

Testimony Revolution

How to rock the ultimate story

by Marshall Jones Jr.

For the kid
Whose testimony inspired me
to revolutionize mine

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Sharing the story

“They will lay their hands on you, delivering you up to the synagogues before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony.”

-Jesus

Part 1

Your Testimony Revolution: Shifting your story to change lives

If a friend asked you to share your testimony right now, how would you begin?

- **The Prodigal Child version:** "I grew up in a Christian home but drifted in my teens..."
- **The Heathen version:** "As a kid, my dad used to beat me, and I hated him for it..."
- **The Pop version:** "My parents were basically good

people, but I never had a personal relationship with Christ..."

No doubt, your testimony is unique, but it probably falls generally under one of those intros. If so, your testimony - generally speaking - is the story of how Christ came into your heart.

And that's wonderful.

But I'd like to propose an alternate map for your testimony. If you're willing to hear me out (or really, *read* me out), I think I can help you shift your testimony to reflect a more accurate, more compelling gospel message.

To begin, take a look at my (clumsy) diagram of your life.

Your Life Timeline

<----- (B. C.) ----- | **Conversion** |----- (A. D.) ----->

Some labels to notice:

- **B. C.** = before Christ
- **A. D.** = after decision
- **Conversion** = the point in your life when you decided to allow Christ into your heart

If you follow one of the general versions at the top, the testimony you're accustomed to telling (and most often hearing) looks like this:

Your B. C. Testimony

<----- (**Testimony**) ----- | **Conversion** |

Comparing your full Life Timeline with the B. C. Testimony, you'll notice that your testimony corresponds with your B. C. days. In other words, when someone asks about your testimony, you explain what happened *before* your conversion.

You tell about your sin and how it influenced you before you made your decision for Christ. Sometime during those B. C. days, God interrupted you and changed your path. Your testimony is the story of how that happened.

With this kind of testimony, the pinnacle of your story is your conversion. Now that *seems* emotionally powerful, but it's not. It's limiting. If your testimony has a climax like that, your testimony has an end.

You've probably seen a few movies or read some books like this. The main character braves the elements, climbs the volcano, throws the ring into the lava, and...

and... and talks to his friends for half an hour? What's up with that?

Here's what I'm getting at: if you emphasize your conversion as the highest point of your testimony, then it's all downhill from there.

That kind of testimony focuses on *becoming* a Christian instead of *being* a Christian. And even though that's important, what's the real goal, becoming or being a Christian?

Let me offer a different picture.

Your A. D. Testimony

| **Conversion** | ----- (**Testimony**) ----->

If you compare this to the Life Timeline, you'll notice your A. D. Testimony is completely on the other side of

your conversion. I'm suggesting that **your testimony should be what God does in your life *after* He enters your heart.** I'm suggesting that your testimony should be about *being* a Christian, not *becoming* one.

Why A. D. Testimonies – Part 1

Check out a few passages in Scripture that speak directly about testimonies.

"Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there..." -Acts 22:12

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony." -Hebrews 11:1-2

"By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not

*see death, 'and was not found, because God had taken him'; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God." -**Hebrews 11:5***

If you read these passages in context, you'll notice that each is an example of Christ working *in* a believer's life. Their testimonies are declarations of the work Christ led them to do, declarations of the power God gave them. Testimonies are stories about what Christ has given us.

Why A. D. Testimonies – Part 2

When you think about it, A. D. testimonies simply make more sense too.

In business, we use testimonies to help understand the value of a product. Check the back of best-selling books or products on T.V. -- almost every form of

advertisement uses (or could benefit from using) testimonies.

Testimonies are the life of persuasion. Facts are great, but we really want a story of how the product affected someone. After all, that's why you and I are interested – we want to know how the product will make a difference in our lives.

In court, testimonies help us understand the truth of a matter. Expert testimonies give us information about a particular subject. Eyewitness testimonies help us understand what happened in a certain situation.

In short, **we use testimonies to get a human perspective we don't have.**

Back to your curious friend

How does your testimony offer a perspective your friend doesn't have?

Your friend lived without God. More often than not, your friend is still living without God. Your friend knows what it's like to live without God. What your friend does not know is what it's like to live *with* God. That's where your testimony is important.

Your testimony, like all good testimonies, should offer a perspective your friend *doesn't* have. That's how it'll deliver value.

