



Moments *for* You

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Theme: Testimony



WHAT IS A TESTIMONY?

For a Christian, a “testimony” is an open acknowledgement of our personal experience of following Jesus Christ, shown by both our lifestyle and our words. A testimony must be public because its purpose is to tell others what has taken place. Our regeneration should be a testament (evidence) to other people that Jesus is alive and is changing lives. If our lives are a testimony for Jesus Christ, then they should be reflections of Christ as we “follow His steps” (1 Peter 2:21).

MAKING JESUS KNOWN BY WHAT WE SAY

In Acts 4:33, the apostles give their testimony in words: “with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.” The apostles, testifying of the resurrection, were telling others what they had seen with their own eyes, heard with their own ears, and touched with their own hands—they gave a personal, eyewitness account of Christ’s resurrection. In the same way, believers today are commanded to tell others of what they have witnessed firsthand. We haven’t had a face-to-face experience with Jesus as the apostles did, but our conversion experience is no less genuine and no less proof of God’s supernatural work in our lives. We should eagerly share with boldness and humility the change that has taken place in our hearts.

Revelation 12:11 says that believers “overcame [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.” Notice the “word” of their testimony—these triumphant ones spoke verbally, without shame or fear. Some believe that Christians

ought not verbalize their testimony but should simply live it out in their daily lives. But it’s not an either-or proposition. Living the gospel message is important, but it’s no more important than our verbal testimony, since God has chosen “hearing” the word as the means of producing faith (Romans 10:17).

LIFTING HIM UP IN WHAT WE DO

A life dedicated to Christ is a powerful testimony. Paul describes how he and his fellow missionaries conducted themselves “in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God” (2 Corinthians 1:12). When our actions of godly living match the words coming from our lips, our testimony will be seen as true.

Jesus summed up a godly life with two commands: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:37–39).

A Christian who wants to live his life as a testimony for Jesus will love God above all else and love others above himself. When a believer shares what Jesus has done in her life and serves God and others in tangible ways, she will increasingly reflect the life-giving power of Christ into a dark and dismal world.

—GotQuestions.org, adapted

THE TESTIMONY OF GOD

The apostle John began his first letter by affirming the certainty of what the apostles knew about Jesus Christ: “which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which

we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life” (1 John 1:1). John wasn’t relaying some inner, subjective vision or philosophy. He was telling about his objective experience with Jesus Christ. You can’t get much more objective than seeing, hearing, and touching!

GOD’S WITNESS

In chapter 5, John shows that God has given a trustworthy witness to His Son through “the Spirit, and the water, and the blood” (1 John 5:8). John’s point here is that God has borne witness to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of truth bore witness to Jesus at His baptism, when He identified with sinners (although He Himself did not need to be cleansed). He testified of Jesus throughout His earthly ministry, through His miracles, His teaching, and His obedient life. He bore witness to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, initially through John the Baptist’s witness (John 1:29), but supremely at the cross where He shed His blood.

The Spirit confirmed that witness through the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead (Romans 1:4). He bore further witness when, in fulfillment of Jesus’ promise, He descended on the church at the Day of Pentecost. He further affirmed the witness to Jesus through the miracles that the apostles performed. We have that witness in the New Testament.

God’s witness to His Son is trustworthy. In a court of law, truth is established when numerous witnesses say the same thing and when those witnesses are shown to have credible character. John shows us that the testimony which declares Jesus to be the Son of God is not just the testimony of men, but of God Himself. Thus John argues, “If we receive the witness of

men, the witness of God is greater” (1 John 5:9).

GOD’S TESTIMONY

You can read God’s testimony in the New Testament. Be careful, though, to read it prayerfully and with a submissive, searching heart, asking God to open your eyes to His truth. If you come at it with preconceived notions of what the Savior should be like, you are likely to miss Him, because He is not a Jesus who fits your every desire and whim. You can’t make up a Jesus of your own liking. You must accept God’s testimony to the Jesus of the Bible.

The Jews of Jesus’ day, including the disciples, couldn’t conceive of a Messiah who would suffer and die, even though Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22, along with the entire Old Testament sacrificial system, clearly predicted such. The risen Lord Jesus pointed out to the men on the Emmaus Road, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:25–27). The Scriptures give us God’s clear testimony of His Son.

