

Jim – Out of Pornography and Idolatry to True Faith in Christ

June 12, 2002 – The Day of my Believer’s Baptism

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Acts 8:35-36

This journey down the road began oddly enough 46 years ago on Jun 14, 1956, the day of my birth. A short time after I was born as was the tradition for infants I was brought to the church to be baptized. This was the belief of my parents that it was the right thing to do.

I am most thankful to the Lord that He provided parents for me that did think it important to bring me up with a Christian education and that He provided them with the ability to afford to send me to a Lutheran elementary, middle and high school.

During these years I learned scripture, doctrine and stories about God and His people. Yes I even learned about Jesus Christ and what He did for us on the cross, his sufferings, death and resurrection. I had all the zeal for God and the tradition that went with it.

But something was missing. After high school my church attendance suffered and visits to church were spotty at best. I filled my life with other things, other loves

Many relationships and idols

I’ve had relations with several women in the past and all of this caused dysfunctional relationships with many people in my life as I developed an incorrect view of what a healthy marriage and relation should look like. Not to mention, that I was repeatedly committing adultery.

I’ve loved golf since the age of ten and it took the place in my heart where only God should dwell. It also had the place in my heart that should have been reserved for my family, my wife and eventually my children.

My pride and selfishness eventually led to increased marital problems, I sought pleasure and satisfaction outside the bond of marriage. I became heavily involved in the world of pornography. Access to it was even easier through the Internet and there were plenty of strip clubs to frequent.

Psalm 89: 32Then I will punish their transgression with the rod, And their iniquity with stripes. 33Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him, Nor allow My faithfulness to fail. 34My covenant I will not break, Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips.

The faithfulness of the Lord is amazing. For whatever reason, the Lord would not let me go, even though I wasn't walking in righteousness, nor was I seeking Him.

I use to run every day early in the morning. One morning as I was running, it was very dark and I tripped over something on my path. I reached down and discovered it was a small rather worn Gideon's edition New Testament with Psalms and Proverbs. I now had God's word that I could carry with me and read where ever I went.

As my children grew my wife gave me an ultimatum, either I would start taking the children to church or she would take them to a Catholic Church. For a staunch Lutheran this was prohibited and I couldn't stand for that. So I began taking my children to church at the place where I had attended my entire life, a Lutheran church in Thiensville, WI.

We would go to church and then I'd drop the boys off at Sunday school while I would drive to the park to read the Sunday paper. At times when picking them up, I would be early enough to hear the end of the Sunday morning Bible study that was going on, and suddenly I had the desire to attend them as well.

A common complaint of the boys was always, why does mom get to stay home while we have to go to church? The boys shared their thoughts with my wife and soon she was attending Church and Bible class with us.

The company that I worked for hired someone, who was a born again Christian and we developed a relationship and encouraged one another. Bob eventually developed his own Christian apologetic website and helped me develop a website for my church.

God used Bob to put a desire in my heart, although I didn't know it at the time to start watching the Christian programming on WVCY Channel 30. I got very interested in a series on creation versus evolution and on apologetics all together. Even though I wasn't saved at the time I debated a group of atheists on the internet for about a year.

I was working at a client in Sheboygan Falls for two years. Every day early in the morning I would drive up I-43 from my home in Glendale. I would listen to hard rock Lazer 103 WLZR, because I loved to rock. When I exited at Hwy 28, I would sometimes head to the right off the freeway to a McDonalds to get breakfast. When I did this Laser would fade out and a Christian radio station would come in, although faintly. This was rather annoying, but at times I would stay in the parking lot of McDonalds just to here a topic finish up. When I left to go to my client and went under the underpass, back came Laser.

Despite my driving, the Lord preserved our family and I'm sure there have been many times He's preserved us. While driving back from a family vacation, we were driving through a construction zone that had the interstate shut down to two narrow lanes. Through a series of circumstances we avoided a very serious accident when 3 vehicles wide, our van in the middle, a semi truck to our right and a car to our left all squeezed

through the two lanes, but no accident happened. I can only believe that the Lord had His angels protect us.

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear. Psalm 66:18

Something was still missing, but I didn't know fully what. The Lord put a stirring in my heart. I began to seek more in my worship and my fellowshiping. The same Lutheran liturgy week after week left me empty. I started to see other people who had blank looks on their faces and perceived that they were lacking something in their church experience as well. I began to reach out these people and soon we were meeting to discuss problems that we felt existed in the church. We wanted something more. I began attending other churches.

My newfound friends and I would meet about every two weeks during the evening and one night my friend Tom brought a tape by Carter Conlon from Times Square Church, New York City, entitled "The House of God is Under Attack". I had never heard such power in a sermon before. Carter was preparing the congregation where he preached, for a month of prayer and fasting. The Scripture that he used is the one mentioned above: If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear. Psalm 66:18 That cut me to the chase and I realized that I was not living my life the way that God wanted me to. I was still living in my sins and not thinking twice about it. We normally ended our evenings in prayer, but this evening I could not pray because I believe He wouldn't hear me. I left the meeting early, but before I did I asked Tom where he got this message? He told me that he and some of the other men had been listening to a Christian radio station called Life Message 1640 am WKSH.

That night kneeling on the floor of my living room I cried out to the Lord in repentance. I believe at that point I was truly saved and was cured of my desire to view pornography and go to strip clubs.

The next morning on my way up to work, I switched off Laser and turned on Life Message and I've turn nothing else on since. (Update 08/20/2011 Since then WKSH is no longer on the air and I listen to WVCY 107.7) I was truly been blessed by the programming which really put my focus back on Jesus. Shortly after I started listening, I don't know how many times I prayed for Jesus to save me, but I wanted to make sure the Lord heard me. It was during this time that I truly put my trust in Jesus as my Savior and Lord of my life.

¹ John 5:11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹²He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

The changes that I've seen in my life have been many. Some have been drastic, some subtle, some coming slowly and some yet to come. There have been, which I'm not proud to say, falls along the way.

- My thoughts are constantly on Jesus and what He's doing in my life and in those around me.
- My faith is placed solely on Him.
- He's leading me to a place where I can worship Him in Spirit.
- Immediately I lost my desire and hunger for pornography.
- I dumped all of the pornography that I had in the form of videos and print into the garbage.
- As mentioned before I no longer listen to heavy metal rock music.
- My cursing has ended.
- My desire to spend a lot of time at the golf course has been replaced with wanting to spend more time with my family.
- I ended a 25 year membership in a golf club that I once thought was very important in my life. I remember shaving one morning and just saying "You know I'm not going to join the golf club this year" and I didn't.
- When I do play golf I don't get angry and lose my temper when I hit a bad shot as I did before. (01/21/2012: I haven't played golf the past two years choosing to focus on God, family and ministry.
- I have no more road rage.
- I believe that I've become much calmer in situations that use to anger me.
- I realize that I need to submit my life to Christ.
- One of the most important changes is that I removed the word Divorce from my vocabulary.
- I realize that there are still areas that Jesus must change in me.

Areas that I need prayer, mentoring and encouragement in are:

- An ever increasing seeking Jesus through reading the Word, worship and prayer.
- Healing of my marriage on the many wounds that I've caused over the years.
- Healing with my sons on the wounds that I've cause them.
- To be like Christ.
- Temptations and lusts.
- How I treat this temple, my eating habits and addiction to soda.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Why am I being baptized?

Acts 8:36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" **37** Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

I believe in Jesus with all my heart! Amen.