3 more benefits of an A. D. Testimony

1) Your testimony will be dynamic. Your testimony will adapt to the situation. The high point of your testimony

won't be locked into one event in your life. It'll reflect the continual working of the Holy Spirit upon your life. Instead of explaining what God *has done*, your testimony will explain what God *is doing*.

2) Your testimony will be positive. Your testimony will describe your life *with* God, not your life without God. Rather than expounding on your pain and hopelessness before Christ, your testimony will reveal the glory and security of life in Christ. Your friend will recognize the benefits of life after conversion and will want it.

3) Your testimony will be others-oriented. Your testimony will focus on contribution rather than consumption. Your testimony used to build only to your own conversion. But what if your testimony didn't climax in *your* conversion? What if instead your testimony climaxed in your *friend's* conversion? How powerful would that be?

Why this is a revolution

In the 16th century, Nicolas Copernicus published a treatise explaining his revolutionary view of the universe. Before Copernicus, scholars thought the sun revolving around the earth. Instead, Copernicus argued that the earth revolved around the sun. His revolution was that he repositioned earth in relation to the rest of the universe.

Your testimony revolution is similar. You're repositioning your testimony in relation to the rest of your life. Copernicus's explanation drew a torrent of criticism but eventually helped astronomers to explain the universe more accurately. I think switching your testimony to the other side of your conversion will help you to explain the *gospel* more accurately.

So let's make some plans for how to do that...

Part 2

Planning your testimony: 7 steps for proactive preparation

Wonderful, now you're going to tell your friend about your life *with* Christ, not life without Him. Great shift.

But, uh oh, you have a problem...

B-o-r-i-n-g.

- **The Discipling version:** “Since accepting Christ into my heart last year, I've started going to church, and I'm about to start teaching Sunday

school.”

- **The Learning version:** “I was saved when a traveling evangelist preached at my college campus. Now I love reading the Bible and sipping tea.”

Or the ultimate drain...

- **The Always-Have-Been version:** “I’ve been a Christian most of my life. I grew up in a Christian home and stayed that way.”

Not quite the nail biter your friend wants to hear, right?

So how do you make your testimony exciting if it’s all about ***being a Christian?***

Is that harsh? Perhaps, but for many, it’s a legitimate question. I’ve asked that question because I grew up in

a Christian home and stayed that way. Maybe you've asked it too.

This problem comes from our leftover, B. C. Testimony mindset. With a B. C. Testimony, experiences *happened to us*. We'd then form a testimony from them. So now we assume that we supposed to form our A. D. Testimonies from who we are or what we've accomplished as Christians.

Ah, but welcome to the other side of Christ. With an A. D. Testimony, you create the experiences you'll include in your testimony. With Christ, you *happen to* experiences, not the other way around.

Exciting? Yeah, but it can also be intimidating if you're not sure where to start. In a minute, I'm going to walk you through the preparation process step by step. First, though, let me introduce some tools...

The Fruit of the Spirit

You're probably familiar with the fruit of the Spirit. Briefly, the Fruit of the Spirit (FoS) lists attributes that manifest in your life when the Holy Spirit is upon you. Paul gives us the list in Galatians 5:22-23:

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-control

We'll use these attributes to find ideas for your testimony.

8 detailed steps for testimony planning

Here's what you've been waiting for: the no-fluff guide to planning your testimony.

Let me warn you - this does *not* work if you only read the steps. It'll sound goofy. If you follow these steps as you read, though, you'll have a complete, practical plan when you're finished.

If you don't have at least half an hour or more to commit to this, I encourage pause for now *without* reading the rest. It'll motivate you to come back to it.

If you have time now and are brave enough to try it, let's get started:

Step 1: Pray. Ask God for direction. Ask Him to lead you to make wise choices. Ask God to help you choose three attributes from the FofS list.

(Now you know why I included the FofS list.)

Step 2: Grab a sheet of paper and a pen (or pencil if you prefer).

Step 3: Write the three attributes from step 1 on the top of your paper. Write one on the left side, one in the middle, and one on the right side.

Choose attributes God wants to develop in your life. What three attributes best combine to make who God wants you to be? Loving, faithful, and kind? Peaceful, gentle, and self-controlled?

Don't worry about excluding any of the good ones by picking your three. You can't leave out any attributes even if you try.

