** How are you becoming different?
- **Ongoing journey:** This isn’t finished

Be Honest About the Process:

Not everything changed overnight. Show that you’re still growing. This makes it more believable.

PART THREE — THE THREE-PART STRUCTURE (EXPANDED)

Part 1: Before Jesus (30 seconds – 2 minutes)

Paint the picture of life without Jesus.

What to Share:

- **Your seeking:** What were you looking for?
- **Your struggle:** What was the problem?
- **Your emptiness:** What was missing?
- **Your understanding at the time:** What did you believe?

What NOT to Share:

- **Excessive detail:** You don't need to describe everything
- **Graphic content:** Keep it appropriate
- **Shame spiraling:** Confess, don't flagellate
- **Self-condemnation:** Acknowledge sin, don't wallow

Formula:

"I was [circumstance/emotional state]. I tried [attempted solutions], but nothing worked. I felt [emotional state]. I believed [what you believed about life/God]. I was searching for [what you were seeking]."

Part 2: The Turning Point (30 seconds – 1 minute)

The hinge moment when everything changed.

Structure:

- **What happened:** The event/conversation/realization
- **Your response:** What you did
- **The commitment:** How you decided
- **The moment of change:** When you knew

Example:

"My friend invited me to a church event. I was skeptical, but I went. During the message, the pastor talked about Jesus' love for me specifically. Something broke open in me. I realized I'd been trying to be good enough my whole life, and I never would be. So I prayed right there and asked Jesus to forgive me and take my life. And I felt something I'd never felt before — peace."

Part 3: After Jesus (30 seconds – 1 minute)

How your life changed.

Structure:

- **Immediate change:** What shifted right away?
- **Relational change:** How did relationships improve?
- **Perspective change:** How do you see life differently?
- **Ongoing journey:** Where you are now

Example:

“That peace stayed. My relationships started healing. I stopped being so angry all the time. I found purpose in serving others. I’m not perfect — I still struggle sometimes. But I have hope now. I know I’m loved by God no matter what. And I’m becoming the person I always wanted to be. The Gospel is real.”

Examples from Different Life Situations**Example 1: From Addiction to Freedom**

Before: “I got addicted to painkillers after an injury. It started innocent — prescription medication. But soon I needed more. I was lying to doctors, stealing pills, spending money I didn’t have. My family was falling apart. I knew I was destroying everything, but I couldn’t stop.”

Turning Point: “My wife gave me an ultimatum — get help or we’re done. I was terrified. I went to rehab. While there, a chaplain asked me if I believed in God. I didn’t. But I was desperate. I started praying — really praying. And I felt God’s presence. I committed my life to Jesus.”

After: “I’m four years sober now. My marriage is restored. My kids call me dad again without fear. I’m serving at my church helping other people in recovery. I still have struggles, but they’re not destroying me anymore. Jesus gave me my life back.”

Example 2: From Skepticism to Faith

Before: “I was a hard-core skeptic. I believed science explained everything. Christians seemed ignorant to me. I had no need for God. I had a good job, friends, no major problems. Life was fine.”

Turning Point: “My father died suddenly. And I had nothing to comfort me. My atheist friends offered platitudes. But a Christian coworker asked if I needed anything. I said no, but she started praying for me. At the funeral, I saw how that family had hope — actual hope. I started reading the Bible to prove them wrong. But instead, I found Jesus. I realized that my intellectual arguments against God were actually emotional defenses. I was afraid.”

After: “My faith has completely changed how I live. I have purpose now. I’m not just chasing success. I’m seeking to live for something bigger than myself. I’m still intellectual — Christianity makes sense to me. But now it’s not just head knowledge. It’s a relationship with Jesus that changes everything.”

PART FOUR — JESUS AT THE CENTER (EXPANDED)

Why Jesus Must Be Central

Your testimony is **NOT** about you. **It's about Jesus.**

The danger: Making your transformation the point. **The truth:** Jesus is the point. Your transformation proves Jesus is real.

Making Jesus the Hero

Jesus should be the main character of your testimony.

Not This:

"I was such a mess, but I decided to get my life together. I went to church, I started reading the Bible, I prayed. And I changed myself."

But This:

"I was such a mess, I couldn't fix myself. I finally surrendered to Jesus and asked Him to change me. And He did. Only Jesus could have changed me like this."

See the difference? One is about your willpower. **The other is about Jesus' power.**

Gospel Clarity

Your testimony should make clear **how someone could have what you have.**

Include:

- **God's love for them:** "God loves you so much He sent Jesus"
- **Their need:** "We're all sinners separated from God"
- **Jesus' provision:** "Jesus died and rose again to bridge that gap"
- **The response:** "You can receive Jesus right now"

Example:

"What changed everything for me was understanding that God loved me even though I was broken. I realized that Jesus died for me specifically — to forgive me, to restore me, to give me life. So I prayed and asked Jesus to forgive me and take control of my life. And He did. If you're struggling like I was, Jesus loves you too. You can have this peace and purpose. You just need to decide to follow Him."

