

# IT'S ALL ABOUT *RELATIONSHIPS*

MAKING PEOPLE FEEL UNDERSTOOD

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## STEP 2 - SHARING YOUR TESTIMONY - CHAPTER 13

### BE RELATABLE IN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

#### Connection Empowers A Relatable Gospel Message

Establishing a connection and identifying with the unbeliever's life struggles or circumstances will help you deliver the Gospel message more effectively. Therefore, if you don't know the person you want to share the Gospel with, it would be beneficial to get to know them a bit first. You should strive to establish trust with that person; they will likely be more apt to listen and respond to your story.



***The Gospel is best shared between two individuals who've connected over time.***

It may take five minutes, five hours, five days, or five months, but focus on building and strengthening relationships. When trust grows over time, people are usually more willing to open up and share their stories.

Also, when we develop relationships with somebody from other cultures, religions, backgrounds, and belief systems, we establish connections and open the door for the Gospel

message to be shared further than we could imagine.

Although it is beneficial to write out your testimony, the purpose is not to memorize it and deliver it word-for-word. The goal is to help you communicate your experience so your listener can connect with you and better understand what you are saying. Using the right words and your story's flow is essential in effectively communicating your testimony.

If you know someone has had the same struggles you have experienced, make sure you add that into your story. This will help the other person relate to you. Considering everybody will have a different life story, it is good to keep your testimony fluid so things can be added or taken away as needed to connect with the person you are speaking with. Also, determining how to start and end your testimony is essential.

As you continue making your [rough outline](#), ask the Lord for wisdom, understanding, and insight on how to share your testimony. Be open to other Christian's advice and recommendations. Many people have said that critique from others on their testimony has been very constructive.

Take time to practice and sharpen this tool of sharing the Gospel with having "[an answer for everyone](#)," and many people will come to Christ.

**Invest time, care, thought, and prayer in this significant and influential part of discipleship. Please start now or keep on doing your [rough testimony](#) copy.**



### **FINDING THOSE WHO ARE OPEN TO THE GOSPEL MESSAGE.**

Many Christians spend their time with other believers without leaving much time and opportunity to meet non-believers.

To share Christ with non-Christians, we must be willing to create friendships and be involved in their life. Don't just spend all of your time in your Christian circle.

As you live a positive Christ-centered life and serve in your community, the Holy Spirit will guide and direct you to people who are open to hearing the Gospel, or perhaps, they will find you.

Think of sharing the Gospel message as more of a **privilege** than out of duty or obligation. As opportunities arise to share your testimony, always communicate honestly and naturally about your faith, hope, and confidence in God. Sometimes, this process takes time and lots of practice. It would be best to strive to be open and prepared to share when opportunities arise.

*Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.* (2 Timothy 4:2).

Once an opportunity presents itself, you could invite them to a home Bible study group, a life group, or an [Alpha Series](#) at a church in your area where they can explore life, faith, and meaning.

Here, you can quickly and safely start conversations with those you invite. Begin with general topics and gradually lead to more significant and profound spiritual discussions.

Remember, God is more interested in your obedience and availability to serve Him and others than your ability to bring others to Christ successfully. It is the job of the Holy Spirit to grow the seed you have planted.



## HERE ARE SOME RECOMMENDATIONS TO GET A CONVERSATION GOING.

### 1. Include some "small talk" before talking about spiritual matters.

Beginning with spiritual things too soon in the testimony might be a turn-off. Please let the non-Christian get familiar with you as a regular individual first. Talk about family, work, hobbies, education, interests, etc. This is crucial in finding common ground to help you relate to the non-believer.

### 2. Discuss current situations in the news or your region.

For example, you could say, "I see on the news that drugs are an epidemic in our area. People are trying to find something satisfying, so they turn to drugs and other things to find answers. But in the end, does that work (Jessie)?"

(Saying their name does make it more personal.)

### 3. An easy way to start your testimony is by stating, "I know in my own life . . ."

Recommend starting with a sentence like, "I know in my own life..." then fill in the blank. It's a great transition sentence. You will be surprised at what is divulged once you have prepared and practiced your story/testimony.

### 4. Be observant of expressed needs such as relationship problems, financial problems, raising children, or stress at work.

