

Church of God Sunday School

THE CHRISTIAN'S TOOLBOX — TESTIMONY



DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** An unchanging God wants to be found (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; Jeremiah 29:13).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** God has revealed Himself (Romans 1:20; Genesis 3:8; Genesis 8:15; Exodus 31:18).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** God's testimony reveals His character (Deuteronomy 6:20-25; Psalm 19:7; Psalm 93:5).
- ❑ **Thursday:** Christians are living epistles, witnessing to the world of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:3; Acts 1:8).
- ❑ **Friday:** Examples of personal testimonies (Acts 26:1-23; Mark 5:1-20).
- ❑ **Saturday:** Do not be ashamed of being a testimony (Psalm 119:46; 2 Timothy 1:8).

MEMORY VERSE: ". . . ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." —2 Corinthians 3:3

Learning Who God Is

Have you ever wondered what makes Christianity different from other religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, or Islam? Let us look at one significant difference by reading a few descriptions of these religions.

ISLAM: "Allah is ultimately unknowable" (*Who Is Allah in Islam?* by Abd-al-Masih). "We humans can never know Allah, because he is so far from us and so different from us" (*What Is Allah Like?* by George Housney).

HINDUISM: Hindus worship countless gods, but everything that exists is said to be a representation of the god called Brahman. It has been said, "An attempt to understand Brahman is said to be futile, as it is beyond the reach of the senses or the mind." Others have said, "He cannot be one particular thing; he is an impersonal being" (*ReligionFacts.com*).

BUDDHISM: While Buddhists do not believe in one god, "there are all kinds of god-like creatures called *devas* populating the early scriptures of Buddhism. . . . though, believing in Buddhist deities is pointless. How do you understand them?" (*ReligionFacts.com*).

One common theme from these descriptions is that these gods are unable to be understood or known. How do these gods compare to the God of Christianity? God wants you to know Him. He does not change, as do the gods of other religions. Also, God has promised if you seek Him with all your heart, you will find Him. Why does God want you to know Him? When you learn who God is and how much He loves you, you will love Him and want to live for Him. Yet, how could God explain who He is? God has revealed Himself through creation and by talking to people. Another way God has revealed Himself was by giving "two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God" (Exodus 31:18) to Moses. Written on these were the laws (or the testimony) of God. God's testimony, written on stone, was a witness of the nature and will of God.



What Is God's Testimony?

The word *testimony* in the Bible also means "witness," "evidence," or "bare record." If someone is called to court to testify, he or she is called a "witness." This testimony, used as evidence in the trial, is a declaration of what is known by the witness to be true or a fact. Keeping this in mind, what does the Bible mean when it talks about the "testimony of God" (1 Corinthians 2:1)? Psalm 19:7 shows that "the testimony of the LORD" is "the law of the LORD." When God gave His law to the people of Israel, it was a witness (or evidence) of the character and nature of God. It showed them what kind of a God He is. For instance, He is a moral God (the Ten Commandments), He is a loving God (1 John 5:3), He is a patient God (Psalm 86:15), and He is a holy

God (Leviticus 11:44; Psalm 93:5). God's words (or Testimony) tells us how we are to live a life pleasing to God (Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3).

God's law also made people aware of their need of a Savior. Galatians 3:24 says that "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." Old Testament Israel continually disobeyed God's commandments. They began to understand that they needed a Savior to save them from their sins and to help them live a holy life, pleasing to God. How did God reveal who this Savior was to be? Through His Word. Many Scriptures "testify" of Christ (John 5:39), telling us who Jesus is and what He came to do. John, Chapter 1, tells us that Jesus is the "Word" of God who was "made flesh [became a man] and dwelt among us."

A Living Testimony

When Jesus lived here on earth, He told Philip that "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). Jesus was a living witness of who God is and what He desires of His people. After Jesus died on the Cross, rose from the dead, and returned to Heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to live in the hearts of everyone who is saved. Because of this, God is now able to write His testimony (law) on the hearts of His people. No longer was God's testimony on "tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Corinthians 3:3). James 1:21 describes it as the "engrafted word." In other words, it is implanted deep inside of you. When God's Word becomes a part of you, you will show others through your actions, attitudes, and words that God's testimony is true. Your life is a witness to the truth of God's Word.

