

# My Personal Testimony

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Before you dive into learning about what believing in Jesus Christ is all about, and what it will require of you, and what you will gain from it, we think it may be helpful to hear about someone's own personal experience with what believing in Jesus Christ has done for them in their life. This is often referred to as a "testimony".

Most people who have chosen to have an abiding relationship with Jesus Christ often have a personal testimony on how much their relationship with Christ changed their life. Frequently, these testimonies revolve around miracles that have happened to them, coupled with a dramatic improvement in their overall sense of wellbeing. My testimony, presented below, is no different.

## How Did My Relationship With Jesus Start?

I was introduced to Jesus Christ at a very early age. My parents belonged to the St. John's Episcopal Church and our Pastor was Reverend Shoemaker. We were not a heavy-going church family, and I know at some point I was baptized but at the time had no clue what it was all about. Later, I'm guessing around age 9 or 10 (start of fourth or fifth grade) or maybe a bit later, I became an "Altar Boy" at our church. I remember wearing a robe, lighting and extinguishing candles, and helping the Reverend put stuff out on a table (which I later learned was for Holy Communion – whatever that was). I suspect my time as an Altar Boy lasted at best a year or so – maybe two. I enjoyed the fanfare and discipline.

I also remember having to memorize a few things over the course of my short service to the church, and this is where I first established, unknowingly at the time, my relationship with the Lord. I remember having to learn and recite the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, Psalm 23, and the Nicene Creed. At such an early age, these things meant very little. I also remember I had a tough time pronouncing Pontius Pilate. I took only three things to heart from memorizing these texts: (1) I should obey God's commands because, well, He was the Almighty, (2) Jesus was my friend, and (3) I should always strive to be a good person. These things were ingrained in me, and I have been blessed ever since!

Fast forward through many decades of virtually no experience with either a church or the Bible (except attending an Episcopal boy's school where academics and sports far outweighed church), and after retiring from a great career, I finally established my full-on, Bible-sourced, abiding relationship with Jesus Christ. Subsequently, I now know why my life has been so blessed, and trust me, Jesus was always more than just a friend. Deep down, but without a lot of thought, I had always believed in Him, and apparently, with all the blessings I have been graced with, He must have believed in me.

## Some of the Many Miracles in My Life

The following happenings in my life, some small, some life altering, are just a few examples of the guiding hand of the Holy Spirit – Christ's gift to those who have chosen to follow Him.

**The School Play:** Probably about the same time I became an Altar Boy, I was also in a Christmas play at my Elementary School. My role was one of the three Wise Men (who my family still fondly refers to as the three wise guys), and my line was simple: "I bring you great tidings of joy". Well, once on stage and facing the audience to deliver my line, I went completely black – I don't remember a thing. My father had to tell me what happened. Dad said I was quickly ushered off stage with the audience in uproarious laughter. Apparently, and I am sure with the Holy Spirit's help, I had blurted out "Boy, have I got good news for you." Some 60+ years later, when studying the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the first time, I learned that in Greek (the language of the New Testament), Gospel means "good news". Coincidence? Maybe.

**High School Honor Code:** As a 14-year-old freshman at my Episcopal high school, I teamed up with a fellow freshman and for some strange reason (I can no longer remember why), we thought the school should have a written Honor Code, so we set out to write one – and the school adopted a version of it! Now tell me, unless moved by something or someone, what 14-year-old would endeavor to do such a thing? I think now, the Ten Commandments played a bigger role than I thought at the time.

**The Car Wreck:** In my senior year in college, my girlfriend, Katie, and I were driving our Pinto north up Highway 17 in the Santa Cruz mountains on our way back to school. Coming south on the highway, a car made a left turn literally right in front of us. We were going about 60 mph, had no seat belts on, and all I remember was yelling "Jesus Christ" before we T-boned them leaving no skid marks. When we woke up, Katie and I slowly got out of our car and in a major daze just kind of looked around. Our car was completely turned around and pointing South. There was screaming coming from the other car which was demolished. We were all loaded into the same ambulance and the passenger in the other car continued her screaming. There was oddly no blood, so we assumed she must have had major internal injuries. All we had, we thought at the time, were streaks of blood running down our faces and clothes as both Katie and I had hit the windshield and made two big dents in it. Since I had the steering wheel to brace me, Katie's dent was slightly bigger.