Please use one or two of these areas to show how Christ has helped you through those issues. For Instance, you can say, "I used to struggle at my job too," or "I struggled with marriage problems as well." Then, you could express that you once allowed these pressures to bring you down and give examples of how you felt during these times and if those feelings manifested into negative actions or behaviors. Did you lash out at others because you were angry? Were you bitter? Did you turn to alcohol and drugs?

Follow this up with how your feelings, actions, and behaviors changed when you decided to accept Christ as your Savior and how trusting in Him changed your life. **It is important** to emphasize that if God can help **you** through life's struggles, He will most assuredly help others.



## WHAT NOT TO DO OR SAY IN A CONVERSATION

### 1. Don't criticize an unbeliever for living a non-Christian lifestyle.

Remember your attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyle before coming to Christ.

Your purpose is to share how they can have a more satisfying life in Christ.

## 2. Avoid one-sided "religious" remarks.

Don't say, "Jesus is the solution to all your problems." He is, but someone may not understand who Jesus is or recognize anything He can do in their lives and circumstances.

## 3. Avoid debates on moral issues.

Be aware that non-Christians will need help understanding biblical teachings. Recognize they need a logical and trustworthy foundation to make correct moral choices. Nothing will be accomplished by **ARGUING AND DEBATING**.

You will meet folks who love to disagree and debate with questions that may be an intellectual coverup and smokescreen. You could answer all their questions satisfactorily, and they would still not put their life into Jesus's hands. Be kind and loving to folks who like to argue and pride themselves in head knowledge. At some point, your conversation may become an unending argument; all you can do is leave them in God's hands. Have confidence that God can change their hearts and minds.



## KEEP THE CONVERSATION LIGHT AND FOCUSED.

### 1. Stay focused on the Gospel message and your testimony.

You will likely find that unbelievers will say something negative or try to change the subject by having an off-topic question.

Examples:

- Talking about a bad church experience.
- Wanting to discuss other religions or beliefs.

- How could He allow bad things to happen if God was real?
- Asking why there is so much suffering and evil?
- They may declare they are a good person; therefore, they don't need someone to "save them."
- Talk about a Christian they know negatively, which they know is not living a Godly life.

You could state that you don't have all the answers. Especially if you need more time to answer all their questions and doubts. Instead, proceed to explain God's mercy and grace. It would also be wise to convey that Christians are not perfect. Some fail badly multiple times. *It is in Him who we trust.*

## 2. Transition to Meaningful and then Spiritual Conversation.

For example, if the person you are speaking with steers the conversation about the stress and challenge of raising children, you could say something like: "I know what you mean. I am a follower of Jesus, and I don't know what I would do if I didn't have Jesus to give me patience and strength each day."



If the person starts to talk about the economy or the state of the world, you could say. "The world seems to be spinning out of control, and no one seems to be able to fix it, but as a follower of Jesus, I know God is in control and that Jesus is the solution to the world's needs!"

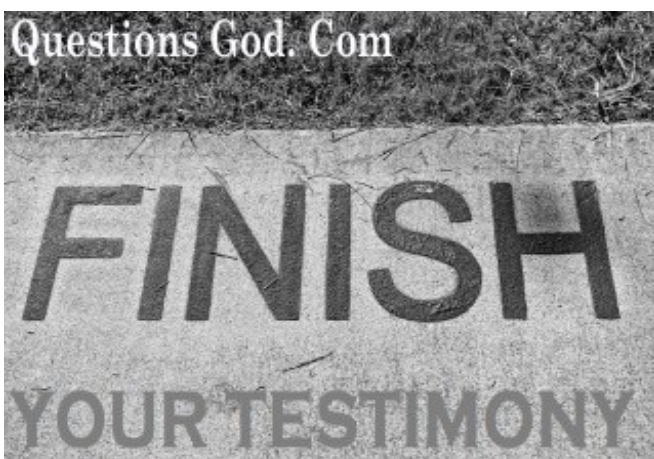
### **3. Combine humor and laughter in sharing.**

We've all heard that laughter is the best medicine, and I believe it is true. Laughter reduces anxiety and stress, puts us in a better mood, and makes us happier. Humor helps you share your story with strangers or new relationships. **Humor** can be a powerful tool for drawing the other person into your testimony and subduing any awkwardness while getting to know one another. Humor can smooth over differences, lower everyone's stress level, and allow us to communicate in a way that strengthens and deepens our relationships.

