

## A Personal Testimony

The Holy Spirit will give you opportunities, as He has me, to tell people about how you are different after committing your life to Jesus Christ. (It's a way of saying you are a *new creation* in Christ Jesus.) This is referred to as your "personal testimony." It contrasts your old and new natures and includes the following three parts:

- What I was like before I was rescued (your old nature)
- How I was rescued
- What I am like now with the Holy Spirit living in me (your new nature)

Your testimony should be brief, with no more than two or three sentences for each part. You want it to be concise and relatable. I suggest you ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you create it. You will likely need to revise it several times. Ask some Christian friends to review it to help you refine it to be impactful for others.

The following verses indicate followers of Jesus should always be prepared to tell their testimony to others:

But set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts and always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks about the hope you possess. Yet do it with courtesy and respect, keeping a good conscience. (1 Peter 3:15-16 NET)

Here are two fictitious examples of a personal testimony to give you an idea of how to construct one for yourself.

### **Fictitious Testimony One**

Before: People liked me and told me I was a good person. I loved people and had many friends. I didn't believe I needed God in my life, so I just didn't think about Him.

How I was rescued: A friend invited me to church. The pastor was preaching about why people need to be saved. I knew this didn't apply to me, but I was still curious about what he meant. My friend told me God loved me and wanted me to spend eternity with Him. He led me through a prayer to know God.

Now: I still love people, but now I also love God. So I study the Bible, pray and meet with other Christians. Now I want to know God better and live a life that pleases Him.

### **Fictitious Testimony Two**

Before: Alcohol helped me forget my problems and feel better about myself. I enjoyed drinking with my friends, so why did I still feel empty on the inside? I was not sure what love was about, but I didn't need God in my life. How could He help me?

How I was rescued: I finally admitted the emptiness and loneliness I felt were real. I wanted peace and joy, so I began to read the New Testament of the Bible. I discovered Jesus Christ and invited Him to be my Savior and Lord.

Now: I don't need alcohol anymore. I have joy and peace in my heart where there was once emptiness and loneliness. Jesus now fills my heart and life with His love for me and others.

**Share-Check-Share.** I learned this method of communication many years ago. It can apply to any subject but is especially helpful when telling people about your personal testimony. Its purpose is to help you determine if people are interested in what you have to say.

**The method:** After making your first statement, stop talking to see if they want you to continue on the topic. If they do, then make your next statement. Again, stop to see if they want you to continue. If their words or body language indicate they are not interested, stop talking on that subject and move on to another topic.

For example, someone asks what you did last Sunday. You tell them you went to worship service and your adult Sunday School class. Stop and wait for their response. If they ask for more information about the sermon or what you learned in the class, respond with that information. If they change the subject and talk about something else, you know they are not interested in what you just said. So, move on to another topic. You can't force people to want to hear about God and salvation in Jesus Christ.

**IMPORTANT:** The Holy Spirit prepares people to hear about Jesus and your life as a follower of His. Some may not yet be ready at a particular time to understand and accept what you have to say. He knows their heart and whether they are ready for the Good News.

**PRACTICE IT**

Why not take time now to write out your personal testimony? Use the two fictitious testimonies as examples of how to write your own. Then, once you have written and tested it with friends, tell it to someone you think may be interested in it. How did they respond? Did they seem to understand it? Did you use share-check-share to assess their interest? Make changes to your testimony as needed from their responses.