

STUDY GUIDE



LIBERATED 06.17.2018

[start with prayer]

Missions Prayer Focus this week:

- Emergency Assistance Center
- Appalachia Missions Team—Serving June 21-24

[set up]

Today we will spend the majority of our time writing out our personal testimony. Our personal testimony is an important tool to point people to Christ. Paul's testimony takes up much of the first two chapters of the book of Galatians.

Resources:

It can be hard to pinpoint all the events we see in Galatians. Here is a helpful site that talks about the timeline of Galatians 1 and 2: <https://redeemerchurchpca.com/2016/09/18/galatians-timeline/>

Other helpful resources for Galatians:

- *The Message of Galatians* by John Stott
- *Galatians* by Philip Ryken
- *ESV Study Bible*
- "How to Read Galatians" by Tim Mackie
<https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Training/Post/View/231125>
(also available on youtube)

[digging deeper]

ASSIGNMENT:

During this group time, the goal is that everyone is able to write out their personal testimony. Below (on the next 2 pages) are some helpful instructions from Pastor Rick Duncan to help your group write their stories. Read those instructions, and after that break off individually to write your personal testimony. Try to keep your testimony under 600 words, but feel free to be as brief as you would like.

[living it out]

After you have written your story, come back and share it with the group. I imagine this will be a very encouraging time!

[end with prayer]

Make sure to leave at least 15 minutes of time for prayer. Focus your prayer time in two areas. First, thank God for his kindness and grace to save us sinners! Second, pray for courage to share our testimonies with the people we know we should share them with.

Guidelines for Writing “Your Story”

What to Do:

Ask God to give you wisdom.
Make your story sound conversational, not academic or formal.
Be warm and personal.
Keep to a 3-minute limit. (That’s about 650-700 words.)
Be realistic, don’t exaggerate.

What Not to Do:

Avoid statements that reflect negatively on any church organization.
Avoid statements that reflect negatively on any individual.
Avoid religious-sounding words, denominations, or church names.
Avoid speaking writing in a preachy manner. Say, “I” and “me,” not “you.”
Avoid using vague terms like “joyful,” “peaceful,” or “changed” without explaining them.
Avoid using religious terms like “saved,” “sin,” or “convicted” without explaining them.
Avoid communicating that all your struggles and problems have now ended.

Writing Style:

Begin with an attention-getting sentence or incident.
Be positive, accurate and specific – sharing a few key details will help arouse interest.
Simplify – reduce the “clutter.” Mention a limited number of people and details.
Use Bible verses directly related to your experience. But do not use the references. For example, say, “One of Jesus’ disciples said...” rather than writing “1 John 5:11-13 says...”
Write things just as you would share with someone one-on-one.

Remember: Effective communication is brief, to the point, and clear. Sharing your story should not take more than 3 minutes. All right, now you’re ready to write! Just answer the following questions:

Before Christ: Who were you before you met Jesus?

Many people’s actions spring out of their unsatisfied deep inner needs. What were one or two of your unsatisfied deep inner needs before you came to know Jesus? What were your attitudes, needs, and problems before you received Christ? Examples: “I was seeking for...” “My life revolved around...” “I gained happiness and security from...” “My life was missing...” “My attitude was...” “My life was filled with problems I could not solve...” (Use an example from your personal life here. For instance, did your security come from money, your relationships, etc? Remember, avoid being overly sensational.)

Non-Christians are usually trying to satisfy their deep inner needs through unsatisfactory solutions. What unsatisfactory solutions did you use to attempt to meet those deep inner needs?

How did trying to meet your deep inner needs this way disappoint you? How was your life unfulfilling? How did you come to realize this? What were you struggling with (if anything) just before you received Christ?

Receiving Christ: How did Jesus change your life?

This part of your personal testimony is where you come to the transition in your life, where God’s work begins to become evident in you. Remember to follow the same guidelines as before.

Describe the circumstances that caused you to consider Christ as the solution to your deep inner needs. When and how did you first hear about and truly understand the story about Jesus? What were your struggles just before you received Christ?

State specifically the steps you took to become a follower of Jesus. Share truths about the gospel—that you realized you have disobeyed God, that you realized you did not deserve His forgiveness, that you realized Christ died to forgive you, and that you realized your need to receive Jesus to be forgiven and to be changed forever. Remember that it's the gospel that has the power to change lives (see Romans 1:16). So, include how you came to understand that Jesus came, that He died on the cross in your place to save you, and that He rose again.

You likely cannot remember exactly what you prayed when you received Christ. But sharing a few words about how you prayed (what you may have said) might encourage someone else to express their faith in a similar way.

After receiving Christ: Who are you now?

When giving a personal testimony, many people concentrate on the sin they had before they received Christ - even the sensationalism. However, an effective testimony focuses not on our sin, but on the work of the Holy Spirit in us, so that Jesus Christ takes center stage. It is at this point that your testimony really begins to shine the spotlight on Jesus.

State how Jesus filled or is filling your deep inner needs. In the before section, you express your needs and how you tried unsuccessfully to meet them. You now want to briefly show the difference that Jesus has made in your life.

What happened when you received Christ? How and why did your attitudes and actions begin to change? What has happened since you received Christ? How has your life changed? When did you notice that change? How are you motivated differently now?

If there is a particular verse that applies, this would be a good place to use it.