

Testimony

by Katie Kersten

I was raised in a Christian home, attended a Christian school, and was surrounded by Christian family and friends throughout my upbringing. Religion, for me, was only formal - faithful church attendance and formal Bible reading and prayer. Sometime in my early twenties dissatisfaction and emptiness grew within me. I began to chafe against all religion, and I was ashamed to admit to anyone outside of my Christian circles that I held Christian beliefs. I became more and more enticed by the world and what it had to offer. Yet I knew with all certainty that God existed and that I must be judged by Him one day. And so my hearts inclination to the world and the pricking of my conscience were continuously waging war within me. I began to feel increasingly more miserable and unhappy. My soul was in spiritual darkness and in rebellion against God. I often felt depressed and empty inside. The powers of darkness had me in their grip. I was on a slippery slope. I began to question, against better knowledge, whether God actually existed. I really didn't want to answer to Him after this life.

Then, while listening to a portion of the Bible being read, the Lord impressed several verses with great power and conviction to my heart and put me at a stand. I saw with absolute certainty that I was heading down a road that would not end well for me, and I knew things had to change, but my soul was still in great darkness.

Then, sometime in the early Spring of 2015, in a very gentle way the Lord began inclining my heart to seek after His truth. In His Providence God placed me in the path of my uncle for a time, during which he often engaged me in conversation about the truths of God's Word. My uncle's genuine openness with me about spiritual matters and his obvious love for the Lord and His Truth made it very easy for me to open up to him. The concern he felt for my soul was clear to me, and that greatly touched me at that time.

Sometime in April of 2015 the Lord awakened my soul. That moment will forever be so precious for me. I was filled with His glorious light. The blessed Holy Spirit came to dwell within me. My heart was changed, and from that moment on all things became new for me. I was completely liberated from the spiritual darkness I had been living in, and I was filled with joy and thanksgiving to the Lord at what He had wrought in my soul. My chief concern became my desire for the living God and for His Word. The Bible was now so very precious to me, and I read it hungrily. I now knew God to be not only holy and just, but also merciful and loving. I felt grieved over the sin in my prior life, and at the same time immense thankfulness to God for pulling me out of the pit that I had been digging for myself. Later, when reading from Ephesians 2, I read what had been my experience: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

I spent the next two years absorbing the scriptures and all the godly books I could find. I lived in a peace and joy in God through Jesus Christ as reflected in Psalm 25:14. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and he will shew them his covenant". There were very few with whom I could comfortably share my joy without a sense of judgment on my new found love for God and His Word. I continued to grow but also began to experience times of doubt. I believe I lacked the assurance of faith, and was afraid that I was missing something. I longed to remain in the present abiding joy of the Lord, but had to learn to walk by faith; to lean upon the promises of God "who cannot lie" when he said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." I was learning that I needed to live by faith and not by sight.

God is so very faithful and He has been a very present help through each difficult situation that has come along the way since then. He has been leading me and teaching me by His Spirit. I am also so thankful to Him for people very near and dear to me who have been instruments of spiritual instruction and edification. I thank God for the blessing of those friendships. My sincere desire is to be obedient to my Savior and to follow His Word as best as I am able.

It wasn't until very recently that I have felt a great desire to obey the command of the Lord and to be baptized. After further searching and prayer, the Lord has confirmed this by way of His Spirit. I felt that to not be baptized after God's saving work in my soul would be a form of denial. In Acts 10:47 Peter says, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

My sincere desire is the salvation of souls, and especially of those around me.

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