

Robert DeSonia – Testimony

I grew up in a divorced family, living with my mother in inner-city Flint, MI, until the end of 7th grade. She had a loose Catholic faith but rarely attended church. My only religious instruction was a weekly children's program I attended with my friend for games, though I only half listened to the short service and never came to accept the gift of salvation. Later, I moved to the suburbs with my father and stepmother, who took us to Catholic mass every Saturday. I sat through it, doing the minimum expected, considering myself a "generally good" kid. That church never really encouraged me to be more than that – it seemed more ceremony than personal to me.

As a high school senior, I started dating a girl that attended First General Baptist Church of Flint and was active in their youth group. I joined her for Wednesday and Sunday services to spend time together. Over time, I began really listening to the youth pastor, Steve Wood. In the church basement, amidst ping-pong and foosball tables, Steve challenged my lack of beliefs over many Wednesdays. In 1988, one message hit me hard: God was most definitely real, being "good" wasn't enough to save me, and I could no longer ignore the truth. That evening, I became a follower of Christ. With Steve's guidance and challenges to read the scriptures for myself, I grew my faith and was baptized in that church for the second time – this time as a believer. My zeal has experienced slight ebbs and flows over the decades from that time, but my belief in the Lord has and will never waiver.

Oh, that girlfriend that encouraged me to go to youth group is now my wife of nearly 34 years.