

FISHERS OF MEN



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Session #3 - Cold Turkey Witnessing

How God Led Me To Win Souls

"For God did not give us a spirit of fear but of power, and of love and of a sound mind."

2 Timothy 1:7

This is my testimony of how the Lord sent me out into the streets as a leader in the Street Ministry.

I can remember when I first stepped out into witnessing, it was very scary and intimidating but I knew the Holy Spirit was prompting me. I would go to the supermarket and I would feel this strong prompting to step out and tell the person in the supermarket about Jesus. Every time this happened I was very nervous, but each time I would do it and to be honest I would come away feeling good that I actually did it. I would be very tense but as long as I did it I was happy. I remember that each week I would purpose in my heart to do three things for Jesus. That could be telephoning someone, visiting someone, or telling someone about Jesus. I remember I would go walking early morning, and one morning I felt prompted to go into the shopping centre. I saw this lady coming towards me and I stepped beside her to tell her that Jesus loved her. She looked at me really strangely, but again I had stepped out. I would come to the Service every Sunday morning totally pleased with myself that I had done what I purposed in my heart for Jesus. I always had a great time with the Lord at the Services. Looking back now, I realise that the Holy Spirit was training me up for Street Witnessing.

I remember one day I was at the supermarket yet again, and the Holy Spirit opened my ears to a conversation that was going on between the cashier and another lady, about one of the shop assistants having an accident. It appeared that the young boy was playing with fireworks and one exploded in his face. According to the lady, his face was a mess. I was doing my best not to hear, but I heard and knew that the Holy Spirit wanted me to speak. Again I was nervous, but I obeyed the Holy Spirit and told the lady that we were having a Healing Meeting that night if her friend would like to come for prayer for healing. The lady received the invitation graciously, but sad to say, neither her nor her friend were able to come. I remember praying for the young man's healing as I walked away.

A few weeks later, the Holy Spirit put it on my heart to go back and talk to the lady. I thought the idea was to witness, but when I saw the lady and asked her how her friend was, she acted astonished and said "You would not believe it, but it has healed so good that you would not even notice his face was burned in the first place." I was totally amazed at the outcome of my prayer, I walked away in total awe of what the Lord had done.

A few years back we had a guest speaker visit our Church who was a Street Evangelist. At the end of the meeting he made an altar call for people who felt led of the Holy Spirit to go Street Witnessing. I responded to the altar call and it all started from there. I believe that

the Lord imparted to me through the speaker, a spirit of boldness. I was very eager all week to go Street Witnessing. This was a whole new experience for me.

I was excited and yet a little nervous. When the day came to go into the City to witness, I eagerly set out not really knowing what was about to happen. Before I reached the train station, I started to witness to the people on the street on the way. When I got into the train I could not sit still. I went up to people, telling them about Jesus and giving them a tract. It was very exciting and yet scary. It felt as if I had stopped being Elizabeth and was another person totally yielded to the Holy Spirit. I guess this was my first experience of walking in the Anointing.

That night I led seven people to the Lord and I know I could have led more, but this being my first experience in walking in the anointing, I was totally overwhelmed by it all. I remember another young man I could have spoken to, and whom the Holy Spirit wanted me to talk to, but I was in total awe of how the Lord had used me that night.

Although I had the spirit of boldness, I still had to overcome intimidation and fear. Every time I stepped out, I had to overcome the fear. To confront people with the Gospel was not easy for me, but God promises each of us that He would be with us always. So each time I trusted that the Lord was with me, and you know, He was powerful.

One day, after being sometime in the Street Ministry, a person came to me at church and actually spoke the following words to me: She said "You know of all the people in the church, you are the least one I would have thought to head up a Street Ministry team." She was absolutely right, I am the least expected to do this kind of work.

You see, when I became a Christian, I had a spirit of fear in my life so much that it manifested itself in seizures. I was actually diagnosed with Chronic Panic Syndrome. I was under the care of a Psychiatrist for nine months, but I learned quickly the things of God, and Jesus set me free from fear. Today, I continue to walk in that freedom. That does not mean that fear does not come against me, it does, but I know how to overcome it now. The way to overcome is to step out and do what the Lord is asking you to do.

I am a testimony to the Lord, and because of my background I am the least expected to lead a Street Ministry team. But then the Word of God says in 1 Corinthians 1:20b "*Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world.*" In the natural I was the least expected person to do this work, but then God is a supernatural God and nothing is impossible for Him.