What should we do with this testimony? Clearly, we must receive it personally. If we do not believe it, we make God a liar, as John shows (1 John 5:10). If we do receive it, we have a sure foundation for our faith: “This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:11-12).

GOD’S GIFT

Eternal life is God’s gift, not something we gain through our good

works or efforts. Because of our sins, we were spiritually dead, alienated from the life of God. Jesus promised that if we believe in Him, we shall live even if we die (John 11:25–26). All that God offers us, He offers in Jesus Christ. He is the only sure, solid foundation for your faith. The most important question in the world is the one Jesus asked His disciples, “Whom say ye that I am?” Peter’s answer, inspired by God, is the only correct one, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:15–16)

Do you believe this testimony that God has given about His Son? If so, you have eternal life. If not, you do not have the life and you will perish if you do not repent and believe! John has written this letter so that his readers may know that they have eternal life. John doesn’t want us to *hope* so, but to *know* so. You can know because God’s testimony about His Son is trustworthy. Your faith must rest in Jesus Christ alone, not in anything or anyone else. If your faith is in Christ, then you have the inner witness of His Spirit, that you are a child of God. You have the evidence in your life that He has changed your heart. You now believe the truth about Jesus. You obey God’s commandments. You love God and others.

If you don’t know whether or not you have eternal life, nothing is more important than to make sure. Go back and read again God’s testimony to His Son in the gospels. See the witness of the Spirit throughout the life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. God’s testimony to Jesus is the foundation of our faith. Accept His testimony to His Son and receive as a gift the eternal life that only the living God can impart.

—Steven J. Cole, condensed

A WITNESS TO THE LIGHT

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe” (John 1:6–7).

Why does the writer of this gospel introduce John the Baptist like this? It seems abrupt. Verse 5 is talking about the light shining in the darkness and the darkness not overcoming it, and verse 9 goes on to talk about the Light coming into the world. And verses 6–8 seem like an interruption. Why not get Jesus all the way introduced, and then introduce John the Baptist?

Well, the effect of the way he did write it is to make crystal clear from the very outset that God’s way of letting the light of Christ shine in the world is by human witnesses. God’s way of pushing back the darkness is by human witnesses. It didn’t have to be this way. God could have caused the light of Christ to spread in some other way. He could have done it with angels. He could have written the gospel in the sky with big puffy white letters made out of clouds. He could have caused the wind to talk. But instead God chose to call and send human beings to bear witness of the Light.

This general principle is even more clear because John was sent to testify to the Light while the Light was there. As soon as the Light was in the world—as soon as Jesus came—God prepared and sent a human being right alongside the Light to bear witness to the Light. Jesus did not need John the Baptist to make Him known. He could have managed by Himself—He was the light of the world. But evidently God’s wisdom dictates that His Son should be heralded, announced, and proclaimed by

people that He sends.

There are at least two implications of this for you today.

1: Be alert to the call of God in your life. All Christians are to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:16). All are called to witness to the light (Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 2:9). But God still calls some in a special way and for special tasks. “The Lord of the harvest ... will send forth labourers into His harvest” (Matthew 9:38). “How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?” (Romans 10:14–15). “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers” (Acts 20:28).

It may be a vocational sending to the ministry. It may be a single or periodic sending for some special mission (across the ocean or across the street). But it is God’s way to speak to a person and send that person to testify of the light. Be ready and open to hear that call and accept that commission. Don’t assume that what you are doing now is your only mission for the future.

2: Be ready to hear the testimony of others sent to you. God means to communicate to you not merely through your own private Bible reading, but also through other people. He means to communicate to you through preachers and teachers and through godly people in your life. We should be aware that it is God’s way to communicate with us through those that He calls and sends. Otherwise, why send them if He has nothing to say to us through them?

I pray that by the time my life is over on earth, thousands of people will have heard such a decisive, life-changing word from God through me that they will say, “There was a man

sent from God whose name was John Piper.” And I wonder how many will say, “There was a person sent from God whose name was you”?

—John Piper, adapted

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

“Ye are the light of the world ... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16).

