

# BAPTISM

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you,  
not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an  
appeal to God for a good conscience, through  
the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 3:21



TESTIMONIES

SOUTHBAY COMMUNITY CHURCH

SPRING 2022

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# 4 Things You Need to do to Receive Jesus Christ Into Your Life

1. ADMIT your spiritual need. "I am a sinner."
2. REPENT and be willing to turn from your sin.
3. BELIEVE that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.
4. RECEIVE through prayer, Jesus into your heart and life.

PRAY  
SOMETHING LIKE THIS FROM  
THE SINCERITY OF YOUR HEART

Dear Lord Jesus,  
I know that I am a sinner.  
I believe that you died for my sins.  
Right now, I turn from my sins and open the door  
to my heart and my life. I receive your forgiveness  
and ask you to be my personal Lord and Savior.  
Thank you for saving me.  
Amen

# Charles Thornhill

I was "baptized" as a kid around the age of 5. I remember the moment pretty vividly...mostly the aftermath of a bunch of people congratulating me after. I didn't understand why. You see, I didn't really grow up in the church. I can probably count the number of times on both of my hands that I went to church in my youth. I spent my formative years working incredibly hard and learned that I could only earn love and acceptance through accomplishments and my own merit.

Fast forward to my sophomore year of college at UC Irvine and this is when I really started to ask more questions about my faith...or lack thereof.

To make a long story short, I went from being an arrogant skeptic to someone who encountered God in a way that was so palpable and real. I've never quite looked back since. I remember one night in the dorms, around the age of 20, and crying out to God and giving my life to Jesus. No audience. No flair. Just me on my knees in the dark crying out.

Because I can remember that moment so vividly and because I have spent most of my adulthood following Jesus, I never felt the "need" to get baptized again because I had already done so when I was a kid.

However, over the years, the idea has tugged at me more and more and as the old adage goes, "better late than never."

While my conversion was absolutely authentic and real...and me working out my salvation these last 2 decades or so has also been very authentic and real...I want to get baptized now because 1) Jesus commanded it. Period.

And 2) while I'm not legalistic and don't think it saves me anymore than I already have been, I want to participate in this act of obedience amongst the Body of Christ including my wife and my kids.

Had I been baptized when I gave my life to Christ during those college years, I think I wouldn't have understood the full weight of my sin and that decision of getting baptized amongst the Body of Christ.

Although a new convert, I was still just that: NEW. I was very prideful, thought I was way too smart because of my academic success, and like most young men, I had issues with lust. I thought that Jesus was ONLY saving me the negative consequences of those sins...which is why I turned and changed my life significantly after giving myself to Him.

But over the many years now of living out my faith, I can tell you that Jesus has saved me from eternal damnation because I sin and sin far more than I ever can begin to fathom. I honestly think that back then, I still would've felt that I "earned" the right to get baptized because I stopped being so arrogant or stopped lusting as much or because I stopped partying in the way I had before... Or even comparing myself to other younger Christians who may have done more "sinful" things than I did since I would actually deem my sins "less" sinful than some of theirs.

My conversion to Christianity wasn't motivated by a seemingly typical college kid vice (i.e. drugs or alcohol, etc)...

Rather, I would say pride was my vice.. All my life, I've been an earner. Earning awards and status. So, any good thing that came my way, I thought it was because of me and my talents and how industrious I could be. It was really pride and pride in sort of a "It's me against the world attitude." Perhaps it was because I grew up without my father. Or that I grew up experiencing certain traumas and still "made it." However, I know full and well that anything truly good in my life is because of God and not because of me. Having this awareness going into a Baptism makes it that much more special for me.

But as the Word says, my righteousness is as filthy as rags. I didn't have just a "few" things wrong with me when I got saved...everything was wrong with me. Not just my actions. But my words. My thoughts. My heart.

Jesus is perfect. He is without blemish. He is blameless. He saved that scared, sinful college kid from a life and eternal life without Him. AND today, He sanctifies me, disciplines me, protects me, corrects me, and above all, loves me deeply. Not because of who I am or what I've done but because of who He is. I deserve not one Good Godly thing. I am far more aware of my fallen nature than ever before...but I am also far more aware of the grace, power, and mercy of Jesus. His mercies renew each day. I am blessed that He has graced me enough to become aware of that truth.