During my time on the street, I had to confront many situations and some were very intimidating for me, but because the Lord was with me I persevered and overcame my weakness each time. Every time I went out into the street I had to overcome intimidation of one kind or another. The most fearful thing in witnessing is stepping out. Once I stepped out, the Holy Spirit took over. Once you are willing to be used in witnessing, the Lord will do the rest. He has certainly proven it in my life.

I had many situations and confrontations with people, two of which I will share with you now.

When I went into the Street Ministry, the Lord did not send me in alone. I had a partner – Steve Young, who was a great encouragement to me. However, this particular night in question, Steve was elsewhere so I was leading the team myself.

I had stepped out to preach when this man came up alongside me and started calling out to people. His voice was so loud that it would have been ridiculous for me to continue. I noticed that the man was drunk. I remember thinking “Where are you Steve when I need you?”, but it was obvious from God that I had to deal with this man.

He was drunk, loud, abusive, vulgar and when I spoke to him, he was very angry. I tried to pass him on to one of the men on the Street Team but he made it obvious that he wanted to talk to me. So I went aside to speak with him. To add to this, his first few words to me were “I hate women”. I remember thinking “Does he realise I am a woman?”

What happened from there was all from God. Let’s call the man Joe. Joe was a very angry and violent man. He had spent time in prison, and to be honest I was not surprised to learn this. I knew the devil was using Joe to intimidate me but the amazing thing was that I was not fearful or intimidated by him. We started to talk and at one point, he actually raised his hand to hit me but it came to nothing because God was with me. He did most of the talking, and all I did was keep the conversation going. I knew the Holy Spirit was moving on him. I had learned that some people who start out totally opposed to the Gospel can have the barriers removed by the Holy Spirit while you speak to them in general conversation. So knowing this, I encouraged conversation.

During this time, Joe was loud and continued to curse and swear at me. I think I can remember a thought flashing through my mind “I don’t have to put up with us”, but I believe that was the devil trying to hinder what the Holy Spirit was doing.

Now the amazing thing about this whole situation was that while Joe was yelling, threatening to hit me, plus the vulgar language that constantly poured out of his mouth towards me, was that in all of this I knew he could not hurt me because of what I was experiencing. It was as if the Lord cocooned me in a protective shield, and although Joe was offensive to anyone within earshot (and could have been to me) I was not touched by anything he said or did. He could not penetrate the supernatural shield that the Lord had placed around me – even the words bounced off of it. All the time I was sitting there with a smile on my face thinking “If only he knew what I was experiencing.” The Lord is amazing. I spent the whole night witnessing to Joe while the other team members continued preaching.

The Holy Spirit had His way and Joe softened to the Gospel. I offered to him the Prayer of Salvation. He refused it the first time, but it wasn’t long after that, that he asked for the prayer himself. So I led Joe to Jesus. I know all of heaven was celebrating, so was I. Joe was not an easy person to witness to, but God’s love and power prevailed and Joe became born again. Joe told me that he had a son whom he had not seen for a long time. I encouraged him that Jesus could change the situation and I prayed for him to see his son. Joe was in tears by now, and yes, you could see what the Holy Spirit had done. It was amazing to think that previous to receiving Jesus he wanted to hurt me, but when he received Jesus he wanted to hug and thank me. I think he even apologised for his

behaviour. Joe's final words to me that night were "Well I guess I had better go home now." I asked him what his plans for the evening were and he replied "I was going to knock off the T.A.B. but I guess now I should go home." The Lord had already started a transformation in Joe's life.

A couple of weeks later in the Street Ministry, Joe came back to visit us. I was amazed at the change in his countenance. He had changed. He had been drinking but he was not drunk. He was still loud, but he was a lot nicer to me and he looked much cleaner. Again he thanked me and told me that he had spent some time with his son that week. He was definitely a much happier man, transformation had begun.

Another situation that happened which could have been very intimidating and fearful was when a group of Gothics saw us praising in the street. They approached us with the words "Are you Christians?". We replied to them "yes" and they got very hostile, and the leader of the group manifested right there and then. Some of the Witness team started to pray in tongues.

The leader turned at Steve and was very hostile towards him. It looked as if at any time he could have punched him. While the leader of the group was having a go at Steve, I got aside with one of the team members and prayed. Next I found myself standing between the person and Steve. I told him we were getting the Police. He continued to be abusive, but moved away, he and the group then left. Later we saw them again up in the Mall and it was amazing what the Lord did. He brought them up to where we were preaching and they sat quietly eating an ice-cream and listening to the preaching. The Lord is amazing, the seed was certainly sown in their hearts that night.

