

## Testimony

### I. My life before Christ

I grew up in a Christian home. As a young child I knew that Jesus was the son of God and that He was the only way to get to Heaven. My grandma played a big role in my belief in God. I have always seen my grandma as a strong Christian. I would say that my dad and her were the one's that planted the seed. I have always been interested in spiritual things, but never really understood about having a personal relationship with Him and choosing to live my life for Him. I just knew my sins were forgiven if I believed in Him.

When I was about 5 my mom had 3 brain aneurisms and had to have brain surgery and my life turned completely upside down. I didn't know exactly what was going on, but I knew it was bad and I was scared that she was going to die. After her surgery she was in and out of rehabs for a couple years. While in rehab my dad still had to work full time and needed a lot of help with me. I would go from one place to the other. I stayed with my grandma's, aunts and uncles, and neighbors. I never really felt like I belonged anywhere. I wanted so badly for things to be normal again, but knew it wasn't going to happen. When my mom finally got to come back home she needed a lot of help. Mentally she wasn't capable of taking care of herself let alone me so the roles really got reversed, I became like the mother and she was like the child. I was angry and didn't want to have to deal with the things that were happening so I would take it out on her. It took 7 years very slowly she got better.

When I was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade my parents decided to get divorced. I wasn't happy with the decision, but I think I was kind of numb because of everything that had happened

before. When I was in 9<sup>th</sup> grade my dad got remarried.

Over the years I have always tended to feel sorry for myself which has caused me to get into quite a bit of trouble. In high school I was a goody goody, I got really good grades, never skipped school, was teachers pet and never got in trouble with my dad. But that didn't mean I didn't do bad things. I just got really good at lying and being sneaky. I also became involved in sex and a little bit of drinking.

After I graduated I continued feeling sorry for myself and had a very low self esteem. I was always trying to be "cool" and feel "loved". I slowly began partying, drinking and smoking marijuana. During this time I met Daniel and we became good friends. Daniel grew up on the mission field until he was 12 and always had amazing stories to tell about the mission field and God. Even though he wasn't walking with the Lord I knew he believed in Him and this caused me to develop very strong feelings for him. But he didn't feel the same way, because even though he wasn't walking with God he knew that he wanted the woman he married to be a godly woman like his mother.

I went to college for one semester where things just got even worse. I became more promiscuous. I only cared about being liked by men and had come to the conclusion you did that by having sex. I was arrested for having marijuana in my dorm, which caused me to become depressed and stop caring even more. I had never really been in trouble like this. This caused me to party heavier. I got into harder drugs, such as meth and cocaine which I became addicted to and allowed them to control my life. Before I knew it my life was completely falling apart. This affected every relationship in my life. I then began to use sex as a tool to get the things I wanted. I

knew what I was doing was wrong but couldn't stop.

## **II. How I came to know the Lord**

When I was 21 my life hit rock bottom. Daniel some friends and I went out to celebrate my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and partied pretty hard, that was April 27, 2005. It ended up with me waking up the next morning thinking I had been raped. I didn't press charges but filed a report. Daniel stayed right by my side through it all until he talked to the friend and realized what really happened, that it was all just a drunken mistake. I felt horrible that I had let my life come to this and that I had accused a friend of such a horrible thing. Daniel got mad at me and went back to his friend. I went from feeling like the victim to feeling like I was the one who wronged him. Daniel went from standing beside me to extreme anger toward me when he realized what really happened. I had just about every negative emotion going through my head. I called Daniel and asked him what I should do. What I really wanted to do was end my life because I felt completely hopeless. Daniel said "I can't help you, the only person who can help you right now is God." I thought I had really gone too far this time and that no one could possibly forgive me not even God. I didn't see how I could possibly straighten out my life and I really wanted to give up. I told Daniel that I didn't know how to talk to God at this point and asked if I could come over and talk to him. After a little while he agreed that I could. When I got there he talked about the gospel for a couple hours explaining salvation and telling me about praying to receive Him as my Savior. He finally asked me if I wanted to pray and ask Him to forgive me of my sins and to help me forgive myself, I said yes and meant it with all of my heart. Again there was hope. Since he grew up on the mission field he knew the prayer by heart and thought it would

be easy, that he would just say the words and I would repeat. But every time that he would open his mouth God would not allow anything to come out. Eventually he asked God why he could not speak and God said to him “because you are not going to make a mockery of My Son. You repent and she will follow you.” So in that moment he recommitted his life to the Lord and I followed him.

