Identifying Fears

1. Sometimes we are not bold because we are not familiar with the message.

Look at Paul. Acts 17:2,17; 18:4,19; 19:8,9.

2. Sometimes we are not bold because the message can be embarrassing.

Rom 1:16 *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.*
2 Tim 1:8 *So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God,*
2 Tim 1:12 *That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.*

- **<u>There are social reasons for this feeling of shame.</u>**

The Christians are so few.

The Christians were so ordinary.
1 Cor 1:26-29 *Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things-- and the things that are not-- to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.*

- **<u>There are intellectual reasons for the embarrassment.</u>**

The message is too simple.

The message is too authoritive.

The message is too exclusive.

- **<u>There are religious reasons for the shame.</u>**
- **<u>There are practical reasons for the shame.</u>**

3. Sometimes it's because people think they know it all.

4. Sometimes it's because we think we are useless and unable to speak.

5. Sometimes because we don't want to offend people.

2 Cor 2:15-16
For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task?
2 Cor 10:4-5
The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

6. Sometimes because we don't know anyone.

7. Sometimes because we don't really believe in Hell.

8. Sometimes because we don't pray.

Acts 4:29 *Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.*

9. Sometimes because we are looking for easy results.

10. Sometimes because we have not been living close to the lord.

GOSPEL SENTENCES

Do-Done summary

"Do". All forms of religion, (formal or informal), are spelled D-O, because they tell us we have to perform good works and obey moral and religious laws in order to find God, to achieve forgiveness, nirvana, or peace. But you can never be sure you have done enough.

"Done". But Christianity is spelled D-O-N-E because God sent his son to earth to live the life we should live, and die on the cross to pay the debt we should pay for wrongs we've done. Buddha said "Strive without ceasing"; Jesus said "It is finished". (John 19:30)

To become a Christian is to turn from "do" to "done" by asking God to accept you for Jesus' sake and commit to live for him.

Sin-Salvation summary

Sin is us substituting ourselves for God, putting ourselves where only God deserves to be--in charge of our lives.

Salvation is God substituting himself for us, putting himself where only we deserve to be--dying on the cross. Read 2 Cor.5:21.

To become a Christian is **first** to admit the problem: that you have been substituting yourself for God either by religion (trying to be your own saviour by obedience to moral standards) or by irreligion (trying to be your own lord by disobedience to moral standards).
And **second** to accept the solution: asking God to accept you for Jesus' sake and know that you are loved and accepted because of his record, not yours.

Slavery-Freedom summary

Slavery. We were built to live for God supremely, but instead we live for love, work, achievement or morality to give us meaning and worth. Therefore every person, religious or unreligious is worshipping something to get their worth.
But these things enslave us with guilt (if we fail to attain them) or anger (if someone blocks them from us) or fear (if they are threatened) or drivenness (since we must have them).
Sin is worshipping anything but Jesus--and the wages of sin is slavery.

Freedom. As a fish is only free in water, we are only free when serving Jesus supremely. For he is the only source of meaning that we cannot lose (freeing us from fear and anger) and that is a free gift (freeing us from guilt and drivenness). Read Matt.11:28-30. His "yoke" is the only one that does not enslave.

Law-Love summary.

Law. Some see God as simply Judge who demands we be moral and righteous. If God is not a Judge there is no hope for the world--how else will wrong be punished?

Love. Some see God as simply a Father who loves us and doesn't want to punish. If God is not a Father there is no hope for us--how else can we be forgiven?

Problem. God is both. If a father was also a judge, and a guilty child was brought before him, he could not just acquit. How can God's Law and Love must be reconciled?

Solution. When God sent his Son to die in our place, the judge was judged. On the cross God's justice and his love was satisfied at once, "that God might be both just and justifier [judge and father] of those who believe" (Rom.3:26)

THIS IS YOUR LIFE.

Definition of a Testimony

Testimony can be defined as an honest and accurate account of God working in your life. Everybody who has been born again and who is becoming like Christ has a unique, interesting and powerful testimony, regardless of whether or not it appears spectacular.

Ingredients of a good testimony

a. ***It is personal, not preachy.***

You are opening your heart to reveal how God has dealt with you. Be very wary of making generalisations from your specific circumstances.

b. ***It is short.***

With though and refinement, about 4 minutes should be enough to cover the essential facts. Depending on your speaking pace this should represent approximately 750-1000 spoken words.

c. ***It keeps Christ central.***

It is Christ who has done the work in our lives to enable us to change. He made the sacrifice. We are becoming like him. Without him we can do nothing. He deserves the attention and glory. He is the One others need to see (John 4:28-30; 1 Corinthians 2:2)

d. ***It uses the Word of God.***

Well-chosen verses that show how God has worked in your life help give a sharper cutting edge to your testimony. However, do not overload a seeker with too many verses as this can cause confusion.

e. ***It is honest.***

Embellishments to and exaggerations of events of your life, past and present, should not be used. Your testimony should have integrity so just tell it as it happened – truthfully.

f. ***It gets attention with the first sentence.***

For example, try and speak to the listeners felt need.

g. ***It has a challenge.***

It concludes by looking for a response from the listener in terms of understanding personal commitment. But be careful not to overstep the mark and be too pushy.

BEFORE AND AFTER TESTIMONY

Preparing a good testimony – 'Before and After' model.
This is for those Christians who can remember a time when they were not believers, that is, they have a before and after experience in their relationship with Jesus.

Before

a. *What was my life before I received Christ?*
(Reflect on your values, direction of life, lifestyle)

b. *When did I first become aware of God working in my life?*
(What did God do to get your attention so that you were in the end ready to receive Christ?)

How

a. *How did I come to understand the gospel?*
(Share what Christ did for you at the cross and the significance of his resurrection)

b. *How did I receive Christ?*
(Explain how you came to see your need and how God opened your heart to him. Include a good verse which explains what happened.)

After

a. *What changed after I received Christ?*
(Reflect on attitudes, desires, values, actions, habits, relationships, etc.)

b. *What are my goals and ambitions now?*
(Reflect on the key things learned from following him; how God has led you; present direction of life,etc)

The Challenge

a. *Ask the comprehension question.*
('Has everything I have said been clear to you?')

b. *Ask the commitment question.*
('Where do you think you stand in relationship to Jesus Christ?')

CAN'T REMEMBER NOT BELIEVING TESTIMONY

Preparing a good testimony –model.
This is for Christians who cannot remember a time when they did not trust in Jesus. They just seemed to grow into it.

The Present

a. ***What does my trust in Jesus Christ mean to me today?***
(Reflect on attitudes, desires, values, actions, habits, relationships, etc.)

b. ***What are the most significant things about my life with Jesus?***
(Reflect on ambitions, goals, key things you have learned from following him, how God has led you etc.)

The Past

a. ***How did I grow into my present relationship with Jesus?***
(Reflect on the progress of your maturing in faith; significant events and circumstances, etc)

b. ***Who were the most significant people in my spiritual pilgrimage?***
(Comment on people who influenced you to keep believing and helped you grasp the faith more solidly.)

The Gospel Facts

a. ***Why are the cross and resurrection so important to me?***
(Comment on your need for forgiveness and the gift of eternal life.)

b. ***What do the cross and resurrection teach me about the character of God?***
(These acts of rescue show very clearly the generosity and unconditional love of God for his creation. Include a good verse which explains God's activity.)

The Challenge

a. ***Ask the comprehension question.***
'Has everything I have said been clear to you?'

b. ***Ask the commitment question.***
'Where do you think you stand in relationship to Jesus Christ?'