I get to live in that truth. I get to re-learn it, re-commit to it, and today in front of the Body of Christ, I get to declare that I am nothing more than a sinner that has been saved by the grace of a perfect Savior.

# Lucas Ng

I grew up going to Church my entire childhood so there wasn't a specific event where I turned to Christ but my faith matured sometime in highschool. Prior to being saved I dealt with a lot of low self-esteem, self-image, and pride. I was caught up in what people thought of me from the outside. I turned to trying to make myself look cool with the way I dressed and act as someone I was not. I would spend all my allowance on shoes and spend hours researching the latest sneaker trends just to impress other people.

In high school, I went to a youth group retreat and the message was about worshiping idols. The part of the message that spoke to me was where you spend your time is where your heart is going to be. I was convicted of all the time and effort I put in towards sneakers and gaining people's approval. I learned that you do not have to gain Jesus's approval and that he loves you no matter what.

Now with Jesus, I have experienced freedom and peace from my sins. With this experience I try to love others unconditionally, no matter what is on their feet, how they act, or what they say, just like Jesus did.

# Cathleen Deleon

I was raised Catholic and had a religious lifestyle. For example, I could recite from memory various prayers, celebrated sacraments, and volunteered to serve the community. I believed that if I followed the Catholic Church's doctrines and lived a moral life, God would declare me to be righteous. On Sundays, I professed Jesus as Lord, but in reality, I decided what was best for me. Moreover, I believed that since I served Him, I deserved to receive good things. When I made mistakes, I reconciled them with good works. I was stuck in this mindset and didn't see other options.

There came a time when I was job searching. I wanted a well-paying job that held a prestigious reputation. However, the right opportunity never came up and I was disheartened. I believed that if I attended more Masses (liturgical ceremony) and persistently prayed certain prayers, God would favor me. During that time, a video website randomly recommended a biblical Christian service and I started watching services in addition to Masses. By God's grace, I gradually became interested in seeking Him and sincerely reading the Bible; attending Mass felt like going through the motions. After some time, I became concerned about my salvation. The Holy Spirit revealed to me that I was a sinner and only through Jesus' sacrifice, I could be perfectly righteous before God. I repented of my sins to Jesus and acknowledged I trusted Him to be my righteousness. Admittedly, I constantly had to be reminded by the Holy Spirit that I couldn't earn God's love nor deserve His forgiveness.

As a child of God, I have experienced the Lord is truly merciful and gracious. Despite my shortcomings, God is faithful. It's a blessing to witness the work of the Holy Spirit in my life. I have been born again and find my identity in Jesus. Now, it's important for me to grow in faith, love, and holiness. My decisions are connected to seeking God's will, rather than my own desires. Although I know I will encounter suffering and trials, I can preserve, knowing He is always with me. Jesus' resurrection helps me understand that things in life are temporary and no matter what happens, there will be a day when everything is made right. I can't wait until I'm in the Lord's presence, praising and worshiping Him without end, together with my brothers and sisters in Christ!!

And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." (Revelation 21: 3-4)

# Jung Ha

My life prior to conversion (confirmed at a Methodist Church in 1990 through sprinkling, but really saved senior year in high school in 1994) was just an absence of the knowledge of Jesus, His word in the Bible, and really anything associated with Christianity. I grew up with my paternal grandparents and my father in S. Korea, literally on the other side of the fence of a local church, but we were non-religious family and I didn't really get introduced to a Christian church and Jesus until I was nine years old when I immigrated to Arkansas to live with my mother.

I think I thought at the time that I was a good kid, obedient and excelling in academics, but looking back, I can see patterns of sinfulness in my life, particularly when I was living in Korea but really even to the present. When I was young, I distinctly remember taking things that were not mine at the local convenience store and even at the church playground. But as I got older, I think the biggest struggle for me was the sin of "self-reliance" and not God-reliance based upon my rearing/life circumstances. I still struggle with this to this day, so I place it at the Lord's feet continuously.

It's obvious when I look back on my life that God pursued me even when I didn't know Him. Last weekend we sang a song called "Goodness of God," that song perfectly describes His PURSUIT of me... that [He] has been so faithful, that [He] has been so good, that [His] goodness is running after me. It's really amazing to see how His steady hand of love and guidance has been there all along my life, even though I grew up in a divorced and broken home across continents (Korea and US). I am so thankful that God surrounded me with His love and grace... through His church... through fellow believers ...through His word.