**Example of adding humor.** (Please use passionate and enthusiastic words.)

I gave a young lady at work a ride home and offered her a joint. She said no thanks but offered to take me to a church service that night. I was so excited that she asked me on a date, even though it was for a church service. I realized I needed something more when I heard God's message at the evening service. I needed Jesus in my life. That was the best date night ever as I turned my life over to Jesus, and I married that young lady one year later.

This short story has always put a big smile on a non-believer's face and has broken down any awkward barriers between us. Using this story, I have realized that the listener lets their guard down each time and is more inclined to listen to my entire testimony. Find your own illustration using a touch of humor that may help you connect with others. If you can't think of an amusing and down-to-earth story off the top of your head, pray about it, and I guarantee God will pop something into your head that you may have previously forgotten.



### **ENDING YOUR TESTIMONY**

When you have shared your personal story, you should end with a comment that makes the individual reflect and consider what you have just conveyed.

What you say depends on how the listener reacts and responds to what you have shared.

If their response seems to show interest, you could say something like:

1. "Have you ever experienced something like that?"
2. "Have you ever considered whether you have eternal life?"
3. "What are your thoughts on having a relationship with God?"
4. "Can I share how I know I have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?"
5. "Can I explain how you can know for certain that you can have a new life in Christ?"

If their answer seems negative, uninterested, neutral, or vague, you could say something like:

1. "Do you have any doubts or questions about what I just shared?"
2. "Well, that is what transpired for me. I will gladly share more if you want to discuss it later." (Please leave the door open to talk later if the opportunity arises.)
3. "If you are interested, I would like to share more with you sometime."



## **COMMON DRAWBACKS IN YOUR INITIAL TESTIMONY PREPARATION**

### **1. Eliminate doubt.**

Are you a doubter? Faith is just trusting. The way you overcome your doubts is to take each step towards God while still being honest about your doubts. Let your doubts lead you to trust Him more and more until there's no need for doubt.

### **2. Being too careful on the first draft.**

Many people have a habit of being too careful and critical when writing the [rough draft](#) of their testimony. You are not trying to make a flawless presentation the first time. Put something on paper! It is easier to cut something down than to increase it.

### **3. Too much reminiscing and retrospection.**

- a. Some become discouraged, depressed, and sad because of too much soul-searching or thoughts of past unhappy experiences and events.
- b. Some like to "*replay*" and "*relive*" previous incidents.
- c. Some become too distracted by trying to make good old conflicts.

### **4. Procrastinating because it is hard work.**

Completing your testimony will take a lot of time and work. And if you are waiting for a moment when you feel like it or have more time, it will not make it any easier. The quicker you jump into the work, the faster you will enjoy the fruits of your labor.

**Spend time, thought, and prayer in this powerful and influential part of discipleship. Please start now or keep on doing your [rough testimony](#) copies.**

### **Why do We Share our Testimony?**

*... Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3:15).*

We not only need to be listening attentively for these opportunities that will undoubtedly occur if we are living as we should be, but we also need to be prepared with a response. We shouldn't wait for people to ask a specific question. The likelihood that someone will directly ask you, "What is the reason for your hope?" is slim. Yet, how many of us have been asked the same question in roundabout ways?

Here are some typical questions people may ask you that you should be ready to answer:

- You don't seem as stressed about work as I am. Why is this?
- What do you mean you don't believe in sex outside of marriage? It looks a bit risky to go without a test drive.
- You always seem so joyful. Life stresses me out. What's up with you?
- I have heard there are many ways to get to heaven. What do you think?
- Of course, you can be spiritual and not go to church. I don't see the connection.
- I never hear you curse. How is that possible?
- You don't seem to complain about much. Doesn't anything get on your nerves?
- Why are you so open and honest with people? I could never tell people exactly how I felt.

What is the answer to all of these questions? **JESUS!**

**"Jesus is in my life – and that same relationship is available for you."**

Recently, I started a conversation with a lady while waiting for an appointment. Within a minute of our conversation, she tells me that her son died a week ago. I encourage you to be constantly available, prepared, and sensitive to the Holy Spirit for such divine meetings. The more you practice in these "*captive settings*," the more you will be ready when others ask you, directly or indirectly, "[What is the reason for your hope?](#)"

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## **PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT**

After writing down and tweaking your testimony, keep practicing it for more evaluation. Continue this [method](#) of scrutinizing and working on it until:

1. You can say it from MEMORY in three to four minutes but in a way that does not sound memorized.
2. It embraces the Gospel in a meaningful, compelling, and engaging manner.

