Preparing Your Personal Testimony

Every time we tell our story (our testimony) we give honor and glory to God, and He is pleased with that. Why? Well, our story is actually the story of how God rescued us . . . saved us. It's our eye-witness (or "I-witness") account of how our lives have changed. It's the story of His pursuit of a lost soul (you!) and the dramatic rescue to tear you from the clutches of your mortal enemy and bring you safely into His eternal kingdom. It's the stuff movies are made of. And that retelling of your redemption highlights His character. That's what we call "glorifying God:" it's giving Him the credit and acknowledging His work.

We like to think that because it's our story, we don't have to put any effort into telling it. We were there when it happened, and we're living it now. But it's easy to get jumbled up, flustered, off the point, and onto a tangent that can distract, bore, annoy, or confuse your listener. We want to glorify God and be listener - friendly. That's why a little planning and practice are so valuable.

There are five basic parts to "Your Story:" the opening, your life before Christ, how you came to Christ, your life after Christ, and the closing. You should be able to talk through all five parts clearly and succinctly within 3-5 minutes. Let's take a look at how to put it together, section by section.

HELPFUL HINTS

- Write the way you speak—make the testimony yours.
- Choose a theme and carry it throughout the testimony.
- Don't be overly negative or positive. Be truthful.
- Don't criticize or name any church, denomination, organization, etc.
- Time limit should be 3 minutes.

Practice it over and over until it becomes natural.

The Opening.

Identify a theme. What did your life revolve around that God used to help bring you to Him? Try to illustrate your theme with a word picture that your audience can identify with.

Your Life Before Christ.

You want to paint a picture of what your life was like before you came to Christ, but don't dwell on how bad you used to be or glory in past sin. Share only the details that relate to your theme, and give enough detail to show your need for Christ. This is not the time to give your resume.

How You Came to Christ.
Ah, this is it. Make sure you speak in such a way that the person you are talking with, and anyone who overhears you, can understand how you became a Christian, and how they can become a Christian, too. Give only the details that are important to communicate why and how you became a Christian. As you begin to work on it, consider what your life was like before you trusted Christ or you really began to see change. This is an educational aspect to your story, so that even if your listener is not interested right now, s/he'll be able to make that decision down the road because you've equipped them with the right information.

Your Life After Christ.
Share some of the changes that Christ has made in your life as they relate to your theme. Emphasize the changes in your character, attitude, and perspective, not just the mere changes in behavior. And be realistic. We will struggle as Christians. Life is far from perfect, isn't it? But what makes it different for you now? Be honest, and God will use your personal experience regardless of how "unspectacular" you may think it is.

The Closing. Close it out with a summary statement that ties your story together according to your theme. You could close with a verse, but only if it's meaningful and relates to the story you've just told.