

Baptized and a Church Goer But I was Lost

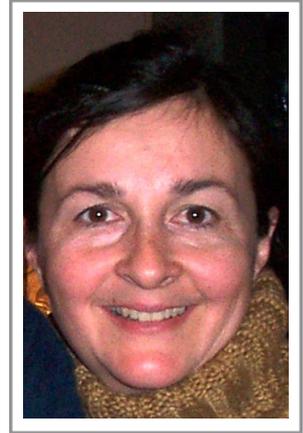
Personal Testimony of Stacey Prins

Childhood Memories

There was never any question in my mind about whether or not I should respect God. As a young girl brought up by a strict Greek father and English mother, I was taught that respect of the Church was important because it represented God and His instituted laws. I remember knowing in Grade 5 that swearing or taking the Lord's Name in vain was wrong. I would say "Sorry God" every time I did.

Church was My Choice

Mom and dad were not regular attendees of the local Greek Orthodox Church but I would go every Sunday. Dad would drop me off. I was baptized Orthodox at the age of seven. I thought baptism was basically all I needed to get started for Heaven and then the rest of the time I would just have to work at it. Work for me meant: go to church, fast to take communion, wear my cross and teach Sunday School. With all those bases covered, I was pretty sure I had a good chance of going to Heaven.



By Grade 7 my father was concerned over the quality of the public school system and the bad influence of the children who went there. He transferred me to a Catholic School where I made new friends. To fit in, I began attending mass, took communion and even did confession twice. I went regularly on my own for a couple of years.

Rituals Felt Good

During my High School years, I returned to the Greek Orthodox Church. I confess I didn't get much out of the service because I didn't understand the old form of Greek used. But there was something reassuring about just being there, doing the sign of the cross, kissing the icons, lighting the candle, taking communion, etc. All of that would probably be enough, I thought. Everybody else was doing it, so I thought I was doing just fine.

The Bible Girl

I met a girl at Central High School who claimed to be 'born again.' She often brought her Bible to the cafeteria to read. Sometimes I would sit beside her. Even though others refused to sit with her, I actually felt some sort of pride in being able to sit with her and not be embarrassed over the Bible being opened for all to see. She approached me once regarding Christianity and specifically mentioned the term 'born again' which led to a long discussion. I didn't budge in my opinion. I suspected those TV fanatics had gotten to her too.

The Young Man who Gave Thanks for His Food Every Time

When I was seventeen I started waitressing at the Sherwood restaurant. That winter a nice looking young man started dropping by regularly for coffee. He seemed to be snowplow/fencer. When Spring struck he came in so frequently I had his order memorized and ready when he arrived – bacon and eggs up, small milk, and a coffee. I told the other girls to let me get his order anytime he came in. I noticed, right away, that he prayed for every meal. That unusual practise impressed me. He didn't seem the *fanatic* sort so he passed in my books. By summer he was coming in all the time. On Sundays he'd drop by mid-afternoon with his car magazines wearing a suit, looking quite dapper.

I found myself quite taken with him and hoped he felt the same. Finally, at the beginning of August, Paul, yes it was Paul Prins, asked me to go out sometime. I was overjoyed. I said sure, that would be fine but each time he would never set a date or time. So I finally asked him out for coffee one Wednesday night. We met after I finished work. We met five nights in a row at the Quality Donut Shop. Paul told me everything he had done in his so called 'party days.' Later he confessed to using the 'party life' as a scare tactic, thinking that if he didn't scare me off, I must be worth holding on to. The reality was I had seen that he had changed; he wasn't that kind of a person anymore or else I would never have gone out with him.

Paul Opens His Bible

One evening while parked under the bridge, Paul brought his Bible out and told me he was **sure** he was going to heaven. He was saved because the Lord Jesus Christ had taken his sins away. When he said that to me, I said, *“He took all our sins away, but that no one could be positively sure they were going to heaven.”* He showed me some verses from the Bible, and then I tried showing him some that I thought were relevant; but I knew I wasn't winning the discussion. My main point was that I was baptized and therefore I felt somewhat sure of heaven myself. Paul finally ended the discussion by saying: *“Listen, the only way you can tell me I'm wrong is by proving it from the Bible.”*

Turning to My Bible

That's what I went about doing. I began reading my Bible in search of winning the challenge Paul had given me. During this time, I had attended two weddings where the Gospel was preached. In my view, they went too far when they said some people were going to Hell and others weren't. I didn't like that in the least. I never forgot what they said because everything supposedly was from the Bible. Well, I was going to find out for myself. I read more verses and even some Gospel tracts. I still didn't believe, but I wasn't so sure of myself anymore.

I was continually reading my Bible in the evenings. I started in the New Testament at Matthew. With every chapter and book I read, the more convinced I became of my standing before God. I was lost. I was not a Christian at all. I began, in earnest, to urgently search out how I could make myself right before God. I knew I wasn't saved and the Scriptures confirmed it. The more I read, the more lost I became. I wanted, so much, to know I was saved, but I just couldn't figure it out.

On October 12th at about 12:45 am I was reading in Acts 8. I read about Simon *“who himself believed and was baptized”* (Acts 8:13). But by verse 21, it was obvious that Simon's heart was not right *“in the sight of God.”* He had tried to buy his way into salvation by offering money to acquire the power that the Apostle Peter had.

Lost! Lost! Lost!

After reading that, I began to think of myself in the same regard. I had been baptized and I *thought* I believed. But I had nothing and it was so empty. I realized I could do nothing that was good enough to make me right for heaven. There was absolutely nothing I could do. Knowing this, I faced the reality that I would have to go to Hell. If I died right then and there, I'd be in Hell. I wasn't saved; I wasn't a Christian. I was without a Savior. The certainty of Hell was before me and I was truly LOST.

Saved! Saved! Saved!

Right at that point, the thought came to me *“Jesus died for me and took my sins away so I wouldn't have to go to hell.”* I saw it as truth, and accepted it. Jesus saved me. I had such a sense of relief to know I wouldn't have to go to hell. I knew for sure, without a shadow of a doubt, that I would be in heaven because of what Christ had done at the cross for me.

“The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

I thanked God right then and there that he would ever save someone like me, and that he would give his Son for me. I have a Savior now. He is my Lord. I've been thanking Him ever since and I'll keep thanking him until I see Him face to face in Heaven.

Please share your thoughts with me. Would you like to be SURE you are going to Heaven? Would you like to be saved? I would love to hear from you. Email me at: staceyprins@yahoo.com

Now that you have read my story, I would like you to read my husband's story. I miss my husband Paul and my children miss their dad.