Immediately I felt changed. I felt all of the burdens lift off of me. I no longer felt like I was broken at the bottom of the cliff, but like I was standing at the top of the cliff with Jesus and He was telling me to look down at my old life. I felt like He was telling me that it was all gone, that He had forgiven me of everything and I was alive for the first time. And I held onto that so tightly, because it felt so good.

### **III. After I got saved**

After I got saved I was so on fire I wanted the world to know that I loved Jesus.

Two weeks after I got saved Daniel told me that the day after we got saved he realized that we were supposed to be together and that we were going to get married. That just made everything even better. Of course we wanted to get married right away since we were coming out of that kind of life style and now wanted to be pure and have the kind of relationship that God would bless. Daniel asked my dad for permission to court me. My dad said that was fine but we weren't going to get married any time soon. He wanted us to wait because of my past. He wanted to make sure that Daniel wasn't just another guy. We were crushed but thought “that's okay we'll just have to show him that this isn't just a faze that we're going through and that this isn't just another relationship.” Daniel decided 5 ½ months later to ask my dad for permission to propose. My dad said that's fine as long as we waited for a couple of years before we

got married. There was that word again “wait”. Again we were crushed. About 2 months later Daniel proposed. I really wanted to get married in March and begged my dad to go along with it and he gave in. Shortly after we started planning the wedding my dad and sister wanted to talk to us. The gist of the talk was that we weren’t getting married for a couple more years. Again we were completely crushed and spiritually weak. More than the other times. In those times God tells us to draw near to Him and He will give us strength. Isaiah 40:31 says “yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.” But we did not draw close to Him. We relied on our own understanding.

Around this time we started to hang out with our old friends again. Little by little we began to compromise and before we knew it we were back to where we started. 1 Corinthians 15:33 says “do not be deceived bad company corrupts good morals.” Our thought was to win our friends to Christ not to let them pull us back into the world. It wasn’t like we left my dad’s house and said we wanted to backslide. It was little by little that we compromised that got us back there. And because we didn’t draw close to God in that time of need when we were feeling crushed we didn’t have strength to fight off the enemy.

In March we came back to the Lord again and decided we were going to get married in June even if we had to elope. By waiting we were just torturing ourselves. I explained this to my dad and this time he agreed. And it was a wonderful wedding because God was there and He was blessing the occasion.

Before I go on I need to go back to before we got engaged. Since Daniel was a

child he had wanted to be a pilot, but always felt that it was a selfish desire. Right before we got engaged Daniel had decided that he wanted to get into the ministry and wanted to go to Moody Bible Institute. He was looking it up online and on the bottom of the Moody website he saw the word aviation, but didn't think much of it. It wasn't until an elder at our old church took him up for a flight in his plane that Daniel's passion returned. About two months before we got married he was praying and God assured him that He put that desire in him and that it was not a selfish desire. God told Daniel that He wanted him to fly. We both prayed, separately, and I really felt like God was saying Moody. I told Daniel this and he said he had thought about that too. We decided we weren't going to talk with anyone about it because we knew that everyone would want to give us advice and some of it may have even been good advice, but just because something seems like good advice doesn't mean that it is God's advice.

We continued praying and asking God to confirm it. And He did. Probably 20 times. He confirmed it every time we opened our Bibles and through others who had no idea what we were even considering. The only person who knew was our pastor.

