



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Sharing What God has Done for You – Acts 22:1-22

CALIFORNIA

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The Bible Study lesson below is adapted from one written in 2011 by my friends Jim Young and Dave Dagwell from our National Ministry Office. I pray it will be an encouragement to you as you serve the Lord. – Frank Erb, Capitol Commission California

HOW TO SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

To be effective in relating the story of your faith in Christ, it must be interesting, well-developed and personal. As we look at how the Apostle Paul shared his testimony in Acts 22, we can follow his pattern and develop our testimony in three parts.

I. Life Before Knowing Christ

Acts 22:1-5 - "Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you." And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said: 3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. 4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, 5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.

Your personal story or testimony of how God drew you to Himself and your walk with Him is one of the most effective and compelling ways to share your faith in Jesus Christ.

Scriptures speak of our need to be prepared to share.

1 Peter 3:15 - But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

Consider what Jesus told a man He had just freed from demon possession: *Mark 5:19 - "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."*

Note also *Revelation 12:11a - They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony....* Here we are told that the persecuted Jewish believers overcame the evil one. Their victory was based on the death of Christ and their **testimony** to the value of that death. Your testimony, your story of how you came to faith in Jesus Christ attributes value to the death Jesus suffered for you. It's a story you need to be proficient in sharing.

WHY SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

Love for God and a Desire to Bring Him Glory

- God is glorified when we speak of His character and conduct
- God is glorified when we obey His commandments
- God is glorified when we tell others of His grace
- God's enemy is defeated.

Love for People and a Concern for Their Future

- A desire to guide a lost person from darkness to light and from hopelessness to hope.

Most people are interested in the personal stories of others. Your story has the potential to change another person's life for eternity.

A. Identify With Your Listeners

1. Speak to them in their own language

Note that Paul chooses to speak in Aramaic rather than Greek. This was a pleasant surprise because they were hearing their mother tongue. We should also aim to communicate well, using words that are understandable and avoiding religious jargon that might confuse our listeners.

2. Tell them about yourself in ways in which they can identify.

Paul spoke to them of things they are familiar with. My best start up conversations relate to sports. It helps to know something about your audience.

B. Expose areas in which they can identify.

- * No purpose
- * Loneliness
- * Gripped by a sinful habit
- * Anger
- * Selfishness
- * Pride

Pick one or two areas and build the first part of your testimony around them. Be factual, specific, personal and brief.

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II. How You Came to Know Christ

vv. 6-16 - “As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. 7 And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ 8 And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ 9 Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. 10 And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.’ 11 And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus. 12 “And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, 13 came to me, and standing by me said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. 14 And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; 15 for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’”

Up to this point Paul’s story would be credible to those who heard him. In fact they would have to admit that it was true. When you are sharing your testimony with people who knew you in your BC days, that’s the easy part, and you need to be careful not to spend too much time on it.

A. Why You became a follower of Jesus

As you share, make the following points clear:

I have a Problem:

I have sinned (Romans 3:23)
The result of my sin (Romans 6:23a)

God Has the Solution:

God loves me (Romans 5:8)
God has provided a gift (Romans 6:23b)

My Response:

Confess (1John 1:9)
Repent (Acts 3:19)
Believe & Receive (Romans 10:9-10)

B. How You became a follower of Jesus

- Where did it happen?
- Were you alone or did someone lead you to Christ?
- What exactly did you pray?

III. How Knowing Christ Has Changed Your Life

Show how God has helped you. If there are areas where you still struggle, be honest and share that you are a work in progress and how God is helping you overcome your struggles.

vv. 17-22 17 “When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance 18 and saw him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ 19 And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. 20 And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.’ 21 And he said to me, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’” 22 Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.”

NOW, GO SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

A. Write it

Write your testimony and keep it between 400-800 words.

B. Practice it

Practice telling it. Rehearse so you can share it naturally in about three minutes.

C. Pray about it.

Ask God to:

- give you a passion for the lost and a heart for sharing
- provide opportunities to share (Colossians 4:3)
- make you sensitive to the opportunities
- give you courage to share

D. Say it.

E. See if it leads to follow up conversations.

F. Trust God with the Results

Trust Him with the results and rejoice when you see Him at work through you!