THE NECESSITY OF LIGHT BEARING

The very purpose of being a Christian is to give light. Giving light is not an option which the disciple may or may not choose. In the time of Christ, the lamp in a home was set in a place where it would be safe and where it would be seen. It was not easy to rekindle a lamp in the days before matches, so when people went out for a short while they would take the lamp and put it under an earthen “bucket” so that it could burn without risk until they got back. When they returned, they would uncover the lamp. We are not to hide the light of our testimony under the “bucket” of fear, like Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38), or allow it to be dimmed through unconcern for those around us, or by inconsistency and compromise, like Lot in the city of Sodom.

THE EFFECTS OF LIGHT BEARING

What are the effects of light? First, light exposes the things that are going on in the darkness. When our Lord came into the world, “The people which sat in darkness saw great light” (Matthew 4:16). If a Christian lives the Christian life before people, it is like a light going on. People will see the error and failure in their own way of thinking and living. Second, the light we have explains the cause of the troubles of the world—man’s

estrangement from God and love of darkness. Third, light shows and provides the only way out of the darkness. It is not education, political reform, or international treaties. These things can only go so far. The Christian needs to tell the lost person there is a way to God, and that is to know the person of Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God who came from Heaven to earth to “seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). He came into the darkness and bore the guilt of this terrible sinfulness that has involved us in so much trouble.

THE MOTIVES FOR LIGHT BEARING

What is the motive for letting our light shine? First, that other people might “see your good works.” In the original Greek, this word “good” usually describes the attractive form or appearance of a thing, rather than the quality of its content. This shows that the way things are done is important to the Lord. The Pharisees did their good works to make sure that others saw them. The good works of the Christian are special because of their modesty and mercy.

Our second motive for letting our light shine is that we might glorify our “Father which is in heaven.” Our good works should be transparent. They should not point to their agent (us), but to their source (the Father). Christian friend, our world is in darkness, and we have the light!

—Dr. David MacLeod, condensed

BE NOT ASHAMED

“God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner” (2 Tim. 1:7-8).

These words of encouragement were written by the apostle Paul to Timothy, a tender-hearted young

man. He lived at a time when it was definitely safer to not be associated with the testimony of the Lord or with Paul, who was a prisoner for the Lord in a Roman jail. Timothy keenly felt the low spiritual state of many professing Christians who no longer wished to be connected with Paul because of what he endured as a faithful servant of the Lord. Paul knew that Timothy’s faith was genuine, and he encouraged Timothy to be firm and faithful, unashamed of the testimony of the Lord or of his spiritual mentor.

The apostle Paul then began to unfold what God, in His sovereign grace, has given to us. There is nothing at all that we earned or deserved. Rather, God’s grace flowed down from His heart through our Lord Jesus Christ. This was God’s purpose “before the world began” (2 Timothy 1:9) and nothing in time could change what God had purposed. God was working out His wonderful plan of salvation, which has been unveiled by the appearing of our Savior.

This wonderful gospel message was given to the apostle Paul. Although he suffered persecution and imprisonment for this gospel, he could say, “I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day” (2 Timothy 1:12). Paul committed his past, present, and future entirely to the One in whom he believed. He had met this One on the road to Damascus when a bright light from Heaven struck him down (Acts 9). Could Paul now be ashamed of Him? No, this Jesus is the One whom God has made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36), and Paul made Him Lord of his life.

Now what about us? Will you make Him Lord of your life? May we not be

ashamed to be associated with Him in this world that has turned away from the Savior. “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Romans 1:16).

—Jacob Redekop, adapted

5 REASONS TO SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

Sometimes I can worry too much about how to evangelize. The Samaritan woman in John 4 taught me not to worry so much. She shared a simple testimony about what she saw and experienced, and encouraged people to meet this Man for themselves. When they did, they realized and believed that He was the Savior of the world.

1. Your story is unique. There is a specific time when you first realized your need of a Savior. Then when you heard that there was one, you repented of wrongdoings and believed. It could be a memorable day or simply a certain expanse of time in your life. Think back. When was it for you?

Your testimony may have been extreme and radical, or it might have been a calm profession of true belief. Both kinds of testimonies are relatable, because God’s love and mercy reach loud and quiet sinners alike.

2. People love to hear stories. We go to the movies, we watch television, and we read books to hear great stories. Stories can give us experiences and people to emulate. They also give us the opportunity to see from another person’s point of view.

