

A vintage typewriter is centered in the background. It has a black body with a silver-colored carriage and a large, blank sheet of white paper inserted into the carriage. The brand name 'FAVORITE' is visible on the front of the machine. The keyboard is visible at the bottom, with keys labeled with letters and symbols. The entire scene is set against a solid black background.

Sharing Your Testimony

Introduction

Testimony: *A declaration of truth or fact. Evidence or proof given by a witness.*

Christians use the word testimony when asking someone to share how they became a Christian because they are testifying to how Jesus and his gospel have rescued them.

One of the most important things to remember about a Christian's testimony is this: it's not ultimately about us. It's about Jesus. The goal of giving your testimony is to:

1. Glorify Jesus by declaring what he has done in your life
2. Encourage fellows with the miracle of grace you have experienced
3. Invite and challenge unbelievers as they hear of the power of the gospel

This short booklet is designed to equip you to share your testimony in a way that helps accomplish these three goals.

When Paul stood before the Jews (Acts 22:1) and King Agrippa (Acts 26:2) he gave an *apologia* (defence/answer/testimony).

Paul's salvation story is told three times in Acts. Luke shares it once, and then Paul tells it twice to different audiences. We'll follow these accounts as a guide:

- Acts 7:58, 8:1-4, 9:1-22 – Luke's account of Paul's conversion
- Acts 22:1-23 - Paul shares his testimony with the Jews in Jerusalem
- Acts 26:1-32 - Paul share his testimony with Herod Agrippa II

Attitude

"Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you".

Acts 22:1

"I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently."

Acts 26:1-3

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The first thing we notice about Paul is his posture of grace toward his audience.

In Acts 22 Paul stands before an angry crowd in Jerusalem. Men who had just beaten him and wanted him dead (Acts 21:27-36). But, instead of reacting in anger or bitterness, he speaks with honour and kindness, addressing them as brothers and fathers. Because of this tone, they gave him a chance to speak (Acts 21:40-22:1-2).

In Acts 26, Paul has been unjustly imprisoned for over two years without formal charges (Acts 24:25-27, 25:24-27). Yet, again, he shows respect and courtesy to King Agrippa, complimenting him on his knowledge of Jewish customs and traditions and asking to be heard patiently.

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Whenever we share our testimony, our attitude matters deeply. We're telling the story of how Jesus met us in our sin and saved us by grace. So let us:

- Speak with humility - remembering we were once rebels against God
- Speak with respect - recognising the value and dignity of each listener
- Speak with awe - seeing this opportunity as a privilege
- Speak with joy - because we're sharing the greatest miracle of our lives

Tarsus

"Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.. Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord."

Acts 8:3, 9:1

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God...I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women...I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished."

Act 22:3-5

"My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem...according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee...I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth...I not only locked up many of the saints in prison...but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities..."

Acts 26:4-12

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This section gives us Paul's background. Notice how concisely he covers decades of his life. His story isn't about spotlighting himself. It's about setting the stage to show the grace of God.

In just a few verses we learn that Paul was a Jew, born in Tarsus, raised in Jerusalem, educated by Rabbi Gamaliel, zealous for God, a Pharisee and violently opposed to Christianity, even approving of their deaths.

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When you share your testimony, include just enough background for people to understand the grace of your salvation. As you share your testimony explain a little of your background. Who are you? Where are you from? What is your religious or moral background? What were your thoughts about Christianity before?

Remember: this is not the heart of your story. It's the contrast that helps others see what Jesus has saved you from.

Damascus Road

"Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' And he said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do'..."

Acts 9:3-9

"As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'...And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you' ..."

Acts 22:6-11

"At midday...I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me...And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me...'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting'..."

Acts 26:13-19

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This is the heart of Paul's testimony. His personal encounter with Jesus.

Paul tells us when and where he met Jesus. He tells us that he heard him speak (22:7, 26:14). He tells us that he came to a true conclusion of who Jesus was (22:8, 26:15). He tells us how he surrendered to him (22:10-11, 26:19).

One moment, Paul was persecuting Jesus' people; the next, he's calling Jesus Lord and asking what He wants him to do.

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When you share your testimony, be clear about when you came to trust Jesus. Even if you can't remember an exact date, you can describe the moment or season when the gospel became real and personal to you.

Make sure to include the gospel itself; what Jesus did on the cross, how he rose again, and how we are saved through repentance and faith. This is your moment to glorify Jesus by explaining how he saved you.

Ananias

"Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias...Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me'...then he rose and was baptized; and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."

Acts 9:10-20

"And one Ananias...came to me..."

Acts 22:12-21

"I declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God...to this day I have had the help that comes from God..."

Acts 26:20-23

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Paul's story doesn't end at conversion; it begins a transformed life. He's baptized, welcomed into the church, and begins boldly proclaiming Jesus.

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Your conversion is only the beginning of your new life in Jesus. The remainder of your testimony is a celebration of the change Jesus has made in your life. In your own story, this is the time to describe how Jesus began to transform you.

Think about:

- What new desires or habits began to form?
- How has being part of the church helped you grow?
- When and why were you baptized?
- How are you living for Jesus now, and why?

Some listening to your story might not know the importance of church, baptism, or sharing the gospel, so this part may help open their eyes to the beauty of new life in Christ.

Appeal

"King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe." And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?" And Paul said, "Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains."

Acts 26:24-29

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In Acts 22 the crowd interrupts Paul and he is forced to stop. He is also interrupted in Acts 26, however, he uses this interruption as an appeal.

Notice that his attitude, even after being interrupted, is still respectful. He calls Festus "noble". He speaks the truth clearly and gives a gracious, but bold invitation. He wants everyone listening to be saved like he is

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When we finish our testimony, it's good to include a short, heartfelt appeal. If you're talking one-on-one, gently turn the conversation back to the listener. Ask them what they think of Jesus, or if they've ever considered what you've just shared.

If you're speaking publicly, invite anyone listening who hasn't yet trusted in Jesus to come to him to receive the same grace and hope you've experienced.

Conclusion

Now it's your turn. Write out your own testimony using Paul's example as a guide. Be honest. Be clear. Be Christ-centred.

Here are some helpful questions to reflect on as you prepare:

- **Your Attitude**
 - Is my goal to glorify God, encourage believers and invite unbelievers?
 - Am I speaking with humility, respect and joy?

- **Your Tarsus**
 - Who am I?
 - Where am I from?
 - What's my spiritual background?
 - How did I live before Christ rescued me?
 - What were my thoughts of Christianity and Jesus before salvation?

- **Your Damascus**
 - When did I begin to understand the gospel?
 - What was my initial response to this challenge?
 - How did my views of Jesus change?
 - How did I become a Christian?

- **Your Ananias**
 - How did Jesus begin to change me?
 - How has being part of the church helped?
 - When and why was I baptized?
 - How and why do I live for God now?

- **Your Appeal**
 - What should others think about after hearing my story?
 - Why is this message important for them?
 - Does my story point clearly to Jesus?



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