I came to know the Lord in a gradual way through my mother, Sunday school and youth group, but I really got to know the Lord during high school when I changed churches and several of my closest friends journeyed with me in my walk. The "light bulb" event happened during an Easter play at the church in 1994, especially during the part where Jesus walked down our church aisle being mocked, spit on and whipped by several Roman soldiers. While it was just a play, it felt so real to me and with every whipping on Jesus' back, I could see/hear my sins being transferred and being carried by Jesus to the cross. What I had read about in the gospel of John only a month ago all came into reality for me and I dedicated my life to Christ that weekend.

Jesus really began to speak into my life after high school as life continued to have its challenges, especially in my drama-filled family situation. I continued to seek His face through His word and church fellowship; and saw His great heart for the nations through a Perspectives class in Boston, a missions conference called Urbana in 2000, as well as on a short-term mission trip to Dominican Republic in 2002.

He was and continues to be my source of hope & strength and father-figure in my life. He has continued to "run after me" with love and grace, providing me a wonderful godly Christian wife (Jean) in 2002 and a miracle in life through our beautiful daughter (Evelyn) born in 2010 after several miscarriages, which really tested our faith.

While life hasn't been easy, I know that God has blessed me in so many ways and surrounded me with such wonderful Christians throughout my life. I know I would not be here without his mighty grace - I realize more and more each day how much of a sinner I am and how much more I need his grace ... leading me each and every day, especially in serving others with love as He has shown me. So each day, I cling to His word, His mercy, His faithfulness so I can live in freedom under His perfect grace!

# Dora Guzman

My name is Dora Guzman, I was born and raised in Bogotá, Colombia. I have two daughters, Luisa and Grace and two grandsons, Noah and Samuel.

I was taken to Church at a very early age, because my father was a Christian. I used to go to Church every Sunday until I became a teenager. But during my young adult years, I lost my passion for the Lord even though I continued to go to Church.

During this time, I made many mistakes because I did not have the Lord in my life. Sometime later I started to realize the many mistakes I had made and how the Lord was with me, protecting me despite my rejection and my lack of commitment to Him. He took care of me and my daughters when I did not deserve His loving care.

I found myself hungry for the Lord, the pressures of life moved me to look for Him. After studying the books of Romans and Ecclesiastes, the Lord confronted me with my sin. He taught me that this world is vanity and the real treasure is in my eternity with Him. His sacrifice in the cross finally became clear, and I felt ashamed for taking His sacrifice for granted. I understood that my sin separated me from a Holy God, but the blood of Christ shed in the cross, cleansed me and presented me before the Father without my blame or my shame. I am now clean because Jesus died in the cross and I am saved because He loved me enough to die for me.

Since then, I have committed myself to the Lord, to surrender my life to Him, to seek Him daily and to depend on Him in every part of my life.

The Lord has blessed me with peace, I have lost interest for the things of this world and I have a living hope of spending eternity with my Savior. This is why I want to get baptized, to make a public profession of my faith in Jesus Christ and what He has done in my life.

# Marshall Hall

My testimony goes deep in my early youth. I grew up in the church and felt an extremely strong frequency with the Holy Spirit. I fell in and out of phases going through temptation and being led away from a fulfilled life through Jesus Christ. Lately in the last 5 years or so my connection has never felt stronger and I have always envisioned myself getting baptized and love the act of obedience and devotion to God through the Son and as Jesus told us we must be baptized, thus I shall! Amen!! Praise the Lord! No matter what trials and tribulations I deal with in life, I always know my Savior is there beside me, showing me lessons through faith and love! There is no greater love!! Amen!! One parable that really got me was Jesus explaining the fruit farm parable before His death (in the book of Mark) this passage blew my mind! Today in God's grace I will walk with Jesus closer and closer!! This is the next step in a long staircase for me spiritually.

Of course, I need Jesus because He is in every breath, every step, every thought that I take. I do not make any big decisions without going before the Lord, first. Jesus' death is the most important event in the history of time. Rolling that into the book of Acts and the resurrection and post resurrection, giving humanity another chance at salvation through the Son, Jesus Christ! His death not only accomplished the salvation of countless lives, (His bride = the church) but God's plan came through in a big way and I believe my old sinful ways of phasing in and out-self is dead and I am reborn through Christ our Savior by the grace of God. That is what death and the resurrection has meant to me. It's everything. Praise the Lord, for there is none higher, Amen.