3. It removes fear and gives courage. In speaking about what God has done in my life, I am also remembering all of God’s goodness. When I recount what He has done in the past, it gives me even more faith and courage for present living.

4. It creates transparency. The more we’re honest about mistakes we’ve made in the past, the more other people can relate to us. Hiding things keeps people at arm’s length. Sharing brings them closer into intimate and real conversations. Your story can be a key to unlock someone else’s prison.

5. It glorifies God. My testimony isn’t really about me—it’s all about God and His work in me. Sharing my testimony is sharing the Gospel because I’m sharing a story of God’s hope. A Christian testimony is focused on a Person that interrupted our selfish rebellion, a Light that helped us see the error of our ways. A testimony is not a Christian testimony unless it includes repentance and a desire to work for God and see things His way for the rest of your life. This is what glorifies God and makes Him smile.

—Jennifer Heeren, adapted

TESTIMONY VS. OUTCOME

Lists can be boring, but not the one in Hebrews 11. It’s an impressive list of Old Testament believers and their amazing accomplishments. However, the writer kept interspersing the words “by faith,” for his emphasis was strictly faith, not fame. *Through faith* these people obtained a good testimony (v. 39). But was there always a good outcome?

In verses 33-35a, the writer highlighted those who by faith subdued kingdoms, stopped the mouths of lions, and escaped the edge of the sword. Then he mentioned “others” who were tortured and killed, those for whom reprieves never came (vv. 35b-38). Did they obtain a bad testimony? No! Verse 39 says that “these all”—both the delivered and the undelivered—obtained a good testimony, for all had acted in faith.

I'm certain that all had asked the Lord for help. But some received deliverance, and others received an answer similar to the one given to Paul when he pleaded for his "thorn" to be removed: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Be greatly encouraged! Whenever you act in faith and in God's strength, you are obtaining a good testimony before Him—no matter what the outcome.

—Our Daily Bread

A GOOD REPORT

When detailing qualifications for leaders, the apostle Paul stressed the importance of possessing "a good report" from the world (1 Timothy 3:7). In other words, a candidate ready for leadership among *God's people* is one who already enjoys a good witness in the *community*—one who confirms from Monday to Saturday what he affirms on Sunday.

Consider the influence your life has on the unbelievers who observe your lifestyle. These unbelievers may be as close as unsaved family members, but they also include neighbors, coworkers, fellow students and teachers, and even the government. The kind of effect you have on them is one which either establishes or denies your readiness for leadership and influence.

A good testimony can be cultivated by applying these principles:

- **Obey the law.** Anything—from obeying city by-laws to paying taxes—is an opportunity for Christians to either demonstrate their good testimony or provide an opportunity for unbelievers to cast reproach on the name of Christ (1 Peter 2:13–17).
- **Word hard at your work.** From the very beginning, man was created to work and make the world a better

place as a reflection of the skill and power of God, and for the good of human beings and creation itself. As such, Christians should be very conscious of their testimony in the workplace—particularly with respect to the quality of their labors (Colossians 3:23).

- **Live visibly.** The more hostile the culture becomes to the gospel, the more Christians consider retreating into isolation. But isolation is no way to fulfill one's obligation to be a light to the world (Matthew 5:14–16; Philippians 2:14–15).

- **Live intentionally.** A true saint engages the world for the purpose of evangelism. Search for ways to be active in the lives of unbelievers, like Jesus did (Matthew 9:10–13).

- **Love one another.** The unusual love believers have for each other is intended not only for the benefit of the Christian community, but also for the benefit of the watching world. By observing this love in genuine display, unbelievers will be attracted to it (John 13:34–35).

- **Be ready to speak.** As important as good works are to evangelization, words are an essential part of sharing the good news (Romans 10:14–17; 1 Peter 3:15–16).

- **Love the lost.** If we truly loved the lost, we would be deeply concerned about whether our actions serve to attract unbelievers to Christ, or drive them away (1 Timothy 1:15).

- **Wage wise warfare.** Christians must be alert to the spiritual battle taking place over their testimony to the watching world. The devil is setting unseen traps—all with the goal of destroying Christian testimony. Such a reality calls for alert and diligent warfare against these schemes (Ephesians 6:11–12; 1 Peter 5:8–10).

— Brad Klassen, adapted