

A. Too Much Confusion: Sometimes our testimonies are clouded by a lack of **clarity**.

1. An unclear line of events
 - When did God begin moving in my heart?
 - When did I finally trust in Christ?
2. Getting lost in the weeds of **details**
3. Missing the Before-and-After
 - Tell what you were like before Christ and what your life is like after receiving Christ.
 - If you were saved when very young, share how Christ has shaped your life around Him.
4. Being **foggy** about what salvation is
 - The Centrality of Jesus' Work on the Cross
 - The Problem of Sin
 - The Importance of Repentance and Faith
 - The Relationship to Baptism

SESSION TWO: COMMON PROBLEMS IN TESTIMONY TELLING

TESTIMONY WORKSHOP



Using Your Story
for God's Glory

I. Introduction: Different kinds of problems.

A. Built-In Limitations: Believers' testimonies can be powerful tools, but they have their limits.

1. Our stories are not the Gospel though woven around it.
2. The power of God for salvation resides in His Word, not in our stories. The authority for Gospel ultimately rests in God's Word, not our experiences. **Romans 10:17**
3. Use your testimony as a vehicle for the greater Story.

B. Unnecessary Hindrances: Sometimes believers tell their testimonies in ways that unduly limit their effectiveness.

1. When our stories are too self-centered, unbiblical, or unclear, we distract from the greater Message of Christ.
2. Work to sharpen your Gospel testimony so others can see through your story to Christ's. **John 1:1-9**

C. Overcoming Grace: We may tell our testimonies imperfectly, but God loves to use weak things for mighty ends.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

1. **Give Grace to Others.** Be **patient** with younger believers who haven't learned to articulate things clearly.
2. **Give Thanks for God's Working.** Sometimes God uses the simplest testimonies to accomplish great things. **John 9:25**

II. COMMON PROBLEMS

A. **Too High Expectations:** Expecting a testimony to do too much.

1. Our testimonies might be compelling to us, but that doesn't mean everyone else will be so moved.
2. The Gospels and Acts contain many testimonies of saved people whose stories were disbelieved. What some people find fascinating and compelling, others will find disgusting and repulsive. **Acts 4:18-22**
3. In our post-modernism society, testimonies can carry less weight in people's minds, even if they are anchored in divine truth.

B. **Too Much Pride:** Sometimes Christians play up their sinful past too much, almost reveling in how bad they were before Christ. **Romans 6:21**

1. Sometimes this happens with unscripted testimonies by a crowd-pleaser. Examples: campfire testimonials, open mic testimony services, etc.
2. Sometimes this is fueled by celebrity storytellers at big events.
3. In the worst cases, people might exaggerate or outright lie about their stories because the truth doesn't seem interesting enough.

C. **Too Little Confidence:** Some believers feel hesitant to tell their stories because they don't think it's interesting enough.

1. Perhaps they were saved when they were young and didn't have a full life of sin to renounce.

2. Perhaps they've been misled to believe that their story has no more claim to the truth than other stories out there—"your truth" instead of "the truth."

D. **Too Much Error:** While none of us speak perfectly all the time, some people's testimonies communicate things that are grossly unbiblical.

1. Unbiblical Ideas of What It Means to Come to **Christ:**

- Relying on Internal Feelings and Holy Hunches
- Reading into Circumstances as Divine Assurance
- Resting in Dreams of Encountering Jesus
- Resting in Empty Professions of Faith Made through Childhood Manipulation

2. Unbiblical Use of the Bible:

- Not just getting the right message from the wrong text
- Getting the wrong message from any text!

E. **Too Little Bible:** When the focus is too much on us, it is likely that there won't be very much focus on God's Word.

1. Our testimonies aren't sermons or Bible **studies**.
2. But we should testify to how we heard God's Word of salvation and how we reacted to it, including times of resistance and our eventual reception of it.
3. We don't always have time to say as much as we might like (and sometimes less is more). But the goal of telling our story out to be to get to telling of God's Story.