# June Guo

In the book *The World of Yesterday*, Austrian author Stefan Zweig, wrote about his childhood education at school, "I cannot recall ever having been either 'joyous' or 'blissful' during that monotonous, heartless, and lifeless schooling which thoroughly spoiled the best and freest period of our existence."

Similarly, during my childhood, I could hardly recall having been "joyous" or "blissful". I was always being anxious and stressed especially at home not because of me being a disobedient kid, but because of my father's abusive parenting style. The relationship between me and him has never been easy. And also as a result of that, I found it hard to fully trust someone. Growing up, majority of time, I tried to avoid human interaction, being quiet and alone made me feel secure.

I somehow managed through the monotonous and heartless life all the way to college, after college, I came to US for grad school. School work wasn't tough for me but I could hardly focus and I felt something's missing in my heart and my mind. I didn't know what it was. At that time, I met several Christian friends, they were so nice to me and others that I felt it too good to be true. They must want something from me, I wondered. But no, they were just trying to help. One of them later became my best friend. It turned out that we had similar childhood experience. I never had trust issue with him. These Christian friends invited me to attend church services and bible study groups, they introduced me the meaning of the cross and resurrection of Jesus. That was the beginning of my relationship with Jesus. My Christian friends planted the seed, but my heart wasn't ready at that time. I approached it in a wrong way, I kept thinking it as an intellectual issue and I had so many questions that cannot be answered. Meanwhile, the relationship with my father was not improved at all. He's still trying to control me while I was thousands of miles away.

Among those Christian friends, another one later became my wife. From her, I learned that I didn't have to be alone. I am valuable. She painted my monotonous, heartless life with color and joy. When I shared with her about my father, she said "let's pray for him.", I asked, "why?, why are we wasting time and energy praying for him, no way he's gonna change." She's so patient and persistent, prayed for him anyway, our Christian friends also prayed for him at one gathering, but inside my heart, I refuse to believe that he would change. And we hadn't spoken to each other for years. One year passed by, he didn't change, another year, he's still the same. When I almost forgot all about the prayers, for the first time in almost seven years, I had a normal conversation with him. No yelling, no accusation, no hard feelings. He seemed like a different person. This was the moment that everything I was told by my Christian friends started to make sense to me. I once lost all my hope but Jesus redeemed me and my father on earth.

My world of yesterday was heartless, listless and lifeless, it was gone, just like the verse in 2nd Corinthians, "For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever." By God's glory and grace, my new life now, I do feel joyous and blissful. However, this is just the beginning of life with Christ, and I do believe the eternal life because of the resurrection of Jesus will be full of joy and love.

# Adalyn Nakamura

Hi my name is Adalyn. I am seven years old. I chose to follow Jesus on December 28, 2019 when I was reading my Jesus Storybook Bible. I read that Jesus is King and someday everyone who believes in Him will have an everlasting life. I believe that God sent His one Son to die on the cross for our sins.

I have been struggling with impatience, but now that I have Jesus in my heart I do not have to struggle as much. I know that Jesus is real because when I pray Jesus talks to me in my heart. He says I do not have to be afraid because Jesus goes before me and behind me, like in Deuteronomy 31:8, "It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."

I prayed about my bad dreams and I still have them, but I am not afraid because Jesus is with me day and night. I am getting baptized to show the world I believe in Jesus.

# Gabrielle Samuel

Hi my name is Gabrielle Samuel and I'm in the 8th grade. I had a family that was filled with God's presence, we did our best to go to church, and it felt like Christian music was being played constantly. Life before pushing myself to dig into God's word was dull, and it felt incomplete. I tried to distract myself from the thought of Jesus, just so I didn't have to face the mistakes I had made. Anything from trying random new hobbies or focusing more on friends.

The most life-changing moment that made me look deeply into my faith in God, was at my first retreat. This was when I felt something change, where I could worship without worry. In that short amount of time during the retreat, it dawned on me that in order to continue down the path of being God's child, I would have to fully put my trust and faith in Him. It would be only right to do so.

The moment felt like a heavy weight lifted off my shoulders, and I felt more than ready to believe that Jesus is the crucified, risen, and returning Savior and King. Because of Jesus, life feels like a more guided path and while there may be some rough patches, I believe that God has the capability to lead me through my life that has been reoriented. I never put much thought into living an eternal life - I could never wrap my head around the concept. But ever since I fully accepted Jesus, I felt the hope of the resurrection impact my life continuously, even until now.