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Mistake 1: Unclear About How Jesus Changed You

Avoid: Saying what changed without explaining Jesus' role

Instead: Connect every change to Jesus

- “Jesus set me free from addiction”
- “Jesus healed my marriage”
- “Jesus gave me purpose”

Mistake 2: Sounding Like You’re Bragging

Avoid: Making yourself sound better than others

Instead: Show humility and God’s grace

- “Jesus is still working on me”
- “I’m not perfect, but I’m transformed”
- “This is all Jesus, not me”

Mistake 3: Being Vague About the Gospel

Avoid: Leaving out how people can respond

Instead: Be clear about the Gospel

- What did you do? (Prayed, confessed, believed, etc.)
- What did Jesus do for you? (Forgave, saved, changed, etc.)
- How can they respond? (Prayer, confession, faith commitment)

PART FIVE — THE THREE-MINUTE TESTIMONY

The Magic of Three Minutes

Three minutes is:

- Long enough to be meaningful
- Short enough to hold attention
- Easy to remember
- Appropriate for most settings
- Flexible (can be shortened or expanded)

Structure and Timing

Breakdown of a three-minute testimony:

Introduction (15 seconds):

"Hi, I'm [name]. I want to share my testimony."

Before Jesus (45 seconds):

"Before I knew Jesus, I was [situation]. I felt [emotion]. I was searching for [what]. Nothing worked because [problem]."

Turning Point (45 seconds):

"One day [event]. I realized [insight]. I prayed [prayer]. And Jesus [what Jesus did]."

After Jesus (60 seconds):

"Everything changed. [Specific changes]. Now I [how you live]. Jesus [central truth]. If you're struggling like I was, Jesus can [what He offers you]."

Closing (15 seconds):

"That's my story. Any questions?"

Writing Your Three-Minute Version

Exercise: Write It Out

Step 1: Write freely (no editing)

- Just get it all down
- Don't worry about length
- Capture the essence

Step 2: Read it aloud

- Does it flow?
- Does it feel natural?
- Is it too long?

Step 3: Edit ruthlessly

- Remove unnecessary details
- Tighten language
- Cut examples
- Keep only essentials

Step 4: Time it

- Read it aloud with timer
- Target: 180 seconds
- Adjust if needed

Practice and Refinement

Week 1: Memorize Structure

Don't memorize exact words. Memorize:

- Your main point of each section
- The progression of your story
- Key phrases that matter

Week 2: Practice Delivery

- Read aloud daily
- Record yourself
- Listen back critically
- Adjust
- Record again

Week 3: Share with Others

- Tell your spouse
- Tell a friend
- Tell your small group
- Get feedback
- Refine based on response

Week 4: Natural Delivery

- You now know your story well

- Deliver conversationally, not recited
- Make eye contact
- Vary your tone
- Let emotion show

Video Recording Your Testimony

Recording your testimony has benefits:

- You can share it widely
- You can watch and improve
- It creates a resource for others
- It's ready for opportunities

Recording Setup:

- **Location:** Well-lit, quiet space
- **Background:** Neutral or meaningful
- **Camera:** Phone is fine (good lighting crucial)
- **Audio:** External mic preferred
- **Framing:** Head and shoulders visible

Recording Checklist:

- Quiet location (no background noise)
- Good lighting
- Camera steady (use tripod)
- Dress appropriately
- Sit naturally
- Make “eye contact” (look at camera)
- Record multiple takes
- Watch playback and improve

PART SIX — EXAMPLES FOR DIFFERENT SITUATIONS (EXPANDED)

Example 1: From Addiction to Freedom (Full Text)

“My name is Marcus, and I want to tell you how Jesus changed my life.

For ten years, I was addicted to drugs. It started with pot in high school, moved to cocaine in college, and by my twenties I was using anything I could get. I lost job after job. My family stopped talking to me. I was homeless for two years. I had nothing. I wanted to die.

I hit rock bottom when I overdosed and nearly died. My mom found me. She called an ambulance. As I lay in that hospital bed, I knew I was going to die. And I was terrified. Not of death — I wanted to die. I was terrified because I knew I was going to hell.

My mom brought a pastor to visit me. I told him I was too far gone. He said, ‘Jesus doesn’t think so.’ He read me John 3:16. And something broke open in me. This pastor told me that Jesus died for me specifically — for my addiction, for my failures, for all of it. He asked if I wanted to pray. I did. I confessed my sins and asked Jesus to save me.

That moment changed everything. The craving didn’t instantly disappear, but something else happened — I had hope. For the first time in fifteen years, I had hope.

It’s been three years now. I’m sober. I have a job. I’m back in a relationship with my family. I’m serving at church helping other addicts. I’m still fighting, but I’m fighting with Jesus, not alone.

Jesus saved my life. Not just from death — He saved my life from meaninglessness. If you’re struggling with addiction or anything else, Jesus wants to save you too. He’s not done with you. You’re not too far gone. Jesus loves you, and He can change you like He changed me.”