For every difficult situation we got into, God got us out of it. And not only that, the Lord even brought many people back to apologise for their bad behaviour towards us. There were many people born again and quite a few came back to visit and we could see the change in them. There were many miraculous happenings because God always wants to demonstrate his power through the Holy Spirit.

If I can do it, so can you! And to encourage each one of you, I give you the Word of God:

"I have strength for all things in Christ who empowers me. I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses inner strength into me. I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency." Philippians 4:13 (Amplified Version)

"Such is the reliance and confidence that we have through Christ toward and with reverence to God." 2 Corinthians 3:4 (Amplified Version)

"Not that we are fit, qualified and sufficient in ability of ourselves to form personal judgement or to claim or count anything as coming from us, but our power and ability and sufficiency are from God." 2 Corinthians 3:5 (Amplified Version)

And again in...

"It is He Who has qualified us making us to be fit and worthy and sufficient as ministers and dispensers of a new covenant of salvation through Christ not ministers of the letter of legally written code but of the Spirit, for the code of the law kills, but the Holy Spirit makes alive."

2 Corinthians 3:6 (Amplified Version)

I have found this Word to be true in my life. God makes us able to win souls. All God is asking of us is to step out and allow the Holy Spirit to do the work through you. The Holy Spirit needs us to work through. We work together and that is why the Holy Spirit needs a yielded vessel. I encourage you to be a yielded vessel and the Holy Spirit will lead you out and give you the boldness to do it. Remember, you overcome the fear by stepping out. ARE YOU WILLING to be used by the Holy Spirit?

Witnessing is now a habit I have formed in my life. Everywhere I go, I tell people about Jesus and do you know what? They want to know that someone loves them.

Jesus says in the Word *"Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33). Fear is of the world – it is not of God. Jesus has made us overcomers through Him.

If God can use me – a person who was so burdened with fear that it manifested into seizures, what can He do with you if you allow Him, by stepping out and being a yielded vessel of the Holy Spirit.

Remember what it says in 2 Timothy 1:7 *"God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."*

Session #4 - Using Your Personal Testimony

The highest percentage of believers are reached by the witness of a friend or relative:
Witnessing is natural – if you love Jesus and people!

Do you remember your first love? Did you have to take a class to learn how to express your love for that person? Cal Thomas writes, “Some classes on evangelism may be very good, but I’ve never taken one. I can’t remain silent about Christ. I love Him. I would have to take classes on ways **not** to talk about Him or demonstrate His love. Those who truly love Him cannot remain silent.”

1. What is the importance of a personal testimony?

How can you be an effective witness for God without even knowing Him? A man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument. It is very important that the **evangelist** has a **vital relationship with God** through Jesus Christ and because of this your testimony of God’s faithfulness is real, has meaning and is a powerful witness. Oswald Chambers said “never try to explain God until you have obeyed Him, the only part of God we understand is the part we have obeyed.”

Most Important! Realise that as you spend time, **prayer and effort preparing your testimony**, you are sharpening and fashioning an evangelical tool to make you a more proficient witness for Christ.

It is quite obvious that some Christians have admirable, well thought out testimonies with zip and life, while others stumble and bumble on in a disorganised, uninteresting and ineffectual manner.

Therefore, our goal in this seminar is that we may all sharpen our evangelical tools and learn to USE our personal testimony effectively.

2. Why is it important to only use the words “Eternal Life” when referring to your salvation experience?

Throughout the presentation we will use the phrase **receiving the gift of Eternal Life** as equivalent to **trusting in Christ or becoming a Christian**. The reason we do not use the phrase, **then I became a Christian**, is that it is such a commonly used word, that using it in the testimony can make unbelievers think that they already have what you are offering them. Many Australians think they are Christians because they were christened as children or do good works.

3. What is a Personal Testimony?

A personal testimony is simply telling what receiving the gift of Eternal Life has done in your life and has meant to you.

1 John 5:11-12 (NASB) ¹¹ *And the witness is this, that God has given us Eternal Life, and this Life is in His Son.* ¹² *He who has the Son has the Life; he who does not have the Son of*

God does not have the Life."

Luke 8:39 *"Jesus told the demoniac from Gadara from whom He had cast out a legion of demons, "'Return to your house and (Berkeley) broadcast all that God has done FOR YOU,' (NEBUCHADNEZZAR) and the man went all over the town spreading the news of what great things Jesus had done for him."*

Note in the following scripture how Christ was **rejected** by one crowd, but gladly received by another. Don't be discouraged by rejections. Rather, praise God for those who freely receive you. Thank God Jesus did not give up when He was rejected but simply took the **Good News** to someone else.