For example, let's say you choose to focus on love, joy, and peace. Is it possible to be loving, joyful, and

peaceful but not gentle or kind? Not really. This exercise focuses your testimony on three attributes but includes the others also. Cool, huh?

Step 4: Pray again. Ask God to show you experiences that would reveal each of the attributes you chose.

For example, how would a loving person reveal love? A loving person would live a thankful life. That person would devote more time and energy to appreciate trees and lakes and clouds. That person might give to charities, volunteer at church, or read a book to a child.

How would a joyful person reveal joy? A joyful person would smile more, complain less, offer more compliments.

What about for peace? A peaceful person would worry less? That person would live courageously, accepting challenges as gifts and helping others do the same.

Step 5: Write your three lists of experiences under each respective attribute. Try to write at least ten for each, ten experiences that would demonstrate each attribute.

Step 6: Pray yet again. This time ask God to show you how He wants you to live these experiences.

Taking a few of the experiences from step 4 as an example, you might consider a plan for how you can volunteer at church. Are you going to volunteer to teach Sunday school or pass out fliers at the fair or visit patients in the hospital? Who do you need to talk to to get involved? When will you talk to that person?

Keep asking questions. Keep finding answers for how you will be a loving, joyful, peaceful person (or whatever three attributes you chose).

Step 7: Write a separate paragraph for each attribute, explaining specifically how, when, where, with whom,

and for whom you'll apply your plan.

Read back over the attributes you chose and the experiences you linked to those attributes.

At this point you should have each of the following:

- **Three attributes** from the FofS you will focus on (see steps 1-3)
- **30 general experiences** that will reveal these attributes – 10 for each attribute (see steps 4-5)
- **Three paragraphs**, each explaining a specific action for your chosen attributes (see steps 6-7)

If you're missing anything, please go back and fill in what you need.

I find it more effective to write this out on paper. That's why I recommended the paper and pen. But if you're

thinking, “Ah, Marshall, this is lame – I’ll plan it in my head (or not at all),” try typing it in a word processor. You don’t even need to leave your chair.

I’ll wait.

You're back. You're finished planning. You have a complete, detailed testimony outline. In the next part, I'll give you some tips for bringing your testimony to life from this plan.

When you get more comfortable with these steps, you can apply other lessons instead of always starting with the FofS. Your plan will start to look like this:

2 general steps for testimony planning

Step 1: Chose a biblical lesson to apply (steps 1-3 in the detailed version).

Step 2: Create a practical plan for applying the lesson (steps 4-7 in the detailed version).

I like detailed, step-by-step instructions, especially at first. Starting with the FofS makes it easy to choose

where to begin. Experiment though. That's the beauty of having your own testimony revolution.

Your testimony reveals what God fulfills in you. It's your personal gospel, your good news, of who Christ is and what He does in your life. It's your testimony for Christ.

Time to create it...

Part 3

Creating your testimony: 25+ tips for gaining experience and living a flourishing life

You've switched your story, you've planned your approach, and now you're ready to bring your testimony to life.

At this point, you already understand what you need to create your testimony. You're only missing exciting, insanely useful experiences *in* your testimony. So far,

your testimony only a plan.

“Hi, friend, I became a Christian and planned all this: *blah, blah, blah...*”

Not cool. You might be a step ahead of your friend but not compelling enough to convince anyone.

Who cares what you plan...

Your testimony truly inspires or fails based on how well you accomplish the creation step. It doesn't matter how well you plan your testimony if you never live it. And it doesn't matter how well you live your plan if you fail to flourish.

I love flourishing and each day try to make it a part of who I am. So I've gathered a list of 25 tips as a growth guide. It's long but definitely not comprehensive. Add your own items to the list when you think of them.

Anyway, I divided this list into three parts: strategy, tactics, and tools. The strategy covers general concepts. The tactics give practical instructions. And the tools help you apply the first two sets.

The strategy is fairly essential. You won't get too far without applying those tips. Not all of the tactics and tools, though, will apply to every part of your testimony. They suggest ideas, but please, make them your own.

Oh, and be sure to read the last one.

So onto the strategy...

1. Focus on being, not doing

While the Bible tells us to *do* plenty, Christians should primarily focus on *being*, being what God wants us to

be. We don't please God by what we do. We please God by who we are. Most of the other suggestions in this list center around what you can do. The crucial part of a flourishing life, though, is in being what God wants.

