

GARY BINFORD / MY TESTIMONY

Passing from darkness into the eternal light of Jesus Christ

I believe that most of us look to live comfortably by following the same formula for success. We investigate and put a lot of thought into the college to attend, the job to take, the person to marry, the house to buy, the community to live in, how and where to invest our money, even where to be buried and what to be placed in. We don't tend to make important decisions with our heads in the sand. But when it comes to looking at the condition of our souls and our relationships to God, our Creator, many people don't examine this eternally-critical issue under the same microscope.

I was one of them. I thought I was on the highway to Heaven, but I was spiraling toward the horrors of hell. Talk about being self-deceived!

Growing up in the 60s in Summit, N.J., I believed I was Heaven-bound because I had been baptized and attended church regularly. But I didn't know the real Jesus or what really makes you a Christian--that there truly must be a rebirth, a change of life, from the inside out. So I went away to college in Ohio, where I learned about a variety of religions, as if they all were true.

A pretty straight-laced kid throughout my teen years, in the guise of "having a good time," I fell into all kinds of vices (sin) in college and thereafter. Oh, I still went to church occasionally and considered myself to be a Christian, but I didn't have a clue about what was in the Bible or who Jesus is. To me, God was like a cosmic genie in the sky that I called upon whenever I needed something. In reality, I lived as if my "gods" were my two professional careers (sports writing and music management), alcohol, drugs, pornography, partying, traveling and the pursuit of money. Everything but the one, true living God.

Then over a period of time in the 90s, I lost everything I thought was important to me—my job, my money, my marriage, my home, etc.—leaving only the bottom of the barrel and God. I was left with only two options--either get to know and serve God, or deny and reject Him and perish in life forever after.

I made the right choice, the life-saving choice. I began to read my Bible, learn from two Christian friends [Kenny Harmon and Dwayne Kerr] and listen to fundamental Christian preachers on the radio [the likes of Roderick Caesar, Tony Evans, Jim Gent, Hank Hanegraaff, the late D. James Kennedy, Greg Laurie, John MacArthur, R.C. Sproul, Charles Stanley and Chuck Swindoll]. I came to understand that although I was acceptable to the world we live in—in fact, several of my former habits and vices are glorified in our society—my sinful condition made me unacceptable to a Holy God. And there was nothing I could do in my own strength to change it. I came to realize while we tend to judge people by what we see them do, or don't do, God is concerned about what we think and who we are deep inside the core of our being.

So I thank God He loves His creation so much that He provided us with a way to salvation through the sacrifice His Son, Jesus, made on the cross. In 1996, I sought God's forgiveness for my sins and accepted Jesus as my Lord and my Savior. I know that my sins are forgiven. God picked me up, cleaned me up, told me He loved me, changed my heart, changed the way I thought, gave me a new talk, gave me a new walk, delivered me from a sinful lifestyle, gave me the real reason for living, gave me purpose, gave me His peace, gave me joy. Most of all, He gave me His Son, who gave me His salvation.

I unequivocally know I could not have made these changes on my own. Truth is, I wasn't looking to change myself, as I considered myself to be a "good person." But once I really understood that God viewed me in a very light, one that would lead to eternal damnation, I accepted His free gift of redemption. So I praise the Lord daily, because if I had died in an accident in which a speeding car hit my car in January of 1992, there is no doubt in my mind that I would have spent eternity in hell.

The most important decision every person has to decide is who Jesus is. Nothing can possibly surpass it! Either Jesus, the only sinless person ever to walk on this earth, is telling the truth or He is the biggest liar/deceiver/demon ever and every Bible should be burned, destroyed forever! We can decide Jesus is Deity or we can decide He was a devil, but we cannot ignore His claim.