# Justin Yi

Hi, I'm Justin Yi and I'm in the 8th grade. I have known about Jesus for as long as I can remember. My parents have been members of the church since before I was even born, so I always went to church every weekend and learned about the stories and miracles that God did in the Bible. But I didn't truly take Jesus into my heart, and although I prayed the prayer of acceptance several times throughout my KidzKrew years, I never really meant it; it was just because everybody else was doing it. I didn't really understand that I was asking for the biggest commitment of my life! However, as I grew older, I started understanding more and more of the Bible, and what all of my teachers at church were trying to explain to me. More importantly, I began to appreciate and realize how big of a deal it was that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, and then rose from the grave three days later. I don't remember when, but it was probably at some point in 4th or 5th grade that I truly invited the Holy Spirit into my heart and chose to become a Christian. After I became a follower of God, I started learning more and more about Scripture, God's plan for us, and how every single one of us is loved and cherished by God.

When I reached 6th grade, I started going to Evolution, the Jr. High ministry. I created stronger bonds with my church peers, and I also met new people. All of the advisors were really friendly, and I really felt like I belonged. On top of that, my relationship with Christ also grew deeper. I gained a deeper understanding of God's Word, through the messages that were preached, and the small group discussions that we had. I thought about getting baptized, but I figured there was no rush, and I didn't want to say a speech in front of everybody, so I decided against it. Eventually, the winter retreat came along, and apparently, it was this big, life-changing event where everybody grew closer to each other and to God. I wasn't too excited about going because I hadn't been away from my family too often, and there wasn't anyone there that I knew really well. Nevertheless, I went anyway. But the retreat turned out to be really great! I felt so engaged with God, and I had so much fun in all of the activities we did. I also think this was the time that I realized the importance and power of worship.

After the retreat and throughout the rest of middle school, I felt more connected to God. Whenever I didn't feel as strong with God, Evo always helped me get back into it. I also noticed that I started thinking about God more and more in my daily life, and not just at church. I found more ways and reasons to thank him every single day. And I made reading the Bible a consistent habit. Nowadays, whenever I encounter problems in my life, I pray to God, because I know He can help get me through every tough time.

Since Covid put a hold on everything, I didn't really feel the urge to get baptized, so I delayed it even further, until recently, when baptisms were announced again. I really felt like God was calling me to get baptized. My growth as a Christian will never be complete, but baptism is the next step I want to take in my relationship with Christ, by declaring my love for Him.

# Amanda Yee

Hey everyone, my name is Amanda Yee and I am in my last semester of high school. I have waited awhile for this moment and always wanted to wait for the “perfect” moment. Although I know that the “perfect” moment does not exist, I have witnessed many baptisms and passed many opportunities to be baptized and never felt that I had an incredible testimony. I had the typical story: I grew up in a Christian household, went to church consistently every Sunday, and attended a Christian school my whole life, but I was going through the motions. I knew God existed and that he died for my sins but I never felt the need to rely on God. I knew how to act like a Christian but I didn’t know how to live like a Christian. There would be times where I wanted to know everything about God and there were times where I cared more about others’ opinions of me.

Growing up, I was easily insecure, shy, and anxious. I never really struggled with my mental health until I entered high school. High school brought up new obstacles and new insecurities. I was easily sensitive and prone to toxic messages spread in the media. Two years ago around this time was probably the darkest moment of my life. News about shutting down school and the rising cases of COVID-19 rocked the world. I remember that time vividly as the time of scarcity of toilet paper, the introduction of zoom, online church service, baking banana bread, making dalgona coffee, and following Chloe Ting’s workout plans. If you had asked me what I thought about shutting down school and being asked to stay home, my introverted self would be ecstatic and say “Count me in!” Little did I know that this would be the most challenging period of my life. The isolation and not seeing my friends increased feelings of overwhelming depression, poor self-esteem, uncontrollable anxiety, and raised questions of doubt towards God. I questioned why He would allow something so terrible as a global pandemic to disrupt my sophomore year of high school and rob me from living life. My mental health decreased as the COVID cases increased. I recall bottling up my emotions, locking myself up away from my loved ones, and losing myself in the process. I battled with myself internally and strayed away from God. I felt angry at Him for allowing my mind to be my worst enemy and felt that He had abandoned me and hated me. I felt alone in this battle and that God truly did not care for me. I thought “Why would God allow me to suffer if He truly loved me?” I didn’t want anything to do with him and instead coped with my negative emotions in unhealthy ways.