You can part seas, cure cancer, or lead crusades, but it's who you are that matters. It's what you believe that matters. It's what you do on a daily basis with your beliefs that matters. Habits form character, and character forms who you are. A few mighty acts here and there don't impress God. Faithfulness impresses God.

Trust God, and create your testimony out of your relationship with Him. The rest of this, the "doing" parts, will become habits and will flow naturally from your relationship with God.

2. Flee sin

Eliminating sin from your life leads to drastic results, so it's a great place to start. Consider the number one, perpetual sin in you life. How does it hold you back from being who God wants? How might removing that sin change your life and provide an excellent testimony for others?

Now go run away.

3. Copy perfect examples

To flee sin, you need to run toward righteousness. Otherwise, you'll wind up fleeing one sin only to fall into another.

Find a model to copy. Jesus is always an exceptional specimen.

*“For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.” -**John 18:38***

How did He live? Imitate that. Read the first four books of the New Testament for ideas.

You can also look to your brothers and sisters in Christ. How do they match what Scripture teaches? Copy that – it’s perfect.

4. Serve others

*“And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” -**Matthew 20:27-28***

When you put others before yourself, you put on the

nature of Christ. What better way to build your testimony than by providing genuine value for others, as Jesus did.

5. Engage

*“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore...’ -**Matthew 28:18-19***

One major feature of an A. D. testimony is the ability to create it rather than let it happen. God has given you the opportunity to engage life and form your testimony. So engage.

Find people. Start conversations. Seek God’s direction for your life.

Act. Volunteer. Give.

Be who God wants.

Okay, so let's talk tactics now...

6. Make others feel amazing

“Therefore comfort each other and edify one another...” -1 Thessalonians 5:11

Encourage others in what they do. Show that you appreciate them.

Examples:

- “Great job, _____.”
- “Thank you for showing me how this works.”
- “Happy birthday, _____!”

Simple words can go a long way. A smile, a warm coat,

or a mug of root beer can too.

7. Make others look amazing

“And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.” -1

Thessalonians 5:12-13

Talk about your friends behind their backs. Let everyone else know how wonderful they are.

Examples:

- “I liked what _____ said.”
- “_____ helped me when I needed advice.”
- “I’m always encouraged when I’m around _____.”

You can also make others look amazing with what you do. If you work on a project with a group and it succeeds, everyone in the group comes away blessed by your involvement. Everyone looks amazing even if you did all the work.

Usually I'm upset when this happens, I admit. Instead, we should set up these opportunities on purpose to bless the whole group.

8. Exaggerate simple experiences

One way to come up with intriguing ideas is to take one simple experiences and exaggerate it.

For example, take reading a story to a child. What if instead of reading one story to one kid, you read 100 stories to 100 kids in the next three weeks? Or instead of "smiling more," you smiled for three hours straight...

at a mall?

9. Simplify big experiences

Missionaries leave everything to live in a foreign country. Maybe can't go that far. Instead, could you do that for a week or perhaps a month? Or how about gathering a group of Christians (tip #18) to send one of you?

10. Plan ahead

We already talked about this in the planning part. But for some of the more complicated tasks, you might have to go back and revise your plans. Planning can help you accomplish more.

11. Don't plan ahead

Sometimes the most fruitful experiences happen spontaneously. You don't plan to help strangers jump-start a dead car battery, for example. This is where *being* instead of *doing* comes into play (tip #1). Your reactions show your true nature.

12. Harness pain and release blessings

Stuff happens (to put it mildly). If it's not your fault, it's God's. Take advantage of it. God sends pain for a reason. Often, the pain deepens the blessings He gives afterward.

Many examples of testimonies in the Bible were a direct result of pain leading to blessings. Take Job, Stephen, Jesus (He's a favorite of mine for examples as you've probably noticed).

Few of us enjoy pain, but God exploits it all the time to create massive blessings and unforgettable stories. If God does it, you should too with His help.

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” -Psalm 116:15

13. Interact with others in person

Face to face relationships drive true friendships. Something about presence makes us bind together.

We often discount these importance physical connections. In the wireless electronics world, we know all about distance relationships. But we forget: the process surges forward faster and is ultimately more intimate when it's founded in person.