Example 2: From Skepticism to Faith (Full Text)

“Hi, I’m David. I grew up in an atheist home. My parents didn’t believe in God, and neither did I. I was a scientist, a rational person. I believed in evidence and reason, not fairy tales about God.

But when I was thirty-two, my father died. And I had nothing. My worldview said that death was just the end — lights out, nothing. But that’s what terrified me. What if he just... ended? What comfort is there in that?

My grief drove me to questions I’d avoided my whole life. A Christian friend gave me a Bible and asked me to read it critically. I did. I was looking for mistakes to prove it wrong. Instead, I found Jesus.

I discovered that Christianity isn’t opposed to reason. It answers the deepest questions my reason was asking. Why is there something rather than nothing? Why do I have a conscience? Why does love matter? Why does justice matter?

And more than that, I encountered Jesus as a real person — not just a philosophical concept. I read the Gospels and saw a man who spoke truth, who loved radically, who challenged power, who died for others. A man who rose from the dead.

I prayed and asked Jesus to forgive me and be my Lord. And something shifted in me. I didn't lose my mind. I found truth.

My faith is more than reason, but it's not less than reason. It's reason completed by revelation. Now I see that Jesus is the most rational response to existence.

If you're a skeptic like I was, I challenge you — truly investigate Jesus. Don't dismiss what you haven't studied. Jesus can stand up to your hardest questions, and He might surprise you with His answer.”

PART SEVEN — TEMPLATES AND WORKSHEETS

Fill-in-the-Blank Testimony Template

MY TESTIMONY

My name is _____ and here's my story.

BEFORE JESUS

Before I met Jesus, I was _____.

I felt _____.

I was searching for _____.

I tried _____ but it didn't work.

What I believed: _____.

THE TURNING POINT

One day _____.

I realized _____.

I decided _____.

I prayed: "_____."

Jesus _____.

AFTER JESUS

Since I met Jesus, my life has changed.

Specifically, _____.

My perspective on life is now _____.

My relationships _____.

I'm still growing, but _____.

THE GOSPEL

What I understand now: _____.

What Jesus did for me: _____.

What this means for others: _____.

MY INVITATION

If you're struggling like I was, _____.

Jesus wants to _____.

You can _____.

Gospel Clarity Checklist

Does my testimony include:

- God's love for people?
- Recognition of sin/need?
- Jesus' death and resurrection?
- My personal decision to follow?
- Clear explanation of how to respond?
- Hope for what Jesus offers?

PART EIGHT — PRACTICING AND REFINING (EXPANDED)

Handling Emotions

Your testimony might trigger emotion — that's okay.

Don't:

- Be ashamed of tears
- Push emotions down
- Lose your message

Do:

- Let genuine emotion show
- Pause if you need to
- Take a breath
- Keep moving forward

Emotion makes testimony more powerful, not less.

Managing Difficult Questions

Common Questions:

“Why should I believe Jesus?” *Response:* “I believed because of [your reasons]. But I'd encourage you to investigate Jesus yourself.”

“What about [objection]?” *Response:* “That's a great question. I struggled with that too. Here's how I see it...”

“What if I mess up?” *Response:* “Jesus isn't about perfection. He's about transformation. I mess up still, but I have forgiveness and grace.”

PART NINE — DIFFERENT FORMATS

Written Testimony (500 words)

Expanded version with more detail, suitable for:

- Email
- Prayer letter
- Website
- Small group study

Social Media Version (60–80 words)

Super concise for:

- Instagram post
- Twitter thread
- Facebook post
- TikTok caption

Email Format

Includes:

- Personal greeting
- Your story
- Gospel invitation
- Call to action

PART TEN — ADVANCED TECHNIQUES

Hooks and Opening Lines

Strong opening lines:

- “I almost didn’t survive...”
- “I was searching for something...”
- “Nobody thought I’d change...”
- “If you’d known me five years ago...”
- “I used to believe...”

Handling Sensitive Topics

If your story involves:

- **Abuse:** Share that it happened, you healed, Jesus helped
- **Sexual sin:** Be honest but not graphic
- **Mental illness:** Normalize, show Jesus’ help
- **Family trauma:** Don’t expose/blame others

CONCLUSION

Your Testimony Is Your Tool

Your personal story is one of the most powerful Gospel tools you possess.

Use it:

- When invited to share
- In conversations
- In small groups
- On social media
- In writing
- With courage

Your testimony is powerful because it's real. It's yours. And Jesus is in it.

"They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. — Revelation 12:11"

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Word Count: Approximately 8,000 words

This Expanded Edition Provides

- Complete testimony foundations
- Detailed discovery process
- Three-part structure with examples
- Jesus-centered framework
- Complete three-minute testimony guide
- Six detailed examples for different situations
- Fill-in-the-blank templates
- Comprehensive practice worksheets
- Multiple format options
- Advanced techniques
- Handling difficult situations
- Gospel clarity checklist
- 50+ actionable exercises