Luke 8:37-40 (NASB) *"³⁷ And **all the people** of the country of Gerasenes and the surrounding district **asked Him (Jesus) to depart** from them; for they were gripped with great fear; and He got into a boat, and returned. ³⁸ But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him; but He sent him away, saying, ³⁹ 'Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you.' And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him. (God also requires babies to proclaim the Gospel). ⁴⁰ And as Jesus returned (to the other side of the lake), **the multitude welcomed Him**, for they had **all been waiting for Him.**"*

1 Peter 3:15 (Moffatt) *"...and always be ready with a reply for anyone who calls you to account for the hope you cherish..."*

Below is an example of Paul's testimony, relating the events leading up to his conversion. There is an outline for you to use in preparing a report of the events leading up to your conversion. If you have already completed this when you received "Your Success Journey" rewrite it again to refresh your memory:

Paul's Testimony (Taken from Acts 20 and 22)

My Life before receiving eternal life was like this:

I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just a zealous for God as many of you are today. I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

This is the way I realised that I needed to follow Jesus:

About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me, fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, "Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" I asked. "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting" He replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of Him who was speaking to me.

These are the details of how I actually accepted Christ:

"What shall I do, Lord?" I asked. "Get up," the Lord said, "and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do." My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me. "A man named Ananias came to see me. He was

a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him."

This is what it means to me to have received Eternal Life:

"I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me - the task of testifying to the Gospel of God's grace."

1. What should the content of a testimony be?

Here Paul give his testimony to the Jews in Jerusalem. Studying this account we see that a testimony is composed of four essential elements.

- i) What I was before I received Eternal Life.
- ii) I realised I needed Eternal Life.
- iii) How I received Eternal Life.
- iv) What Eternal Life has meant to me.

Therefore every testimony is composed of these 4 essential elements - Before, Why, Then and Since I received the gift of Eternal Life.

2. What do we need to be careful of when giving a personal testimony?

One of the common errors in giving a personal testimony is to belabour the first point on what you were before you received the gift of Eternal Life and minimise the third point on what Eternal Life has meant to you. This is ineffective, as strangers have no personal interest in your sordid past.

Rather we must do what Jesus said and *"tell people what God has done FOR us"* (Luke 8:39). We need to emphasise the positive benefits of receiving the gift of Eternal Life.

One person actually gave a testimony like this. *"When I accepted Christ, I lost all my friends. They wouldn't have anything to do with me. Then I lost my job. You know, all the people who do worldly things like smoking, drinking, partying and watching movies (things that evidently thrilled the people we were visiting) don't want to know you, when you give up these worldly practices."*

It was as if he had given a one minute discourse on why one should not become a Christian. It would be like seeing a cigarette advertisement with an emaciated man, showing excruciating pain and coughing blood saying to you, *"Smoke my brand of cigarettes."*

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NASB) *"Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; (TCNT) his old life has passed away, a new life has begun!"* It is important to emphasise more, your new life in Jesus.

3. When specifically is it important to use your personal testimony?

You should always use your personal testimony when witnessing but it is especially important to use it when you sense resistance to presenting the Gospel. People will argue doctrine `till the blood runs, but they cannot argue with your personal

experience.

4. How do you go about working out your personal testimony?

First of all, it is vitally important to remember to be specific.

People remember specifics but forget when we talk in general terms. Don't say "O, it's so wonderful." What is so wonderful? Using vague phrases like this produces bad results, if any at all.

Rather say, "It's wonderful to know when I lay my head down on my pillow tonight, that if I should not wake up in the morning, I will be in Heaven with Jesus."

Secondly you need to select one concept from your life and discuss around that, what difference receiving the gift of Eternal Life. Eg. Loneliness vs friendliness; Strife vs Love; Guilt vs freedom; Weakness vs strength; Fear vs courage; Emptiness vs purpose; Discouragement vs ambition; Inferiority vs worthiness; Depression vs joy.

You also need to make it concrete by relating an actual real life example of that problem before and after you received the gift of Eternal Life. Friendliness is significant to people because they are lonely. Many homes have every conceivable luxury except the most important ingredient of all – love. Guilt fills our psychiatric hospitals, for it fractures the human personality. If people could get rid of their guilt, they could once again live with themselves, face the world and love people.

Some say they are not afraid of hell, but are afraid to take the garbage out at night. That's living a lie.