14. Hunt for the herds

Where do your friends gather? Where do people in general gather? You can easily generate excitement in the middle of a throng of people.

Try malls, concerts, churches, parks, seminars, schools, downtown sidewalks. It's easy when you hunt.

15. Start local

“...[R]epentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” -Luke 14:47

You know the locals. You already should have some reputation with them. You have networks and relationships already established. Start there.

16. Then go global

“As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” -John 17:18

Take what you do locally and send it further away. What do you offer consistently that you could spread broader? How could you do it? (Hint: you might find parts of the answer in other sections of this ebook.)

17. Act as though your testimony includes everything you do (it does)

You don't put on an “I'm creating my testimony” hat. You life is your testimony. Every behavior, every conversation, every habit contributes to your testimony.

You live in a terrarium, and - like the lizard in the pet store - you're on display.

You were on display even before becoming a Christian. If you happened to work at a local restaurant, your friends judged other restaurant workers in relation to you.

But restaurant workers don't care how they make other restaurant workers look. As a Christian, though, you should care how people judge other Christians. You reflect Christ. Or at least you're supposed to. That's your testimony.

So here are some tools for putting all this to work...

18. Create teams

Consider:

- Achilles (and his Myrmidons)
- Robin Hood (and his merry men)

- Rocky Jones, Space Ranger (and Winky)

Perhaps not the most convincing examples. Still, teams enable you to take on bigger challenges, strengthen others, and end up encouraged. Another example:

- Jesus (and His twelve disciples)

19. Set up metrics

You'll won't know progress if don't know what counts as success.

Sure, you'll often venture out in faith, not knowing exactly why God calls you to do something. After all, God calls us to walk by faith and not by sight. But more often than not, you can (and should) measure what you do. Usually, ignorance (or perhaps laziness) keeps us from calculating our steps.

Don't do that (can I be any more obvious?).

Use your God-given tools to determine your effectiveness. You can measure your progress through the criticism of other believers (and sometimes unbelievers), through prayer, and through comparisons with Bible.

You can also measure practically. In tip #8, I mentioned reading 100 books to 100 children in three weeks and smiling for three hours straight. Measurements like these ground your testimony in tangible results.

20. Leverage communication technology

Use your telephone (and text messages), email, blog (and comments) Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, snail mail, paper airplanes, anything to communicate with others.

Technology can expand your reach to a wider audience. Don't sacrifice personal interaction. Put technology to work instead only to augment your communication.

It's fast. It's cheap. It's exciting.

21. Speak the gospel

Your entire testimony should reveal the gospel, so why not share it *while creating* your testimony? Tell others about Christ and what He did for them. Proclaim His love. Use your voice.

You can preach a better sermon with your lips than without them.

22. Feed others

Jesus mastered this. Think water into wine or five

loaves and a couple fish or that eternal banquet I keep hearing about.

People love food. Find a way to combine it in your testimony, and you'll hook anyone.

23. Grab attention with randomness

"Albuquerque."

24. Give physical gifts

"A gift consists not in what is done or given, but in the intention of the giver or doer." -Seneca

People see through facades. But if you give with a servant's heart, a gift can inspire and provoke others to wonder why you're generous. Don't focus on materialism but on meeting people with what they

understand. Everyone understands an authentic gift.

(Extra: non-physical gifts can work also)

25. Follow the Holy Spirit

Finally, the essential tip for creating your remarkable testimony. The first 24 tips? Forgettable. That's okay – you can come back when you forget. What you should remember is this:

The Holy Spirit is your ultimate guide. He's your power, your direction, and your connection to God. When in doubt, follow Him. When not in doubt, follow Him. He's always right, always present, and always helping.

Ah, the benefits of loving God.

Lastly, observe as you go

This will help in the next part where you'll take the testimony you've created and gather it into a coherent story. To do that, you need to know what happened when you created your testimony.

Throughout the creation process (meaning, throughout your whole life), constantly observe what occurs around you, in you, and through you.

How do others act before you act? What is your reaction to them? What were you thinking when you did that? How does this experience teach you to love God? How can you use this experience to teach others of life with Jesus Christ?

Keep your spiritual sense tuned to how the Holy Spirit might grow you to attract others, and you'll be well on your way to delivering an amazing testimony...

Part 4

Delivering your testimony: How to compile the compelling story

Testimony revolution? Check.

