

My Testimony

by Johana

God at Work: Three Friends Become Three Sisters

JOHANA'S PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Not Very Religious but Hoping to Earn Some Credits

I was born and raised in Colombia (South America) as a Catholic by not very religious parents. I was baptized as a baby; I attended Catholic school and did my first communion when I was 10 years old. I always believed in God but never really had an interest in establishing a closer relationship with Him. Overall I was a good friend, sister, daughter, student, and I thought God would give me credits for being good to society.



Struggling in USA

During the middle of my teenage years I came to Philadelphia. I was struggling with self-esteem issues, the divorce of my parents, adjusting to a new country, city, culture, language; working at a very young age, and taking over responsibilities in the house to cover the absence of my father.

God Working in My Life

Thankfully, everything wasn't BAD! God was working in His miraculous ways and making connections without me knowing it. The Lord brought Alejandra, a Colombian girl my age with the same background and struggles into my classroom at Lincoln High School in Philadelphia. We became great friends and today we are sisters in Christ. Alejandra and I always went up to our counselor Mrs. Estela (Spanish speaking lady from Panama) with questions about classes and credits. Our conversations were long and included religious beliefs. One day Mrs. Estela invited us to her church meeting, but Alejandra and I worked every Sunday therefore we never did attend; however, Alejandra's mother did go once and enjoyed the service. Eventually, Alejandra started to attend meetings every Sunday with her mom. Years went by and Alejandra and her mother both trusted Jesus for salvation. All these events took place, yet I still wasn't grasping much about my Creator and Savior's love for me.

Feeling Incomplete and Empty and Alone

Towards my late teenage years I was enjoying everything the world had to offer, yet I felt incomplete, empty, and alone. I had no inner peace. I knew something was missing, but I just couldn't understand what it was. One Friday night, I called Alejandra to invite her to the movies. In return, she said: "I was invited to a Bible study and I promised I will go; would you like to come?" My response was: "No thanks! I will find someone to go to the movies with."

Movies or a Bible Study on Friday Night?

Surprisingly, I did not have anyone to go to the movies with, so I took Alejandra's offer. The Bible study had already started when we got to the hall. On the white board, in red ink, were the words: 'The 4 Gospels'. Throughout the discussion I was very lost because I did not know what the word 'gospel' meant. After the session, everyone was very welcoming, food was great and games were fun. I left with questions that night and went back for answers the following Friday. Those answers brought more questions, and from question to question, I noticed my need for salvation. My interest started to grow and Friday night Bible study became the place where I wanted to be every Friday evening.

Special Night and a Special Bible Verse

John 1:12 says, "But to all who did receive Him (Jesus), who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God". This verse made a difference for me on October 18, 2009 when I understood I was created by God, but I was not His child because I had not yet received Him. That night I appreciated Jesus Christ, the One

who became flesh; He had come into the world and gave Himself as a sacrifice to save me (1 Peter 2:24). The One who knew no sin yet became sin for me (2 Corinthians 5:21). I rejoiced because His blood cleansed me (1 John 1:7). I understood the meaning of love and I'm glad that I can say I love Him because He first loved me (Galatians 2:20). The only wall that separated me from God was my sin (Isaiah 59:2). I accepted that although I was good to society by my own moral standards, I was still a sinner before God (Romans 3:23). I repented and received the Holy Spirit. Although I did nothing to deserve it, neither did I earn it with good works, I was given eternal life and a purpose in life. It was through faith in Christ alone that I could now see and it was by grace that I was found (Ephesians 2:8-9). It was all done for me!!! It was all paid in full!!! It was free!!! He can do the same for you!!!

Salvation is a Personal Relationship with Christ

Shortly after my salvation, Pamela (my best friend for many years) also trusted Christ and she has been able to testify of her faith through many trials. Thankfully, I now know God's miraculous ways and that He continues to work and to save others. He can do the same for you. He is knocking at the door of your life. Will you open up and let Him in?