

# Salvation Testimony

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By God's grace, I grew up with Christian parents who loved Jesus and raised me in the faith. They taught me about God, the stories in the Bible, and Jesus. Being a know-it-all, I soaked it all up! During Sunday School lessons, my arm was permanently glued to the air, ready to be called upon by the teacher. But with all my knowledge of the Bible, I did not *know* God, I only knew *about* Him.

As I grew older, I continued to learn from and obey my parents (I was an avid people pleaser). But this was only when they were looking. In front of them, I spoke and acted respectfully, but my heart was deceitful and wicked. I lusted, lied, spoke crudely with my friends. Though I knew God could see everything, I did not truly believe it, or else I would not have sinned against Him in secret. I had no faith in Christ, though I had knowledge of Him.

One New Years, when I was 15 years old, I sat on the couch and thought of the year before. It was in that moment that I truly recognized myself: a fraud! I was like one of the Pharisees, those "whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness" (Mat. 23:27). The burden of shame overwhelmed me, but it did not lead me to true repentance. Instead, I resolved to quit sinning! If ever there was an impossible New Year's resolution, it was that!

Unsuccessfully, I tried to stop indulging in private lusts. But I continued headlong into my double-mindedness: one moment crying out against my sin and the next moment burning for it. My grief was a worldly one that produced only death. What I needed was the godly grief that "produces a repentance that leads to salvation" (2 Cor. 7:10).

I do not know when this sorrow came, but once it did, I knew I could not return to my former life. My heart was broken, not because I had been caught, but because I had sinned against so good a God! When I realized my own neediness and spiritual poverty, I was humbled and brought to true repentance. My debt against God was great, but His Son Jesus paid for it on the cross. He took the penalty of death instead of me!

Since then, I have received only good from God's hand, whether painful or pleasant. He has grown me so much, from the inside out. He has given me a new, clean heart so that I can truly worship Him! As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:11: "But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."