

How to Write Your Recovery Testimony

Before you begin, consider Paul’s story as recorded in 1Timothy 1:12-18 as a writing example:

*I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though **formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent**. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Before you write:

- Pray – Ask God what He would have you share to communicate His Story and His power.
- Clarify your primary purpose – What is the one “take away” you wish to communicate to those listening? Write that purpose in 10 words or less: _____
- Consider these things before writing:
 - Determine to exalt Christ, not your sin or even your own improvement.
 - Share struggles in an appropriate way (not in lengthy or graphic detail).
 - What specific Scripture did God use as part of your recovery, transformation process?

What to aim for:

Focus on key recovery area(s) versus your life story.

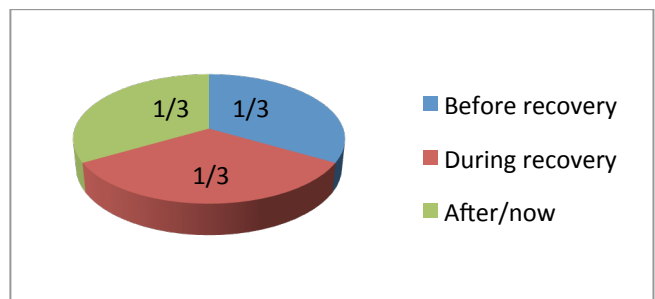
Every detail of your story is significant, but for the purpose of Monday evening, focus on the part of your story **surrounding the key struggles/areas of recovery**, limiting it to one or two of the areas. It might be helpful to consider:

What it IS:	What it IS NOT:
Telling a part of your story related to the key recovery area(s) Christ has/is transforming : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What life was like BEFORE recovery in Christ • How Christ worked in you DURING the process • NOW the changes in your life, relationship with God and others that Christ has done/is doing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A chronological life story, with all childhood information (though some may be needed as it relates to what was in need of transformation in your life) • All of Step 4 – Inventory (though some details will be highlighted as you describe the area(s) of growth you will share about)

Divide up your story in thirds focusing on your recovery area(s).

As you prepare the content, think about your time sharing being split into equal proportions of before, during and after.

It can be easiest to spend a lot of time before, as you worked on this in the inventory step, but ask God to also show you how much he has worked to transform you and how your relationship with Him and others has changed.



If helpful, prepare a short outline before writing.

This is not helpful to everyone, but can be if you need help narrowing it down before starting to write. Just create a 3-level outline, list out bullet points of appropriate descriptions and examples from your story, Scriptures, etc., that tell the story of Christ bringing freedom and joy in your life as you’ve responded to His grace.



Start Writing:

Divide your talk into the following five sections. Use these questions as a guide to help you consider what you might share. You do not have to specifically answer each of these questions.

Intro (maximum 100 words)

Hi, my name is _____. I have a new life in Christ and I'm recovering from ____, ____, and _____. (No more than three struggles/areas of recovery.)

Before recovery in Christ... (maximum 1000 words)

In what ways was your life not working before recovery?
What are some of the circumstances that others could relate to?
If you had a relationship with God, what was it like? If you did not, what was your view of God?
What was your attitude toward others in your life?
At what point did you know that something needed to change? What was that turning point?

During recovery in Christ... (maximum 1000 words)

How did God get you to recovery?
Describe your first night at re:gen. How did you feel?
Describe how God showed you that your life was out of control and you needed to submit to Christ. **(Be sure to share your salvation experience clearly.)**
What did God do in recovery? When did God show you that a new life was possible?
Give specifics on how God used this recovery process to impact and begin to change you.

Current recovery in Christ ... (maximum 1000 words)

Describe life now. How has your walk with God changed? How do you continue to pursue God? Are you sharing the gospel? What changes has God made in your relationship with others (friends, family, co-workers)? Any changes in your marriage? If dating, how is your purity? How are you handling conflict? How has being in community affected your recovery? What areas of your old life are gone? Or how have they changed? Where do you see the fruit of God's work in you? How has your perspective changed? How have your motives changed? How has your speech or the way you spend money changed?

This is your opportunity to share with the audience why you are thankful for the hard work of recovery.

Conclusion (maximum 100 words)

If you could only tell the listeners one thing tonight, what would that be? Restate your primary purpose.
What encouragement can you give a newcomer?



Final Checklist

1. Was Christ exalted? Is the story more about you or Him? Will the listener remember your sin or God?
2. Did you use Scripture? Is it used in context?
3. Was sin exalted or described too graphically? Is any sin or struggle described in a way that could lead others to be tempted or stumble?
4. Did you inappropriately communicate that your sin is unique, instead of it being a common struggle (1 Cor. 10:13)?
5. Did you demonstrate a “victim mentality” anywhere? Did you “own your part?”
6. Did you focus on anyone else’s sin/recovery to an inappropriate level? Did I give someone else’s inventory?
7. Did you share your salvation experience? Was it addressed as grace through faith in Christ alone?
8. Could the way that you communicated your story offend anyone? (homosexuals, addicts, divorcees, members of specific denominations, someone mentioned in your testimony, etc.)
9. Was marriage/separation/divorce/remarriage mentioned? Was it biblically addressed? Could anything that you said be misinterpreted by the listener to justify their decisions?
10. Is there any mention of demons, baptism of the Holy Spirit, audibly hearing God’s voice or anything else that needs to be checked theologically?
11. Did you mention any books or authors specifically? We do not want to specifically endorse anything but God’s word.
12. Is there any unfinished business that needs to be taken care of before you give this? Anyone to whom you still owe an amends? How would you feel if that person happened to be in the audience the night you speak, or happened to listen to your story online?
13. Has someone from your community group read it? Have someone time you to insure delivery is under 15 minutes. Make sure that you have read this out loud and timed it!
14. Was your story equally divided?
 1. 1000 words - Before recovery in Christ
 2. 1000 words - During recovery in Christ
 3. 1000 words - Current recovery in Christ
15. Did you communicate your primary purpose/“take away”? Did you summarize it and include it in your closing?
16. Time should be 12-15 minutes. Typically this is 3000-3200 words. **If not, it will be returned to you until it is at the word count!**