Just as the disciples could see the Father through the life of His Son, Jesus Christ, you can let others see God in your life as well. When you live a holy life, when you are patient and loving, and when you live a good moral life, God's nature is being revealed to others through you. There is a song that says, "Your life's the only Bible that some people read." What do people see when they read the pages of your life?

Your Personal Testimony

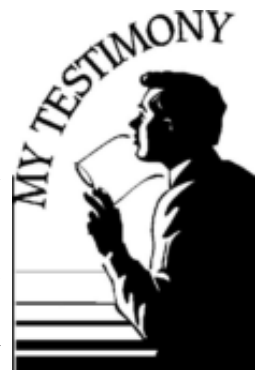
When Paul was brought before King Agrippa in Acts, Chapter 26, his personal testimony was so powerful that King Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (verse 28). After Jesus cast out the unclean spirits, the Gadarene man wanted to stay with Jesus. However, Jesus told him to "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." When he began to tell others what Jesus had done for him, "all men did marvel" (Mark 5:19-20). After Jesus healed the eyes of a blind man in Luke, Chapter 18, this man followed Jesus, giving glory to God. His testimony caused "all the people" to give "praise unto God" (verse 43).

This is why Jesus told His disciples in Acts 1:8 that "you will be My witnesses [to tell people about Me] . . . even to the ends of the earth" (AMP). The disciples did this, and in "the space of two years . . . all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). Unbelievers could see God's testimony, which was written in the hearts of His disciples, through the actions and attitudes of the disciples. When the disciples told how Jesus had changed their lives, they were witnessing through their personal testimonies.

A personal testimony is powerful! There are people who may only learn about Jesus through your testimony. You might have friends and family whom no other Christian can reach. What is your personal testimony? It is the story of how Jesus has changed your life—what He did and is continuing to do for you. Regardless of how long you have been saved, you do have a testimony. You are an eyewitness of the works of Jesus in your life. No one knows your story as you do.

The best way to be prepared to give your testimony is to think about it beforehand. One possible way to do this is to write it down. Take time to reflect on how God saved you and what He is doing in your life. Then, listen for God's leading as to when and how you should share your personal testimony. Questions asked by unsaved friends might be a good opportunity. Or you might feel God impressing you to share your testimony during a church service. Do not be discouraged if it seems like no one is affected by your testimony. It can be like sowing a seed—it takes time to see the benefits.

Guard your personal testimony! It can take years to build up an influence, but one act can destroy it. So it is with your testimony. The longer you live for the Lord, the greater your testimony will be. Do not listen to the devil's lie that the best testimony comes from someone who went into deep sin and then was saved. A testimony of one who never became involved in drugs, alcohol, and sinful activities is the best testimony! If you are saved, you have a testimony, and you are adding to it every day. There are people who need to see and hear your testimony. Ask God to help you to let your light shine to a lost world.





1. How is Christianity different from religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, or Islam? _____

2. Why does God want you to know Him? _____

3. What are three ways in which God has revealed Himself?

4. How does God's law reveal His nature or character (what kind of a God He is)? _____

5. How did God reveal whom the Savior was going to be and what He was going to do? _____

6. In the Old Testament, God wrote His testimony on tables of stone. Where does He write His testimony today?

7. What do your words, attitudes, and actions reveal about God's testimony? _____

8. When the disciples became Christ's witnesses, what took only two years to happen? _____

9. Why is a personal testimony powerful? _____

10. How can you prepare for sharing your personal testimony? _____

WRITE YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY

- 1. Think about how powerful and important a personal testimony can be: we overcome the enemy "by the word of [our] testimony" (Revelation 12:11).
- 2. Study an example of a personal testimony, such as Acts 26:1-23 or Acts 22:1-21.
- 3. Give thought to your testimony.
 - A. BEFORE: What was your life like before you were saved? What were some of your problems?
 - B. How: How did you get saved? Where were you? What was happening at the time? Was there a special person who helped you?
 - C. AFTER: How has becoming a Christian changed your life? How have your thoughts, attitudes, and emotions changed? What does having a relationship with Jesus mean to you? Are there special Scriptures or songs that add to your testimony?
