**How to Prepare and Tell Your Story**

*1 Peter 3:15 – ‘Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.’*

One of the most effective tools we have for sharing our faith is the story of how Jesus Christ gave us eternal life. When Paul stood before King Agrippa (Acts 26), he spoke simply, logically, and clearly about his life before salvation, how he met Christ, and what his life was like after he chose to become a follower of Christ.

The purpose of preparing a testimony is not to memorize it and give it verbatim, but to help you put into words some of the important details that led to your decision to follow Christ. A testimony serves primarily as a ‘door opener,’ not a ‘convincing tool.’ Many people are not ready to be convinced that they need Christ, but can often be led to talk about the gospel after hearing a personal testimony.

1. **Before I accepted Christ** 
   1. What was my life like that will relate most to the non-Christian?
   2. What did my life revolve around the most? What did I get my security or happiness from? (The non-Christian is relying on something external to give him happiness)
   3. How did those areas begin to let me down?
   4. Don’t dwell on past sin, but give enough detail to show your need for Christ.
2. **How I received Christ**
   1. When was the first time I heard the gospel?
   2. What were my initial reactions?
   3. When did my attitude begin to turn around?
   4. What were the final struggles that went through my mind just before I accepted Christ?
   5. Why did I choose to accept Christ?
      1. Include the gospel clearly:
         1. All have sinned – Romans 3:23
         2. Sin’s penalty – Romans 6:23
         3. Christ paid the penalty – Romans 5:8
         4. He rose from the dead – 1 Corinthians 15:3-4
         5. We must receive Christ – Romans 10:9-10, 13
   6. Give only the details that are important to communicate why and how you became a Christian.
3. **After I accepted Christ**
   1. Emphasize the changes in your character, attitude, and perspective, not just the mere changes in behavior.
   2. Be realistic. We will/do struggle as Christians. Don’t make it sound as though life is perfect.
   3. Be honest. Talk about what makes it different for you now.

Remember to write the way you speak and be informal. The length of your testimony should be about 3 minutes long. At that length, it’s easily something you can put into a conversation without it becoming a monologue. Remember to include what your life was like before you accepted Christ, how you decided to become a follower of Christ, and what your life is like after accepting Christ.

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