At the Emergency Room, the doctors immediately attended to the screaming passenger of the car we hit. After a while, they attended to the driver of that car. After standing, walking around, and sitting for what seemed like an eternity, a doctor finally asked us how we were feeling. Katie shared that her neck hurt a little. They walked her down to the x-ray room. She came back on a gurney, her head in a brace and surrounded by sandbags. She had a broken neck. The doctors couldn't believe it. Apparently, all I suffered was some scalp lacerations that were already dried up.

There were four miracles that day. Having seen both cars a few days later, it was clear to me and my best friend Randy who was with me, we should have all either died or been seriously injured in that crash. The front end of the Pinto was gone, and the engine of the Pinto was shoved slightly down and under the passenger compartment. The other car (both cars were in a police impound lot), had no front or back passenger side – it was completely gone. The passenger of the other car suffered no scratches and no internal injuries – the screaming was solely from shock. Her driver was also fine, with no injuries. Yes, Katie suffered a broken neck, but after successful surgery, she fully recovered. There is no doubt in my mind that Jesus, through His Holy Spirit, intervened big time and saved us all. We were saved by miracles and Katie, Randy, the police, and the doctors all felt the same.

**Making Payroll:** There was a time in my career when things were kind of tough. I was going through a divorce – no, fortunately not with Katie as we had broken up many years prior – and the circumstances behind the divorce were somewhat extreme. I won't bore you with the gory details but there was a time driving back from my attorney's office that I thought if I didn't have a big commission check in the mail, I wouldn't be able to meet payroll. I would have to close my business. I remember praying out loud to Jesus to please have a check waiting for me. You guessed it, when I got back to the office, a big check from Guardian Life was sitting on my desk. Coincidence? Well, if I had shared all my blessings up to this point, the pile of coincidences would be rather high. And believe it or not, the best is yet to come.

**The Day Before Trial:** In this same divorce – we had been married only 18 months with no children – my soon-to-be former spouse wanted our case to go to trial. Let's just say that later, I found out that I was not her first, second, or even third husband. The day before trial, my lawyer called and said that her lawyer had called, and they had made an incredible offer that we could not pass up or the judge would throw the book at us for not accepting it. All I had to do was come up with \$65,000 to pay her back for the down payment she had made on a house we had shared, and they would dismiss any future spousal support (she had fraudulently claimed total disability), withdraw any claim she had on my other home, and she would pay for her own attorney's fees – and I would also get to keep the other house too as I was paying for that mortgage as well. It was about as sweetheart a deal as you could ever dream of. Unfortunately, they knew from all the mandatory court filings, I didn't have a nickel to my name, much less \$65,000. Of course, my lawyer knew that too so all I could say was how long do I have to try and raise the money not having a clue where it might come from. He sighed and told me they want it by the end of the day – before the trial started in the morning. This was about 1:30 in the afternoon and I just laughed. He made it clear, I had to find the money, or we would be dead in court the next day.

Yes, miracles do happen and here's proof. Remember back at that early age, in my religious memorizations that it was ingrained in me that I should follow the Lord and always strive to be a good person. Well, within 45 minutes of hanging up with my lawyer, I had three people, each willing to write me a check for \$65,000. I called my attorney with this incredible news, and he simply couldn't believe it. Needless to say, he was more than floored. We did not go to court, there were no future payments, I kept my own home, and now had a second one. As icing on the cake, a month or so later, her lawyer called me and asked if I would be his firm's insurance agent. In the Bible, when God says He will reward the generous and faithful many-fold, He isn't kidding.

**Moving to Meet God:** We were settled in our retirement home, which I loved, and one day my wonderful wife, Melody, walked into my detached music studio and told me, out of the blue, we needed to move. I have no idea why, but I just said, okay, where to. Again, I won't bore you with the miracles that got us from there to here (which included moving out of state) but there were many. But the biggest miracle is we ended up moving to a home that was only a few blocks from where a certain church congregation was having their Sunday services. Melody loves to walk every day and on Sundays she would occasionally walk by this location. There were always people outside waiving at her and she would waive back. One Sunday, a voice inside her head told her to go on and walk inside. As they say, the rest is history.

