

**Baptism Class
Summer, 2013
Alvyn Lim**

Testimony

What was I like before I became a Christian?

Not much different. I was still a kind person with a good work ethic, aside from a one-year rebellious phase during middle school. The main differences are that I read the Bible and pray regularly.

How did I become a Christian?

It was a gradual thing, rather than a sudden life-changing transition. I was introduced to the Church at a young age and given my own Beginners Bible. Though I'll admit I didn't really get into a close relationship with God, until after a traumatic incident involving a gory movie scene.

How am I growing as a Christian?

I still read the Bible and pray regularly even when I'm away from Gilead and home at San Jose State. Granted, it would be great if I could find a fellowship or Church at San Jose.

Testimony Speech:

Just what is a Christian? A person who grew up in the house of God? I remember my humble beginnings at Gilead Bible church.

My mom, originally a Buddhist but now a Christian, would leave me...I mean *take* me there on Sundays so I would learn how to become a good person, and – as I personally still suspect – to keep me from giving my parents lip in the future. Needless to say, it worked...Mostly. It was during this time that I gradually learned more and more about God, His son Jesus Christ, His word and holy standards, and the people who had the honor of knowing Him personally.

With that said, church has been a part of my life ever since elementary school. So following the aforementioned logic alone that growing up in the church makes you a Christian, as a child I must have thought I was one from the start. And if anyone took a quick look at my lifestyle, they'd probably think I was one too! I had a good work ethic, I obeyed my parents (most of the time), and I wasn't a jerk to anyone. I even had my own Beginners Bible, that I fondly remember getting from the book section at the back of a Toys R' Us!

However, looking back now, I can see how wrong I was. Outside of the church, I didn't read my Bible on a daily basis, have a regular prayer life, or even say Grace before every meal. But above all, though I was familiar with the story, I

didn't understand the true value of what God's Only Son Jesus did for me.

But that all changed after one fateful summer night, when something inside of me snapped. Was it a really bad panic attack or major case of emotional trauma? I'm still not sure to this day. But whatever it was it left me in a fragile emotional and mental state for over a year. I started feeling more depressed about life, more prone to irrational thoughts, and worrying about all of the possible bad things that could happen me. One such instance was worrying that I would get the West Nile virus just by taking a hike during a Yosemite trip.

Throughout the first few months of this period, nothing could help ease my inner instability. Not even the comforting words of my parents. But there was Someone else who could. God. Thus I started becoming closer to God by praying regularly for His comforting love and reading the Bible daily in hopes of better understanding His works and how He helped others.

Though I still had my moments, I was finally able to get over my inner instability. But my closer relationship with God didn't end there. No: since then, I have read through the entire Bible more than three times, maintained a more consistent prayer life, and even possibly led a person to Christ. And throughout that time, I have continued to witness God's blessing and deliverance – big and small, from getting into a good college to receiving much needed strength to face life's challenges.

But above all, I now truly understand God and His Son's precious gift to me: His coming down to Earth as a human being just to suffer a terrible death on the cross for us all. Why? So that His loving sacrifice could atone for all of my sins as long as I believed so and accepted Him as my personal Lord and Savior **and I confessed that I am a sinner**, thus allowing me to stand before God in the end and enter the gates of Heaven.

However, though my walk with God is still going along, that doesn't mean my life has been all gumdrops and lollipops from there. To add on to what a wise man once said, there are a few things you can count on in life: death, love, taxes, and hardships. Lots and lots of hardships. Unless you're one of those spoiled rich kids in the upper class, then that doesn't count.

In my case, these range from academic pressures, the occasional emotional relapse, and that time every now and then when I forget an important task and turn my home into a madhouse whilst trying to fix it. But you know what helps me get through it? Prayer. Every time I fall into a pit of troubles, I pray to God for His help and guidance.

Though my prayers don't always seem to be answered, I like to think of these instances being "blessings in disguise." For example, I was hoping and praying to get a high enough grade in a crucial course so I could apply for

admission into my college's BFA design program. But sadly, the "C" I got doesn't look like it's going to cut it.

