

Scott Pearl - Testimony

I was born into a mixed religion family. My mother was raised Lutheran and my father was raised Jewish. I had a basic belief in God at an early age, but no relationship and no understanding of the Trinity. In the summers, our family visited our Lutheran relatives and would attend church with them. While there, we prayed before meals and I received my first introduction to the Lord's prayer. Back home, my father enlisted us in Hebrew school on Saturday mornings. I disliked Hebrew school and after my brother ran away from home for a week in protest, my father disenrolled us.

At college, I met Tim, who lived his faith out loud and constantly spoke of his relationship with Christ. Tim shared a Gospel tract with me, the first time anyone witnessed to me, and he planted a seed that would take 12 more years to sprout. I still have that Gospel tract. After college, I was stationed in Ohio, where I lived a promiscuous life that lasted for several years. I was nice to everyone, but life was really about "what's in it for me?"

I was reassigned to the DC area where I met Bill, another Christian. Like Tim, he lived his faith openly, and we became good friends. He was non-pressuring in sharing his faith and I began to ask him to pray for me at times. I became less proud of my weekend activities. Soon after, I met Renee. Her smile warmed me to the core. She was a preacher's kid and I wanted what I saw in her. (Sadly though, I later realized I was intimidated by her knowledge of the Bible and it took me years to step into the role of spiritual leader in our marriage).

In the fall of 1993, I began to want Christ as my Savior. When confronted at church with the question, "Where will you go when you die?", I walked to the altar where I admitted I was a sinner, that I believed in Jesus, and I asked him to come into my life. About 2 months later, I went forward in obedience to follow in believer's baptism.

Looking back at that time, I didn't understand how broken I was and still had areas of my life that I needed to surrender to the Lord. I viewed my new religion like I did everything else--all things in moderation. As a result, I continued my faith journey at a slow crawl. On the surface, I presented as a Godly man, attending church and Sunday school regularly, and raising our children in a Christian home. I was faithful to God, my wife, and my family. I thought I knew Jesus well enough. When we would give extra money for a church need or to help someone out, God blessed us, yet I still found myself holding out from giving Him all of me. I believed I put my family above myself and would rationalize that was true. I began to struggle at home, failing in many ways as a husband and as a father. At a time when my prayer life needed to escalate, I hid from God. I wanted affirmation and slowly directed my time in areas where I received it—initially at work—and started working longer hours, receiving praise for how well I "took care of my people." The decay was slow but steady. Like Samson walking the 26 miles to meet the prostitute, I walked into deeper and deeper sin. I lacked accountability, failed to put on the armor of Christ, and Satan had a field day with me as a willing participant.

As my wife cried out for me to be present, I misunderstood her needs as criticism and withdrew further, embellishing stories to others about what a great father I was to other people and lavishing in their praise. I eventually bottomed out, deeply hurting my wife and family, and couldn't look at the imposter in the mirror. But God didn't give up on me! I worked initially on restoring my relationship with Him. More humility was needed. I was completely ignorant of what true intimacy was or meant, with God, with myself, with my wife. I had no men in my life I could confide in or who would hold me accountable. It took longer than it should have to break me, but when I finally found my way back to the foot of the cross, this time it wasn't for insurance. I had been laid low by the choices I had made. I came this time with humility, fully prostrated, not just on a bent knee. God then brought opportunities and people into my life to walk with me and to hold me accountable. He showed up in magnificent ways and continues to do so as I found forgiveness and peace, redemption and sanctification through not just believing in Christ, but truly knowing Him and having a real relationship. This time, coming to the cross broken and surrendering was much easier to do. After spending several years placing the Holy Spirit on mute, I found peace handing the keys to the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to guide my way. God has never turned his back on me. He has never given up on me. Never. How can I not pursue Him and give him the wheel to steer my life?!

Lighthouse Church has been a tremendous blessing to Renee and me. We are thankful for John Oliver's invitation to visit. Getting solid grounded bible teaching has helped me grow in this continued pursuit of Christ. The bible verse I have clung to and carry in recent years is Hebrews 13:5, "...for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."