

My Spiritual Testimony

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As I think back on what my life was like without Jesus, I thank the Lord for the work that he has done in me. I was lost, and now I am found!

I was raised by two loving and encouraging parents, in a home that has always expressed Jesus Christ as our Savior. I, however, did not open myself to receive the gift of salvation personally. As a teenager and young adult I chose to live for myself and for the world. Moving out from under the protection of my parent's wings, I made decisions that I felt would benefit me. Little did I know that taking my fate upon myself would be a grave mistake!

My life without Christ was very dark, selfish, and sad. My chief concern was how people looked at me. This desire to please people caused me to live a sort of double life. I had friends who partied hard, were profane and immoral. When I was with them I would fit right in. The very next day I might be with my family and I would act completely different, falsely portraying myself as a "decent" person to my family and our Christian friends. In reality, I lived in darkness. Only a handful of people saw who I really was. Over time my family began to see that the things I said were not true. As they began to figure me out, I withdrew, living in the darkness even more. I convinced myself I didn't care what my family or these other people thought. I began to abandon the morals and the values that I had been raised to cherish.

Through all this, deep inside I knew the truth, I knew what was right, and I knew what I was doing was wrong. The pain I felt from my sin and shame separating me from God and my family became almost unbearable. This was when I realized I was at the end. For the first time I knew Jesus died for Ben Caron. With that came spiritual brokenness. Late one night in the summer of 2002 on the way home from work I pulled over to the side of the road and began to weep bitterly. Desiring so much more, I asked Jesus into my heart. I knew that Jesus was the Truth, and my salvation. He met me there with open arms. It may have been nighttime along that road, but I was brought into the light!

From that point on I began to seek the Lord. Going from darkness to light, was a feeling so wonderful and overwhelming it's hard to find words to describe the joy and freedom I felt. Not having to hide, or be ashamed of who you are, is one of the most precious gifts. I felt so blessed, yet so undeserving of the forgiveness that was washing over me. My life was being transformed. I began to acknowledge God's changing grace at work in my life. The Bible says "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." Proverbs 9:10

The work that God did in my life that summer was incredible. I now had a sense of direction and I became motivated to become the man that God wanted me to be. But it was also a time of conflict due to the influence of my unsaved friends. Apart from my parents and a few long-distance friends, I had no other Christians to lift me up or keep me accountable. That summer I met the basketball coach at Bemidji State University. He approached me and asked me if I would play for him. Not knowing he was a Christian, and he not knowing that I was a Christian, I told him that I would pray about it. Feeling the Lord leading me, I decided to return to school. I soon found out that coach Guiot was a Christian and so were most of the players. What I thought was a mere basketball program turned out to be an unconventional discipleship program. As much as coach Guiot was a competitor he was more concerned about winning the souls of his players than winning basketball games. (Note: we did win the conference championship!) I really felt the Lords' presence in my life. I had good people around me and I was looking to the Lord for my decisions. I came to realize I had nothing in common with unbelievers other than the fact that we all need the loving forgiveness of Jesus. I began to develop new relationships with true believing friends who cared about me and held me accountable before the Lord. On a cold September day, on the shore of Steamboat Lake, surrounded by my family, friends, and team I was baptized as a public statement of my desire to die to myself and live my life for Jesus.

My relationship with Jesus Christ is by far the most incredibly precious thing in my life. "I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things." Philippians 3:8. I now have such an appreciation for life and a desire to live for God and to honor Him. I cannot help but smile at the difference Jesus has made in my life. I find joy in the most basic things.

A simple sunset or rainbow is enough to make me well up and thank the Lord for the forgiveness that he has bestowed upon me. Life is such a gift I pray I don't waste any more of it.

I never want that moment of salvation I experienced beside the road to become a historic event in my life rather than an ongoing present reality. Everyday I want to know Jesus more. We should never be content with where we are in our walk. To love Jesus is to continually want to know Him more. This testimony is only the beginning of a growing relationship with Christ my Savior. I pray that as my relationship with Christ grows, so will my love for Him and my testimony of His continuing work in my life.

“ If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” 2 Corinthians 5:17