But hey, who knows? Maybe if I did get in, I wouldn't even be able to keep up with the competitive and fast pace of the program. Or maybe, instead of spending an extra two or three years to complete the program, God will have me use that time for something more important. But the bottom line is whether or not my prayer was answered, I am 100% certain that God listens and still has a plan for me, just as long as I continue to trust in Him and live my life according to His word.

Now I'll admit, I may have gotten slightly irregular in terms of reading the Bible, because of my busy life at San Jose State, but I still keep the memory and understanding of God's gift close to my heart and mind. And as such, I can now truly say, without a doubt, that I – AM a Christian. And one day, I hope I can say the same for all of you here.

Also:

- Purchase a notebook
- Begin or continue your devotions
- Maintain a consistent prayer life
- Please record in your notebook what you have learned from your devotions, what's going on in your life, what you have prayed for, what and how God answered your prayers, etc.

Michael Lim - Testimony

My parents know this the best, but if any of you have ever spent a prolonged period of time with me, you'll quickly learn that my five favorite words are who what when where and why.

Where (I grew up): Gilead Bible Church: my mother took Alvyn and I here when she was still a Buddhist. I remember running around in the plastic car upstairs in the playroom and listening to all the stories at Sunday School (and competing with Benjamin and Darren with who could remember the most Bible Verses). As a kid I absorbed everything I heard without question. It was simple: Moses freed his people from Egypt, David killed Goliath, Jesus came down from Heaven and died for our sins so that we may have eternal life through Him.

When (I became a Christian): So the term is "born-again Christian," right? Well, I was fortunate to have been born again... twice. On accident. One day at VBS, they had all the kids gather around, sit down, and close their eyes. And the head volunteer said "If anyone wants to receive God's love, please raise your hand." So I didn't know this at the time, but they were trying to see if anybody wanted to become a Christian for the first time. Except, I had grown up in church believing in Christianity, so I was just raising my hand because, well, yeah, I wanted to receive God's love. Who wouldn't? And before I knew it I was taken outside and given a Bible and I said the A B C's (Accept, believe, confess)... **I acknowledge that Jesus Christ is God's one and only son. I believe that Jesus Christ die and rose again from the dead for me. I confessed that I was a sinner.** For the second time.

What (My faith looked like as it grew): I suppose it helped though, having a specific day that I supposedly renewed my faith. So my faith as it grew; it expanded not only in width of the knowledge of Biblical figures, stories, and verses that I knew off the top of my head, but I sought to increase the depth of my understanding. Moreover I wanted to learn exactly how my faith could be related to living like Jesus. Because as fascinating as memorizing Bible stories is, what became more important to me was learning the messages and ideals behind the stories and using them in my own walk with Christ.

Why (I challenged my faith): This brings us to the why. And this is sort of what I went through the last two years. So why didn't I get baptized earlier? I went through a series of questions about Christianity; and the reason for this was because I was trying to measure out God's divine plan and creation with my own

worldly logic. I asked, if God is so infinitely loving why doesn't he just make everyone go to heaven? What happens if a village in the middle of nowhere never gets a chance to hear about his salvation? If faith without works is dead, how come it is only our faith that saves us? How does my scientific education about evolution and anthropology fit into my faith?

After struggling with these questions, I've come to the conclusion that my faith and following Christianity is not a how, it's not a why, it's not a where or when, but a WHO.

Jesus is to me, much more than a savior, he is a confidante, and a friend. His everlasting love and forgiveness is so significant, it's impossible for me to truly express or understand

That's probably what I struggled with for the longest time, and now I know it would be insulting to my Heavenly Father to try to limit him to my logic and imagination.

Jesus has done for me so much, and even though my debt is unrepayable, I have tried to be a good witness to those around me.

He has saved me through faith but also shown me that doing good work in the world is one of the best ways to find fulfillment. I am, or at least, I think I am, more sensitive, giving, thoughtful, and compassionate because I find inspiration in Jesus' teachings.

I know that I do not, and will never have all the answers; but that's why it's called faith. I just have to believe and trust that God's understanding, wisdom, and power is eternally greater than any human being's.

But I will never stop seeking out more knowledge to better my faith, and being a good Christian to show just how life changing the gospel can be, if you let it.