

Trainer Note: This is a time-consuming training, so if done in a 3/3rds group you'll have to move quickly through the first third. You won't have time for the Care question. Go right to the check up and move quickly through it, apologizing as you go for rushing people. Then go right into the "Look Up" which will be this training. For the last 3rd just pray and ask everyone to think of 2 people they should share their testimony with. Write down names for next week's check up.

Testimony Training Session Teacher Notes

1. Paul, the great evangelist had his testimony ready to give....

Paul's gives his testimony twice in the Book of Acts.

- Luke gives it once – **Acts 9:1-22**.
- **Acts 22:1 – 21**. To the hostile Jews in Jerusalem who sought to kill him.
- **Acts 26:4 – 23**. To King Agrippa when he's on trial.

There probably won't be time to read these verses, but do emphasize that in two difficult situations: before hostile Jews and before a King, Paul resorts to his old standby – his testimony. That's so often the case even with us; we're not sure what to say, and so having mastered our testimonies gives us a solid base to start when we engage people. The testimony can get the conversation up and moving. Mastering our testimony takes practice. That is what we will do today and throughout the 3/3rds meetings together.

2. Giving our testimony is powerful spiritual warfare.

Our ability to give testimony has a powerful effect on our spiritual lives:

Revelation 12:11 (NASB95)

11 "And they overcame him (Satan) because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

Ask: "According to this verse – what do we do to overcome Satan?"

Please note there's 3 things that Christians do to overcome Satan:

1. They cling to the blood of the Lamb. That is, we're not condemned because the Lamb has died for us and paid the price.
2. They give their testimony. It's powerful spiritual warfare!
3. They don't love their lives even when faced with death. Their commitment to Jesus and His Kingdom is so great – they would lay down their very lives for Him.

Ask: Have you ever felt that nudge of the Holy Spirit to say something and you ignored it? I know I have – how did you feel afterward?

On the other hand, how do you feel *after* you have shared the Gospel? Whether they believe or not, we always feel great after we've shared the Gospel – it's always a spiritual boost. That's probably because of this next reason...

3. Virtually every time the Holy Spirit is given in the Book of Acts the believers share the Gospel. (Acts 2:4-11; 4:8,31; 7:55-56; 8:17; 10:44-46; 11:24; 13:9-10; 19:6-11.) No need to read these verses, and there probably won't be time in a normal 3/3rds time slot.

The Holy Spirit testifies about Jesus. And he blesses us in our efforts to do so as well.

Getting Started: Prepare Your Testimony

Work with: Your story, my story (or my testimony), God's story (The Gospel).

"Your story" means first we ask about them. You ask them questions. First we establish a relationship by showing sincere interest in them.

Engaging people in conversation is made easier by asking them questions about themselves. A helpful acrostic is:

ROCI (Pronounced "Rocky")

- **R**esidence – do you live around here?
- **O**ccupation – what type of work do you do? Note: don't ask what they're currently doing because some folks are out of work.
- **C**hildren or family: Are you married or do you have kids?
- **I**nterests – What do you enjoy doing to relax? Or what kind of hobbies do you have?

The idea is show interest in them. Listen and hear their story. Then...

The Bridge: There are many ways to bring up spiritual matters in everyday conversation. Some very direct ways include asking questions such as,

- "It sounds like you have faith in God. Do you consider yourself a Christian?"
- "Tell me about your spiritual journey – what's that been like?"
- "Do you ever think about spiritual things?" or...
- "Do you consider yourself a spiritual person?" or...
- "What is the most important thing in the world to you?" or...

Once you have turned the conversation to spiritual things you can usually find a way to naturally share an account of how you came to follow the Lord.

- “I have found that faith in Jesus has been very helpful in my life. Could I tell you a little bit about it?” or...
- “Can I share with you the most important discovery of my life?”

If someone is concerned about something, and you are able to relate:

- “I have had issues with such and such before. Can I tell you what helped me to get through that?”

I find if I ask questions about them and show interest and listen, they are almost always interested or willing to listening to me. And then I share my testimony...

The Testimony: Many people in the Bible shared their personal testimonies. Some examples are the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:18-20), the Samaritan woman (John 4:28-30, 39), Peter and John (Acts 4:18-21) and Paul (Acts 9:1-22; 22:3-16; 26:9-18). You should read these passages to get some ideas about how to share your faith in this way.

Your testimony in 3 parts:

1. Your life before Christ.
2. How/why you came to Christ.
3. Your life after Christ.

New believers:

- Your life before Christ.
- Why you came to Christ.

Those raised in the Church:

- An account of what difference it makes in your life to be a child of God. This is appropriate for anyone.

What we'll do now:

- **Take a sheet of paper.**
- **Write down your testimony.**
- **Plan on sharing it in 2-3 minutes.**
- **Break into groups of 2 and Practice it 5 times with your partner.**
- **Allow your partner to help you improve it.**

The coaching role is important!

Don't *just* be nice and affirming and smiling. We *DO* like to encourage people even if it's bad. Remember **Proverbs 28:23 (CEV) Honest correction is appreciated more than flattery.**

You want to give feedback, you want to coach – help them be effective. Do it in love. Was there anything unclear? Or hard to understand? Or didn't make sense? Something you wanted to hear more about? Let them know how their testimony can be better. We don't want to send folks out with a bad testimony just because we were afraid to hurt their feelings. They'll be so blessed to go out with a good testimony that impacts people!

Trainer Notes: Arrange the chairs so each person is facing someone. Have one side share their testimony with the other side in 3 minutes. You can use your smart phone timer to keep track. At the end of 3 minutes call "stop." And have them give feedback for one minute. Then swap roles and do the same thing – the feedback giver then gives his 3 minute testimony. And then hears 1 minute of feedback.

Then one side stands up and shifts down one chair and they do it all over again.

After each has done it 3 times you can have them share it in 2 minutes then 1 minute.

At the end, when all have shared their testimony, ask: "What did you learn?" And debrief the experience.

Ask "What was it like the 5th time compared to the first time?"

Ask this question to emphasize the value of practice. Share that from time to time in a 3/3rds group we'll be sharing our testimonies in the practice time.

Ask "was the feedback from your partner helpful? Did it help you improve?"

Point out that we put a high value on the coaching because we're training them all to be trainers. And getting them to give feedback is part of the process of making them trainers of trainers.

If time permits ask each to ask God whom they should share their testimony with this week and write that down for next weeks "Check up."