

Megan's Testimony

As I grew up in Salt Lake, it was quite clear that the predominant religion here was not for me. It isn't true, and I wanted nothing to do with it. I became borderline aggressive about the denial of God, because it was the easiest way to avoid the conversations about how I still had a chance if I changed my ways. I guess before I moved to Tennessee to get married I didn't really even think must past that. There was no God. People who believed in God were nuts. Moving to Tennessee and the extreme culture change was the first step in what changed my thinking. It didn't happen all at once, and it wasn't in one particular way

I started to notice something different about people...I noticed a sparkle in people that I had never really seen. I didn't understand the motives of people out there. People were kind, and at first, I assumed it was that "Southern Hospitality" I had heard so much about. As I am now sure of, during those months God was lining things up exactly how they needed to be. I was just about 12 weeks away from my wedding date when God really started working in my life. I will simply say that the relationship that I was in was not healthy. It involved a lot of sin, anger, and a lot of violence. Deep inside I was alone, and scared, and thousands of miles away from my family, friends, and home. But when you are in that situation it is really hard to see anything else, and it is really hard to get away from it. I wanted what my friends had, I needed it, and I just didn't know it yet.

In December of 2010, I started a new job. The owners of the company were a Christian couple.... the Barton's. They bought me a learning Bible, and left it on my desk with a card that held the first Scripture I ever spent any time meditating on: "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:20. In January 2011, I joined the Barton's for the first time at church. In the summer, Dr. Steve Barton challenged me to a Bible project. This project was the second major event in my Salvation. It brings me to tears to realize that this project was not for him, it was for me. He saw me struggling; he knew that if he could help me get to Jesus my life would be better. I think I may have even gotten paid for working on this project. Ha. (He is a psychiatrist and was interested on an Atheists opinion of Matthew- He said)

So much was going on inside of me this year on a personal level I felt like I was in the middle of a tug of war. I was holding tight to a life that was very painful, but it was all I knew. I thought I was in love, I thought that the storms and the difficulties would pass. I liked the idea of God, but I didn't have trust that he was real, I didn't have faith that he would take me and guide me to what it is that he intended for me to do. God actually delivered me out of some difficult situations a few times, and for weeks, or a month or two at a time I would gain some ground spiritually, but then I would slip back and start relying on myself and end up right back in painful situations again, my life was chaos. Things went on like this for the better part of a year and a half. In my spiritual walk, I was taking two steps forward and one step back.

In October of 2011, I was at a Presbyterian Church in Tennessee, and I believed in God. I heard the pastor read the Bible, and I whole heartedly believed that that was God speaking to me through him. We were reading 2 Chronicles 20:21.... "*Give thanks to the LORD, for his steadfast love endures forever.*" This was the first time that I believed in God. It was the first major change *in me*. I was still

in a bad situation though, and over the next several months God really started working in me. I knew what it was that the people had, and I knew where to get it, or at least I thought I did. But what had not changed was the whole entire rest of my life. I was still in the same situation, and like I mentioned earlier the pattern of moving two steps forward, one step back was a hard one for me to break. This sudden belief in God was genuine, but it did not come with a sudden knowledge on how to calm the chaos that was my life. I stumbled and fell many many times for the next 6 months. The difference now was I *wanted* to live differently. I was ready for God to be the focus in my life.

In June of 2012 I had enough, and I was fed up myself. I had been reading the Bible and going to church and I knew better. I knew this was not how life was supposed to be, and I prayed. I prayed harder and with more conviction than I ever had. I begged God to show me how to apply what I was learning in church and from fellow Christians to my life. I reviewed everything I had learned, and I tried to organize my knowledge of the scripture. This is when the missing link appeared, it was Jesus. There was never going to be a way for me to fix things. I couldn't do this on my own. I needed Jesus. I realized this whole time, yeah, I may have been a victim of some sins, but I too was a sinner. I confessed my sins to The Lord, and I handed over the reins of my life. I mean literally I put my trust into Jesus. Into his death and resurrection being EXACTLY what this chaotic life of mine needed. I realized that God has a plan and it is better than mine, and he has been trying to show me, but I haven't been listening.

To be honest my life has been a whole lot easier since. I've faced some challenges, but I can tell you that in my life before I often felt alone, or lost, but I mostly felt scared. Since I really trusted in Jesus I have had an abundant, overflowing amount of blessings. I was able to quit smoking, come home and be with my family, I was able to let go of a relationship that I just couldn't seem to before, I have reunited with family members that I haven't seen for years before this, I have started college, I have found Gospel Grace Church. Literally my list of God's Victories since I handed my life over to Jesus is long and beautiful. What is most beautiful of all is I now have the Holy Spirit inside me now that lets me have a personal relationship a loving, merciful, and just God, a God that sent his Son here to die so that I can have eternal life. Jesus' blood saved me.