She came to the Lord rather quickly. I was pleased, but still had not joined her in church. A few months after she started attending church, she asked me if I would like to join her in a Christmas Eve service. I said sure. I still had fond memories of my short time at St. John's Episcopal church and though thoroughly uneducated about it, I did believe in Jesus. I just wasn't terrible religious about it. Within a month, Pastor Jim knew I was ready to fully, *and knowingly this time*, commit to Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I had always been with Jesus, but never truly understood what such a relationship really meant and what all was behind it – much less why it sourced miracles and a very blessed life. Aside from those early memorizations, I hadn't read any of the Bible – I just believed. And as miracles would have it, Pastor Jim turns out to be an incredible and awe-inspiring teacher of God's Word.

Which is why you now find yourself looking at our website. I have had a truly blessed life and thanks to Pastor Jim and the Bible, now I know why. How everyone else can have a blessed life is a message that needs to be shared, and this need gave birth to [WhyBelieveInChrist.com](http://WhyBelieveInChrist.com).

## Aside From Miracles, What Else Is There?

Great question and I will share what has happened to me by continuing with my testimony. I can not testify about eternal life in heaven yet, but I have faith that it will come. I am with the Apostle Paul as he confirms his faith in eternal life when he tells us in Philippians 1:21-26 that “to die is gain”.

*“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.”*

What else is there besides eternal life in heaven with Christ can best be expressed as “Fruit of the Holy Spirit”:

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23*

When you start to ardently believe in Christ and begin to live your life accordingly, you become a magnet for these things – the Fruit of the Holy Spirit – and who you are in your heart changes to adopt them.

Speaking for myself, I was taught early on in life to be kind, good, and faithful (remember those memorizations). Now being tutored by Pastor Jim, and with continued Bible reading, participating in Bible studies, attending church on Sundays without fail, and being in great fellowship with other Biblical Christians, I have found that my life has also taken on a real sense of patience and peace. So, for me, what does that look like?

The first think I noticed, and it happened quickly, is that I stopped swearing. One day, that part of me was just gone. Oh, it creeps back in on occasion, but it is now extremely rare. Like many, I also suffer from road rage. That too has dissipated a lot. Now, I find myself just relaxing on the road and just being patient with the traffic – letting people have their way when that wasn’t always the case. It isn’t completely gone, but it certainly has been reduced dramatically. I also used to get angry sometimes if people were doing things that I felt were out of line but now, with my increase in patience, most of the time I just say okay and move on.

My overwhelming sense of peace always comes when I fully accept that God’s really in charge. He’s got this, and it is always going to work out His way anyway, so I don’t need to worry too much about it. Yes, of course I still worry a little bit, but that wonderful peace always comes to me when I simply let go of the outcome knowing it’s in God’s hands.

Needless to say, my well-being is much, much greater with Christ and His Holy Spirit being the biggest part of my life and their bringing with them, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness.

Unconditionally loving all people and having pure joy always in my life are proving more difficult for me, but I know they will come when I have completely surrendered to God and have totally abandoned my self-righteousness. I’m working on it and the good news is knowing that we are always a work in progress. Christ knows what is truly in our hearts and if it pleases Him, He will complete our faith when the time comes.

**Ever Have Back Pain?** Here’s a final miracle to share. One night awhile back, I was struggling with severe back pain which fortunately is unusual for me. I had some important things to do for the church the next day, and I wasn’t sure if I would be up to the tasks given my severe pain (I had had this type of pain only once before in my life and was down for days). As I was walking to the bathroom preparing for going to bed, without thinking I just prayed out loud saying, “Jesus, could you please help me.” As I left the bathroom and walked to our bed, maybe all of 10 steps, the pain completely, and I mean completely, disappeared. Gone, totally gone. In what, maybe all of 8 seconds? Coincidence? I know better now; and I hope that someday you too will find out that all good things come from God.

## Summary

Remember, this is my testimony – it is what has happened in my life because of my following Jesus from a very young age. Fortunately, it is a testimony, not a template. You don’t have to start at an early age like I did. You can start your relationship with Jesus Christ at any time for He is always there, just waiting to be asked.

But in your life, what has happened and what will happen, is between you and God. If you want eternal life with Christ in heaven, and if you want love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control in your life now, the documents on our website will show you how to obtain them. The hand of God has been all over my life, and if you are reading this, the odds are He’s also touching yours.