Testimony planned? Check.

Testimony lived? Check.

What's left? Well, your friend is still waiting to hear it.

We're used to presenting our testimonies without having clear goals. We tell a story. But often, we don't know why we're telling the story. We just tell... or ramble.

We know the testimony is supposed to bring glory to God. We've heard that 7 septillion times. That's not much help, though, because we don't understand how a testimony actually accomplishes that.

So think of it this way.

3 Kinds of Testimonies

1. **“Just the facts”**: professional, accurate, measurable
2. **Expert testimony**: evaluation given by experts in their field

3. **Personal experience:** based on a personal account or situation

Those are the three, separate kinds, but you're going to combine elements from each kind into one testimony. You need to include “just the facts” for your testimony to be credible. You need information that's measurable and accurate.

But you also need an interpretation of those facts. You're the expert. You're the only one who's lived your life. Apart from God, you know your situation best and should convey this in your testimony.

Your testimony should stay trustworthy while saturated with life, or no one will care. Often, testimonies lean to one side or the other, toward facts alone or experience alone. Your testimony needs balance.

To help, I've broken this down to give your testimony

four goals. And to keep it memorable (read: corny), I've worked it into an acronym. Maybe it'll help you remember it (it helped me).

What to include

- G**race
- A**udience
- T**ruth
- E**xperience

This is the GATE for your friend. The purpose of your testimony is to include all four parts of the GATE.

Grace

"To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach

*among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of
Christ...” -Ephesians 3:8*

All is given from God. You didn't work for it. You didn't help God do it. You didn't contribute any part to your abundant life with Christ.

Your accomplishments might seem impressive to you, but don't fool yourself – they're probably not impressive to your audience. If, on the other hand, your accomplishments seem scrawny, don't worry. Grace is the reason people listen to the gospel. **Grace is the reason your testimony can impact others.**

Your testimony should compel others to see how God has worked in your life, not what you've done for God.

Audience

"I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." -1 Corinthians 9:22

Without an audience, you have nothing to share. Adapt to them. **You testimony is not a sales pitch - it's a product review.** We don't respond well to advertisement when we're being gamed. Your testimony will persuade based on results, the results of Jesus Christ in your heart.

If you argue your testimony, you lose your audience. If you force your testimony on your audience, they build walls to keep you out. Work with them. Include them in the plot. Give them what they want to know about life with Christ.

Truth

“A true witness delivers souls, but a deceitful witness speaks lies.” -Proverbs 14:25

Truth conveys authority. The random bum on the street can make up a fun story. Your audience doesn't want that "fun story." Think product review, remember? Keep your story interesting by modifying the structure to fit the audience, but keep the details accurate.

Don't exaggerate. Tell what you know. **Transparency is key to a compelling testimony.** If you still struggle with pride, don't hide it by saying God cured you. From your friend's perspective, no one is perfect. Don't pretend you are. Show your friend the real Christ-follower.

Experience

“...[B]e an example to the believer in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” -1

Timothy 4:11

What’s a testimony without experience? Deliver your testimony from an excruciatingly personal perspective. Explain how your feelings and thoughts have changed, but do it through examples. **General terms don’t mean anything to your audience without concrete examples.**

Imagine Betty Lou telling you she saved a bunch of money through a program she purchased. Now imagine Betty Lou telling you she saved \$100 on gas and groceries this week because of the program. Which is more convincing?

Your testimony is a story. Stories need details.

Taking this GATE as a guide, tell what you've lived...

How to include it

Start with Scripture to support why you live a certain way. Try this:

1. Quote a Bible passage. Example:

*"...[I]dle chatter leads only to poverty." -Proverbs
14:23*

2. Explain how you lived it. Example:

"Instead of idle chatter, which wasted countless hours of my life, I started consciously digging into deeper conversations, and I've since made a bunch of new friends..."

If you followed the steps in the planning article, you

could use Galatians 5:22-23. This formula draws your friend into your experiences while leading back to the Word of God.

Keep it brief. Shoot for less than five minutes (unless you're presenting your testimony formally for a large audience and are required to speak for a longer period). Ideally, you should be able to talk forever about Christ in your life. But your friend doesn't necessarily want that speech.

Limit your story so your friend doesn't feel obligated to listen to your personal *War and Peace*. Your testimony doesn't have to always include your life story, just an example of how you live with Christ.