### **Practice on a captive audience:**

- At a restaurant.
- When you are waiting at a bus stop.
- As you are waiting for an appointment.
- When you are watching your kids at the park with other moms or dads.
- When you talk to someone sitting next to you on an airplane, bus, car, or train.

Many find working on their testimony to be discouraging and daunting. On the other hand, several find it to be stimulating and helpful. Like anything else, you must make up

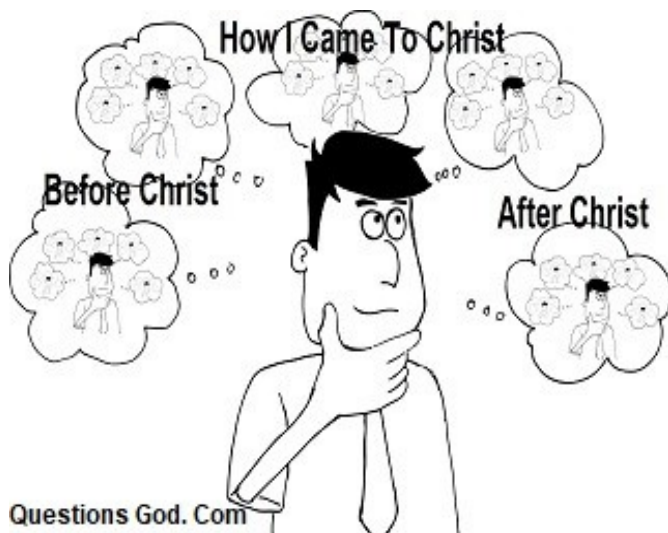
your mind and work hard! Your approach, motivation, and attitude in practicing your [testimony](#) can make it as straightforward or complex as you make it.

**Pray for God's wisdom, guidance, and direction.** It will be the best life decision you can make.

### **Why are testimonies effective, forceful, and compelling?**

- People enjoy listening to personal stories; therefore, you have the attention of people who might not otherwise stop to listen.
- Because it is your story and your experience, no one can argue with you about it.
- It does not appear that you are trying to convince or preach to them of anything. You are simply sharing an essential part of your life with them.
- It makes the concept of God more relatable, concrete, specific, and personal.

## **LIFE BEFORE (RELATE) - HOW I CAME TO CHRIST (REVEAL) - LIFE AFTER (REJOICE)**



### **My 10, 30, or 60-Second Testimony.**

To instill your testimony outline securely in your memory, you should establish a "*ten-second*" testimony that outlines the basis for a complete personal testimony.

Then, do a *thirty* and *sixty-second* testimony.

### **LIFE BEFORE**

Use descriptive words that a non-Christian will know, describing your life before knowing Christ.

### **Some identifying words are:**

*Fearful, selfish, lonely, no meaning, good person, troubled, without hope, full of anxiety, always trying to be #1, without purpose, lost, etc.*

### **HOW (CONVERSION)**

It is best to characterize your conversion in terms that a non-Christian will immediately understand. Phrases that are meaningful to Christians, such as "*I got saved*," "*my sins were covered by the blood*," or "*I prayed at Calvary*," will typically not be understood by a non-Christian. You might explain your "HOW" encounter with words like *forgiveness, direction, assurance, peace, love, faithfulness, compassion, gentleness, etc.*

Or phrases such as:

"I realized God loved me,"

"I recognized Jesus was God's Son,"

"I understood that God had a plan and a purpose for my life."



### **LIFE AFTER:**

Use words common to a non-Christian to describe your life experiences now. Use phrases such as: "I found a purpose." "I stopped trying to be the center of attention," "I found forgiveness," "My guilt is gone," or "I have found the only means to true living."

Learn to keep your "ten-second" testimony simple. Use more details in your "three-minute testimony."

