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BUILDING MOVEMENTS: WIN:NATURAL MODE

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY?

We all love to listen to a good story. Throughout the ages stories have been used to entertain, correct and instruct. Traveling bards and minstrels entertained the masses as they journeyed. Jesus understood the power of the story (His parables) and used it effectively to teach profound truths.

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, helpless, hell-bound 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'... giving Him credit, highlighting His character, 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, 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 when helping your disciple prepare their story. You get to help them discover their story, and when they've learned to communicate it well, it can become an effective tool for evangelism.

Preparing to Share Your Story

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

THE POWER OF A STORY

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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 details 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 still 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 don't throw one in to sound spiritual. Use it if it is meaningful and relates to the story you've just told.

Worksheet

1. The Opening

A. Identify a theme.



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2. Your Life Before Christ (or gave Him complete control)

A. What was your life like that will relate most to the non-Christian?

B. How did those things let you down? Why were you open to change?

3. How you came to Christ (or gave Him complete control):

A. When was the first time you heard the gospel? (Or when were you first exposed to dynamic Christianity?)

B. What were your initial reactions?

C. When did your attitude begin to change? Why?



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D. What were the doubts or struggles that went through your mind just before you accepted Christ?

E. Why did you accept Christ?

4. Your Life After Christ (or gave Him complete control):

What are the specific changes Christ has made in my life? Are there any illustrations that would be helpful? Why am I motivated differently?

5. Closing

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.



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