As we found out more about Moody we got a little discouraged because of the cost, moving away from family, and we found out that Moody was pretty conservative. That was completely different from what we were used to. Our church was very small and charismatic. We were used to people dancing, speaking in tongues and giving words of prophecy, etc. But as we prayed God continued to confirm it. And He said "I will provide in a way that will glorify only Me." We decided to do it. But we waited until after the wedding to tell anyone. We had planned on waiting until the next year to move, with the wedding and everything that would have been a little more stressful. But

God had other plans. We realized that He was wanting us to move immediately. So we moved 2 ½ months after we were married. We didn't know what to expect, we had never even visited Spokane.

We found a church and an apartment on the internet and moved 1600 miles away from home without even knowing the place we were moving to or anyone there.

At first I hated it. I wanted to move back immediately. It took a long time to make friends and I refused to see any good in Spokane. We never got connected at our church and personally I didn't want to. I knew that if I made friends then I just might like it here and I didn't want to like it. I wanted to move back to Iowa.

2 ½ months later I got pregnant which was another huge change and surprise. Around this same time Daniel started listening to the Calvary Chapel radio station. He came home and said "I'm feeling like we need to check out the Calvary Chapel here. I've heard the pastor speaking on the radio and he seems like a really good teacher. And I've also been realizing the importance of being taught the Word." he explained that there was a Wednesday night service and he thought we should go. I was very hesitant because I was content with not being happy here and I didn't want anything to mess that up. I wanted to go back home and I knew that if we found a church we liked I might actually want to stay. But I allowed Daniel to make the decision and we went. Immediately when we walked in the doors Jim greeted us and we felt very welcomed. We liked that it was a small church, because that's what we were comfortable with. That night Jim was leading the service because David was on vacation. Jim said that normally they didn't do this type of thing, but he wanted to open up a time for people to share a praise report or if they had a prayer request they could share that. That

confirmed it for us, we were home. Jim had no idea, God did, that one of our favorite things at our church back home was that we had a time of open prayer where people could share their prayer requests and praise reports and then we would walk around and pray for one another. When we left that night we decided that that was going to be our new church.

In the winter of 2007 Daniel was feeling discouraged about going to Moody because we were going to have a baby and it didn't seem possible to him. Then a guy from Moody in Chicago called, his name was Angel. He encouraged Daniel to apply. He decided to go ahead and see what would happen and he got accepted.

We started going to Calvary Chapel regularly and we attended the Agape feast one evening. At the Agape feast there was this woman there who came up to us and welcomed us to the church. She encouraged me to go to the Woman's Bible Study, which I tried to find every excuse not to attend. My main excuses being we couldn't afford it and I didn't have a way to get there. But my real reason was that I still didn't want to get connected. Well those excuses failed horribly as she then told me that they would give me one for free and that she could give me a ride. I still tried to come up with reasons why I shouldn't but Daniel strongly encouraged me to do it. I gave in and she started picking me up every Friday morning. Little did I know she would become one of my dearest friends. She has become more like a sister to me and not only welcomed me into the church but into her family as well. And that just opened the door to many other friendships. I can't describe the love that I have felt from every one at our church and how much that has helped me to realize God's love for me. He has also taught me that no matter where we are and no matter what the circumstances He

will always provide both physically and emotionally.

Since being at Calvary Chapel the Lord has grown me in many areas. I have realized the importance of service. Not just for the church but for me as well. I have learned to ask what I can give the church not what can the church give me. I also have a much deeper appreciation for the Word. With the way the world is right now I've realized how important it is to really know the Word and to cling to it, because it is easy to be led astray if you don't.

I wish I could say that life has been wonderful and easy since I was saved, but it hasn't always been like that. Yes, there have been some amazing times, but there have also been times when things were absolutely miserable and I just wanted to give up. But I have learned to rejoice in my trials because I know that my faith will grow stronger and that God is always in control. I just need to trust Him and surrender my heart to Him. Romans 5:3 says "...we exult in our tribulations knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance."

I just want to end by saying that no matter what the future holds I rejoice in knowing that my God loves me and His hand is on my life.