Encourage your friend to ask questions. If you fill in all the gaps, leaving nothing out, your friend will burn out. End your story while your friend wants more.

Remember, you share your testimony for your friend's benefit, not your own.

You want to find common ground so your friend can relate. Your experience as a Christian will set you apart enough. Don't worry about trying to be different from anyone else.

Stay flexible. Don't get too comfortable in one testimony. God might want you to tell some other detail or structure it in a different way.

Sometimes you might quote three verses with three different examples from your life. Other times you might quote only one verse and give subtle examples or quote many verses, relating them all to one experience in your life. Or you might...

"Hold it, Marshall. That's enough..."

Yeah, okay.

I'm making up these suggestions as I go now. And you can too. You can expand, contract, add humor, add Scripture, include friends in a group testimony, or create one that includes only you and God. It's entirely flexible to allow the Holy Spirit to lead you.

Be available. That's all God wants. He'll take care of you.

“But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak...”

-Matthew 10:19

You don't need me here to walk you through each of these steps for compiling your story. Tell how God's worked in your life. Consider your audience. Hold the truth. Offer detailed experience.

That's it. Like pie, if you can make it, delivery is easy.

Now, where's that friend of yours?

Changing A Life

At the beginning, Part 1 included the subtitle, “Shifting Your Story To Change Lives.” That’s a big promise. But here’s where the testimony revolution is awesome regardless of whether or not you change lives with it.

Even if you live your whole life as an amazing testimony of God’s work in you for others and none of them care, you’ll still have changed at least one life: yours.

Even if no one else sees your testimony, hears your testimony, or draws closer to Jesus through your testimony, shifting your story to focus on life *with* Christ **will change *your* life.**

And that by itself is totally worth it.

Bonus

Practicing your testimony: 6 steps for encouragement

So what do you do in the meantime? What do you do before you get the opportunity to share your testimony with that friend who doesn't know Jesus?

Maybe you need some encouragement to share it. Maybe you need somewhere to start. Maybe what you need is practice.

Here's the thing: if *you* aren't practicing how to share

your testimony, one of your Christian friends probably isn't either. What an excellent opportunity.

One of the most common excuses for not sharing the gospel is, "***I don't know what to say!***" I think that's only part of the problem, but I'll go along with it for a second.

If you don't know what to say, why not practice it? And like I said, if *you're* not practicing, you can probably find a friend who's in the same position as you.

So here's the final drill...

6 steps to finding a practice partner

1. Choose a close friend who's also a Christian.
2. Ask your friend if you can practice your testimony on him/her. (If no, move on to asking someone

else.)

3. Practice. Run through your testimony.
4. Ask if your friend would like to practice on you. (If no, no problem.)
5. Ask if your friend would mind doing this again in the future. (If no, thank your friend for listening, but look for another practice partner.)
6. Set a time/date to practice again. [Very important.]

This isn't *that* difficult, but it is scary and awkward. If it's scary awkward for you, though, it probably is for your friends too. Do them a favor and initiate.

And do that curious friend in the future a favor and practice now. Because you never know when they'll ask

why you're a Christian. You never know when they'll want to hear your story, your testimony...

“And this is the
testimony...

*...that God has given us eternal life, and
this life is in His Son.”*

-John 5:11

About *Marshall Jones Jr.*

My father is a pastor, but I'm a Christian anyway. My testimony is my life with Christ.

Years ago at a Christian, youth camp, I remember listening to dozens of testimonies on the last night. Everyone seemed to enjoy rattling on about all the sex and drugs they'd gotten into... and then Christ saved them. The end.

But then one kid got up and talked about how he still hadn't even kissed a girl, never tried drugs, and never remembers a time without God. Instead, he'd lived with his family in Bosnia as a missionary during all the conflict in the '90s. He'd lived through war. He'd literally pulled people out of ditches that used to be their homes. He'd prayed, for the first time, with a friend about his age only two days before that friend was killed.

I realized then that that's the kind of testimony I wanted. His testimony sparked mine.

Later, I wrote a series on bondChristian.com about creating a testimony. This ebook is a compilation of that series. I hope it's provided a starting point – and some encouragement – for your own your testimony revolution.

Christ's,
Marshall Jones Jr.

Marshall shares more at bondChristian.com...
...a practical guide for serving others.