### **BELOW ARE EXAMPLES OF A TEN, THIRTY, AND SIXTY-SECOND TESTIMONY.**

#### **TEN-SECOND TESTIMONY**

**LIFE BEFORE** - *I had no lasting peace and happiness in my life, but a friend told me this was because I didn't have a relationship with Christ.*

**HOW** – *When I received Christ as Lord and Savior, I was forgiven by Jesus and chose to follow Him.*

**LIFE AFTER** - *I discovered forgiveness, joy, true peace, and direction.*

#### **The above ten-second testimony developed into a thirty-second testimony.**

#### **THIRTY-SECOND TESTIMONY**

**LIFE BEFORE** - *I couldn't find lasting peace and happiness in anything or anyone in my youth. My friends, family, and activities could not fill that void in my life.*

**HOW** - *A friend told me how Jesus had died for me so my life could have direction and meaning. I then understood that I needed God's mercy and forgiveness as a sinner. I asked God to forgive me of my wrongs and genuinely believed and accepted that Jesus Christ is my Savior, receiving Him into my life.*

**LIFE AFTER** - *After turning my life over to Jesus, I have found that the Bible gives all the key answers I need. Regardless of circumstances and concerns, God's faithfulness, joy, and peace are mine forever.*

#### **The above thirty-second testimony developed into a sixty-second testimony.**

#### **SIXTY-SECOND TESTIMONY**

**LIFE BEFORE** - *In my youth and as a young adult, I couldn't find lasting joy or peace in anyone or anything. My friends and I were always busy doing something, and it seemed there should be much more to life than we all were experiencing. I would get excited about new things; they only satisfied me briefly over time. My friends even agreed that there seemed to be a big void in our lives.*

**HOW** - *One day, while talking with a friend about some problems, he informed me that my biggest obstacle was needing a personal connection and relationship with Jesus. Through a Bible verse in Romans 3:23, he showed me that no one is perfect, meaning everyone has sinned. I discovered in the Bible in [Romans 3:23](#) that no one is perfect, meaning everyone has sinned. I discovered that the Bible, in [Romans 6:23](#), tells me my sins had earned a specific wage for me: death. Nonetheless, God didn't leave me in that place. Jesus died for me so my sins could be forgiven and pardoned, and I could enjoy a connection and a relationship with God and receive His free gift of eternal life.*

*All I had to do was to believe that Jesus died to pay the punishment for my sins and that He was raised from the dead so I could have a new life. My next step was to ask God to forgive me for my sins. My prayer request was simple; I said, "God, please forgive and pardon me for my sins. Thank you for giving your Son, Jesus, to die for me and to live so I could have everlasting life. Please save and deliver me from my sins and take charge of my life, Lord Jesus."*

**LIFE AFTER** - *After turning my life over to Jesus, God's continuing and satisfying peace and joy have been mine as I have embraced God's Word to overcome difficulties. I still have trials, but I am now trusting and convinced that God will help guide and strengthen me when difficulties and problems come.*

May God stir up your faith to share your story with conviction and trust. Recognizing every trial and tribulation you experience is an opportunity for the world to be transformed by your God Story.

### **A Journey Of Chapter 13 Questions – Be Relatable Build Relationships.**

Embark on a journey of self-discovery, reflection, and personal growth. Explore your thoughts and emotions to understand yourself and your world better. Please reflect and give thought to these questions from Chapter 13.

1. What are some of our recommendations to get a spiritual conversation going?
2. What are 3 things not to say in sharing the Gospel?
3. What are the right things to say and do in sharing the Gospel message?
4. What are the suggested closing ways to end the sharing conversation?
5. What stops us from preparing our initial testimony?

**Please remember to keep working on your three to four-minute testimony.**

When writing out your story, have [three pages of your testimony](#) using three sheets of paper labeled "[before](#)," "[how](#)," and "[after](#)."

**[My Life Before Christ](#)**

**[How I Came To Know Jesus Personally](#)**

**[My Life After I Came A Christian](#)**

## **Tomorrow's Study Guide**

### **Chapter 14**

#### **TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR TESTIMONY**



#### **Additional Sharing Handout Resources**

*Your Faith Story ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))*

*Writing My Faith Story ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))*

*My Faith Story Questions ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))*

*Prospects List ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))*

*Personal Sharing Handouts ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))*

*Spiritual Interest Survey ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))*

*Awareness Scale of the Gospel ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))*

*Steps For A New Christian's Growth ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))*

Use and print out our [Word-.docx](#) or a [PDF file](#) that makes 3 rough drafts.

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## **SHARING THE GOSPEL OUTLINE - 30-DAY STUDY GUIDE**

Sharing our faith is among our urgent calls as followers of Jesus. Discover the heart of evangelism and exciting techniques you can utilize to help you reach others for Christ.

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