One of the most devastating questions you can ask anybody is, "What are you living for" or "What is the purpose of life?" Most people have no idea. When one receives the gift of Eternal Life the enigmas (mysteries) of the universe, the questions that perplex people begin to fall into place, and we begin to see the puzzle of life more clearly.

Note: So what you must do when you are relating your personal testimony? **SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE - A REAL LIFE INCIDENT before and after you received the gift of Eternal Life - illustrating that concept.**

5. What are some do's and don'ts I should look out for when giving a personal testimony?

- i) Avoid **Christian cliché's** that are meaningless to the non-Christian.
E.g. "I received a **blessing** when I became a Christian. I received **deliverance** through the **sinner's prayer**. I was **unsaved** and needed to be **saved**."

My **conversion** happened when I put my faith in Jesus Christ my Saviour, who died for the sins of those who trust in Him. **Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! Amen!**

I received salvation when I believed the Gospel and was **washed in the blood of the Lamb**.

I was **born again** when the **Holy Spirit spoke to me at the altar of God**. I lost all my friends and my job. The devil has been after me ever since. Praise His holy name! The trials and tests are unbearable. I just hope I can hold on until the end. Then maybe I'll make it into heaven."

- ii) Avoid giving a **travelogue** dealing with unimportant externals and missing the true heart challenging spiritual matters.
- iii) Use **humour** constructively, especially if the situation is tense.
- iv) Speak **pictorially**. If they are not seeing in their mind what you are talking about, they are probably seeing something else that they are thinking about.

6. How should I end my testimony?

Your testimony must end by giving **assurance of Eternal Life**.

NOW, IT'S YOUR TURN!

Your conversion may not have been as dramatic as Paul's. Like snowflakes, no two conversion testimonies are identical. That's what makes them special. God's call to each one of us is very personal.

As you prepare your own testimony, select one of the "Type A" persons (explained later) and visualise how you will share your story with this person.

Harvesting Your World

Preparing your personal testimony begins with telling the story of what your life was like before you received Jesus Christ. It is not necessary to go into extreme detail. Effective communication is usually brief, to the point, and clear. In fact, explaining your testimony should not take more than three or four minutes.

For each of the following sections , complete the ideas appearing above them.

Guidelines for Writing Your Testimony

What to Do:

- ◆ Ask God to give you wisdom.
- ◆ Keep to a three minute time limit.
- ◆ Be realistic, don't exaggerate.

What NOT to do:

- ◆ Make statements that reflect negatively on any church organisation.
- ◆ Make statements that reflect negatively on any individual.
- ◆ Mention denominations or church names.
- ◆ Speak or write in a preachy manner.
- ◆ Use vague terms like *joyful*, *peaceful*, or *changed* without explaining them.
- ◆ Avoid religious terms like *saved*, *sin*, or *convicted* without explaining them.

Writing Style:

- ◆ Begin with an attention-getting sentence or incident.
- ◆ Be positive, accurate and specific – details arouse interest.
- ◆ Use Bible verses directly related to your experience. Delete references – for example, say, "One of Jesus' disciples said..." rather than "1 John 5:11-13 says..."
- ◆ Write a logical conclusion.

Harvesting Your World

Before I Received Christ

My attitudes, needs, and problems before I received Christ...

My life revolved around, and I gained happiness and security from...

Use an example from your personal life here. For instance, did your security come from money, your relationships etc? Remember, avoid being overly sensational.

How did this disappoint me?

How was this unfulfilling? How did you come to realise this? What were you struggling with (if anything) just before you received Christ?

Harvesting Your World

How I Received Christ

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.

When and how did I first hear about Christ?

What were my struggles just before I received Christ?

What happened when I received Christ, and how did my attitude begin to change - and why?

Harvesting Your World

Since I Received Christ

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 centre stage. It is at this point that your testimony should begin to shine.

What happened after I received Christ?

How has my life changed, and when did I notice that change?

How am I motivated differently now?

Harvesting Your World

Reviewing Your Work

Now that all the sections are completed, you should be able to put them together to make it sound like a story. When checking your testimony, ensure that the following are evident:

- ◆ The story flows well.
- ◆ It makes sense.
- ◆ It can be read aloud in three to four minutes.
- ◆ It isn't exaggerated.
- ◆ That you have given the Lord enough credit for the changes in your life.

How You Can Use Your Testimony

Now that you have a written testimony, you can use it to deliver an effective witness for Christ. Think of three people you know who you want to see receive Christ. Pray for them all the time, practice presenting your personal testimony, and think about how you will present the Gospel.



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We would love to hear from you.