Until God opened the door for me, I wasn’t able to ask for help myself. I was too scared to admit that I needed help and that I was indeed suffering. However, he guided me towards healing mentally and emotionally. In reaching out for help, I met my amazing therapist, who has been there for me through it all. I used to believe that going to therapy was shameful and meant you were weak and lacked faith. But God quickly debunked my belief and showed me that asking for help was not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength.

Two years later I can confidently say that it was all worth it. I can declare that God intended my battles for good and that he had a divine plan for me. 2020 may have been the year of hurting but 2022 is the year of healing.

Through this journey, I have learned various things about myself. I have learned that my feelings are valid, that I'm not broken, that I have purpose in life, and that I am fearfully and wonderfully made. I can also say that I believe God had me go through this so that I may help others in the future. If it weren't for the pandemic and going through my experiences, I would have never discovered what I value and am passionate about. Though I may have been lost in the depths of anxiety and depression, I was found in my identity in Christ. If you were to ask me now if I was given the choice of going through that difficult journey versus choosing the easier route, I would choose the harder route. I would not be the same person I am today. Through my experiences, I have learned how to be a more assertive, empathetic, and a loving person. I've learned that real beauty comes from within and not to place my value in what others may think about me. God taught me many lessons even if it wasn't the way I would have wanted it to be.

Since attending South Bay Community Church about a year ago, I have found my community of people who accept me for who I am not who they want me to be. I've drawn closer to God and His people. I've drawn closer to His word and what He wants to teach me. Today I have decided that it may never be the "perfect" moment. I am far from reaching that ideal "perfect" time. To be honest, I've been hesitant to get baptized and make the public declaration of faith because I did not feel worthy enough or "Christian enough." But today I feel that God has called me to get baptized because He acknowledges that no, I may never be ready but He calls me His own, and that is enough for me.

# Dylan Wakayama

I'm Dylan Wakayama and I'm a senior in high school. I suppose a part of me always wondered what my life would look like after I finished high school - what I'd learn and what the great take away would be from the story of my adolescent years. What I didn't know was that it would be the story of how I came to find Christ. For most of these years, from about 7th grade onward, of course I had moments that were both joyful and somber, but there was always a sense of emotional restlessness and turbulence that filled my heart. There was always something to worry about, to feel insecure about, or be frustrated by. By 9th grade, much of this had come to a climax with how much high school had shaken up my life. Many of my close middle school friends had moved away or changed beyond recognition, and at a certain point, I'd become incredibly isolated from my peers and I struggled with feelings of deep loneliness.

Then, it was around the middle of sophomore year when my friend Garrett invited me to come to church - this church. Until then, I had been loosely "religious", but never anything deeper than attending church once in a blue moon. In many ways I guess you can say I knew of God's presence, but I never felt it and never took the time to understand it. I still tried to fill these holes in my life with physical or materialistic things, reassuring myself that "If I could just have that one thing in my life, all would be okay." Over the course of the next few years however, that mindset slowly began to change. I stopped looking for physical answers to my problems and began looking for spiritual ones. I stopped praying for an easier life and instead began praying to be a better Christian. I stopped asking God what He could do for me and instead began asking what I could do to better follow Christ. I began focusing on my faith in Christ and instead of worrying about everything, I began trusting God to handle things the way He has planned.

As my faith in Christ grew, I began to feel the love of God enter my life and my consciousness. In fact, I feel it every time I walk through the doors of this church - because nowhere am I happier than when I am in God's house. No matter what happens throughout the week, no matter what test I bomb, no matter what co-worker tries to argue with me, the restlessness and emotional turbulence of my younger days has vanished completely, and in its place exists the Holy Spirit - because "If God is for us, who can ever be against us?" - Romans 8:31. In no way does this mean my life is perfect. Of course there are still bad days, I still make mistakes, and there are stress factors in my life, but none of them phase me anymore, because I know I have my faith in Christ. It doesn't matter if I don't have a perfect life, because Jesus Christ has given me an eternal one - and through Him, I know now that I no longer have to be worried or scared about what happens in this life or the next, because the Holy Spirit will always be a part of me; and if God is all I have, then I have all I need.