

## KEY MAN'S INVITATIONAL

# HOW TO SHARE YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY

19 February 2004

**INTRODUCTION:** *Your Story about how you became a Christian is one of the most powerful tools in your evangelism arsenal. People may refute your theology but they can not argue with your personal history. Your Story about your life before, the events leading to your conversion, and what God continues to do in your life as you grow in Grace should be written down and then rehearsed so you are ready "to give an answer of the Hope that is in you."<sup>1</sup> In this section we will discuss what a Testimony is, how to prepare one, and how to share it with others. You will discover as you use it God will open many doors that were closed before.*

### I. WHAT IS A PERSONAL TESTIMONY?

- A. Your "Story" about how you became a Christian.
- B. Declaring what one has seen, heard, and experienced.

1 John 1:1-3

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. [2] The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. [3] We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

### II. A BIBLICAL MODEL

- A. Acts 22 Paul having just been beaten is brought before a Roman officer by the Jews.
  - 1. How did Paul capture the interest and attention of his hearers?
    - a. Acts 22:1 \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 3:15

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b. Acts 22:2 \_\_\_\_\_

c. Acts 22:3 \_\_\_\_\_

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d. Acts 26:2-3 \_\_\_\_\_

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Acts 22:1-3

"Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now offer to you."

[2] And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became even more quiet; and he said,

[3] "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, just as you all are today.

Acts 26:2-3

"In regard to all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that I am about to make my defense before you today; [3] especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among the Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

2. Which personal pronoun is most frequently used in his testimony?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What style was Paul using? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Notice Paul's testimony in Acts 22 and 26 can be divided into three parts:

a. What his life was like **BEFORE** he met Christ.

b. **HOW** he met Christ (his conversion experience).

c. What his life was like **AFTER** he became a Christian.

5. In Acts 22 and 26 which verses relate Paul's story:

Before \_\_\_\_\_

How \_\_\_\_\_

After \_\_\_\_\_

### III. WRITING YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY

**BE FACTUAL, BE SPECIFIC, BE PERSONAL, BE BRIEF, BE REAL**

A. Before Christ

- a
1. List three “open nerves” that affected your life before you became Christian.
    - a. \_\_\_\_\_
    - b. \_\_\_\_\_
    - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. What incidents or examples from your life illustrate these “open nerve” areas? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. Your conversion experience:

1. Remember these principles
  - a. Bring out the Gospel clearly and simply.
  - b. It is effective to use Scriptures that were influential in your conversion. Isa. 55:11
    - 1) *Don't use too many verses a few well selected verses get the point across.*
    - 2) *Memorize the verses you use.*
    - 3) *Explain words that may be hard for your listeners to understand.*
  - c. **BE CAREFUL TO AVOID RELIGIOUS JARGON THAT WILL CONFUSE OR BE MEANINGLESS TO A NON-CHRISTIAN!**





# <sup>1</sup>LEVELS OF TESTIMONY

Philip and the Ethiopian: Acts "Philip started with the Word of God!" "He started where the man was."

## **Acts 8:26-40**

Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. <sup>27</sup>So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, <sup>28</sup>was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. <sup>29</sup>Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot." <sup>30</sup>So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" <sup>31</sup>And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. <sup>32</sup>The place in the Scripture which he read was this:

*"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;  
And as a lamb before its shearer is silent,  
So He opened not His mouth.*

<sup>33</sup>*In His humiliation His justice was taken away,  
And who will declare His generation?  
For His life is taken from the earth."*

<sup>34</sup>So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" <sup>35</sup>Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. <sup>36</sup>Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?" <sup>37</sup>Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." <sup>38</sup>So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. <sup>39</sup>Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup>But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

A PERSON'S TESTIMONY IS ONLY EFFECTIVE IF ALL THREE LEVELS MATCH. A PERSONAL TESTIMONY MUST BE GOD CENTERED AND WORD CENTERED NOT "ME" CENTERED. THE LEVELS CAN NOT AND MUST NOT CONTRADICT EACH OTHER. DOES MY PERSONAL TESTIMONY ACCURATELY REPRESENT THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD?

- I. CHARACTER - What I am.
- II. CONDUCT - What I do.
- III. CONVERSATION - What I say.

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<sup>1</sup>Credit for outline due to Dr. Charles Stanley " In Touch Ministries" Friday, September 17, 1999

## ED RUSH

### *Testimony for Southside Church 16FEB97 "edited and revised"*

I have now been involved with the church since August. I have enjoyed the ministry of the Word and fellowship of this church. I will be leaving this week for Meridian, MS to continue my flight training there. I would like to thank Pastor Groves and all of you for this opportunity to tell you what God has done in my life.

I became a Christian when I was about 10 years old. My father had been on a road trip with his job and had come to know Christ through some co-workers. He came home, walked in to my room and laid it down for me, "Ed, you are a sinner, God has died for you, and if you want to go to heaven you need to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior." Well, that was good enough for me. I accepted Christ without any fanfare, bells, or whistles. To be honest, I didn't feel any different at all. The only reason that I know that Christ came into my life at that time is that from that point in my life until now I can see God working in my life for change.

Well, that's how I became a Christian, but let me tell you about a time when God really got a hold of my life. When I was a freshman in college, I had really only one focus – I wanted to be a missionary. I felt that God had been calling me into full time service for Him overseas. So I wrote to about 25 missionary agencies, and got letters from about 40 others. I wanted to be on the front lines for the kingdom. As a matter of fact, I wanted to go to the mission field so bad that I was frustrated with God that I was in school. I felt it was a waste of time when I could be doing some real work for the kingdom somewhere else. One night I was walking through campus praying. I had a little card in my hand that had a list of some names and some prayer requests, both general and specific. One of my general prayer requests was for unreached peoples. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the term, unreached peoples are those who do not have anyone near them who could tell them the Gospel, even if they wanted to hear. So here I am walking and praying for unreached peoples when I look up and realize that I was standing in the middle of fraternity row, with houses on either side. It was then that I felt convicted to reach this group. I was a baseball player, there were a number of guys on the team so in the Spring of 1992, I pledged and was initiated into Lambda Chi Alpha. Well, the results were astounding. Within a week I found myself riding in the car with the fraternity President explaining to him the meaning of John 3:16. Numerous times someone would come to me in the middle of our party floor at 2:00 in the morning saying, Rush, you gotta tell me about this religious stuff, or someone would knock on my door having just broke up with their girlfriend say, Rush, you're a religious guy, tell me what I'm doing wrong here. People felt comfortable talking to me because I was one of them.

***In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus says,*** "Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all of the things I have commanded you..." The interesting thing about that passage is that the command there is not "Go" it is "Make Disciples." The word "Go" could be better translated as "As you are going..." That's what God taught me that night on fraternity row. I thought that I needed to GO. I couldn't wait to get out of school so I could be involved in the real work of the ministry. The thing that I didn't understand is that I was already going, God was commanding me to MAKE DISCIPLES. Every morning when I wake up God has already fulfilled the first part of Matt. 28:18. The going is easy. That's what I do everyday. The hard part I think is to follow the command to make disciples. God impressed upon me that night that it is not the sole responsibility of the pastors, the missionaries, and the full time workers to do the job of evangelizing the world, it is my job too. Please pray for me as I go to a new mission field NAS Meridian, MS, that God would use me to "Make Disciples" while I am in flight training there.