

## Serving Time Testimonies

### Testimony By

### Ministry Connection

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I am a Messianic Jew. At age 23, I realized that Jesus was LORD, not a liar or a lunatic, which are the only two other possibilities. In 1947, I was born to a Hungarian Jewish mother and an Italian Roman Catholic father. Today I am a born-again Southern Baptist. However, that path was not a simple and straight-forward one, and if it wasn't for the deliberate intervention of Jesus into my life, I wouldn't be here writing this right now.

I was raised in a conservative Jewish household since my father converted to Judaism when he married my mother. We were not very religious, but we did observe many of the ceremonial laws and Jewish customs. When I was 8, I began instruction in Hebrew, and at 13, was Bar Mitzvahed, a tradition that virtually all Jewish boys uphold; in some cases, forced to uphold. The Bar Mitzvah means that you reach the age of accountability for your actions. Of course, being born spiritually dead, and not knowing this, I was dead in sin, accountable for these sins, separated from God, and holding a one-way ticket to Hell. In our home, God was a very distant, virtually unapproachable, creator. I always wanted to be close to Him, but knew of no way to access Him. Moreover, the Hebrew traditions, which were works oriented, without any intimacy with God, proved to be extremely frustrating. It was at this point that I decided it wasn't worth the effort to continue with religion and put God in the back of my mind. I withdrew from Judaism and anything that smacked of religion. However, what I could not withdraw from was the gnawing hole in my heart that God put there. [Later, I would learn that this hole could only be filled with the love of Jesus]. This hole made me feel empty, purposeless, useless, and meaningless.

My inner city survival instincts carried me through high school and into college. I became very worldly, self-serving, and eager to please myself. This is the natural fleshly path for the unregenerate. Yet, no matter what I attained, nor how much physical pleasure that I sought, I always ended up feeling empty. As the Preacher said in the Book of Ecclesiastes, "all was vanity and vexation".

When I was 19, I began to experiment with hallucinogenic drugs in hope of "finding myself". I also got involved with stimulants since I always enjoyed have surges of mental energy. While many people took 250 micrograms of d-lyseric acid diethylamide tartrate -25, better known as LSD, I was taking doses as high as 2250 micrograms. I began to drop acid while taking methamphetamine. The next month I would try it with Robitussen, a depressant. This type of drug use, which lasted almost a year, led me into spiritual things and higher levels of spiritual consciousness....the wrong kind of spiritual consciousness.

I soon became very interested in Eastern religions. My library suddenly had books like the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Tibetan Book of the Dead, and Zen Buddhism. I had my own mantra and tinkered with transcendental meditation, or TM. Why did I do all this?? It was because I was seeking to find the deep things of life and to understand my origin, purpose for being created, and my Creator. I was seeking God, but did not know where to look. So I looked everywhere but the right place. The drug culture also led me to dabble in the Enemy's playground. I was involved in seances, ouija board use, and other emulations. One night, we spent 4 hours talking to a 15th Century schnitzeler through the Ouija Board medium. Although this activity was very pleasing to my ego, it did not solve my basic problem that life was meaningless and purposeless. Eventually suicide entered into my mind. Since my viewpoint was rapidly converging to nihilism, living was no longer important.

At that point in my life (Age 23), I was spiritually dead, and had I gone through with these thoughts, I would be spending eternity with Satan and his demons. But God had other plans for me and began his rescue at a diner in Northern New Jersey in February 1971. I stopped for some lunch while driving aimlessly. For some unknown reason this diner "appeared interesting". Inside I met a young man of 18 who began to talk with me. He had a deep look of peace and self-assuredness...the things I had been seeking all of my life and not finding, no matter what I tried or did. He told me that he was in turmoil until about 6 months ago. Then he met Jesus Christ and became a new creation, and had a new purpose in life. I knew he was telling me the truth. Who was Jesus Christ?? As a Jew, I knew only of Jesus as the center of faith for most of my Catholic acquaintances. From the secular world, He was the center of the rock opera, "Jesus Christ Superstar". The acquaintances, were people that played church on Sunday for one hour and wreaked havoc on everybody for the other 167 hours in the week. In my search for the right religion, I had already passed Christianity by and had Taoism and Hinduism on the short list for my ultimate choice. But this boy was talking about a personal relationship with Jesus. How was that possible, if God was millions of light years away?

Soon afterwards, God put another person in my life, a Baptist believer, who befriended me and taught me much more about Jesus. I was given a Bible and was intrigued by the "other Testament". Satan was working overtime now because he was at risk of losing me. After all, everything I did was in line with what Satan wanted me to do. But now I was thinking in the wrong direction from Satan's perspective.

Many distractions delayed me considering Jesus as my Master, but on August 30, 1971, at approximately 8:00 pm, in my apartment in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, I no longer resisted what God had predestined in Ephesians 1:4. While watching a Billy Graham crusade on television, I was convicted of my own fallen nature. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God", "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of life is through Jesus Christ". How could I have missed the obvious!! The enmity in my life was within me and only through Jesus could I escape. When I got onto my knees to surrender to Jesus, it was as if 220 volts had struck me. The peacefulness and cleansing was deep and so intense that I can not find superlatives sufficient enough to describe it. All night, God deeply loved me, the pain drained from my heart, wisdom flowed through my mind, and the dead spirit was replaced with the Holy Spirit. That night, I became a new creature in Christ. Mike Warnke's quote comes to mind, "Jesus didn't come to

Earth to make bad people good, He came to make dead people alive". Although almost 30 years have passed, I have not forgotten a moment of that evening. Psalm 40:1-3 describes it perfectly. "I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me and heard my cry. He took me out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and put a rock underneath my feet, and a new song in my heart...". All other attempts at attaining peacefulness; other religions, mantras, TM, incredible combinations of mind-altering drugs, ego-inspiring books, did nothing for my eternal state. Jesus, my Master, rescued me, forgave me of all my sins, and placed in the indwelt Holy Spirit in me.

I would like to say that the last 27 years have been years of perfection. However, that would make me a liar. There have been setbacks, but mostly a steady climb from the slavery of my old nature to transforming my mind with the Mind of Christ. Jesus has given me the spiritual gifts of teaching, administration, and exhortation, and I have used each of these supernatural gifts in many ways to glorify Him. That is my purpose in life. Now, as a Promise Keeper, and a man of honesty and integrity, I am focusing on being a better husband, and a better father. I can only do this through the power of Jesus, for He has given me hope for the future. I no longer am a citizen of this planet, but a citizen of Heaven. At some point in the future, time will expire on my corruptible body, and then I can inherit the promised incorruptible body. But until that time occurs, it is necessary to use my spiritual gifts to glorify Him as much as possible while I am still here on Earth. The best way to do this is to evangelize the lost and edify the saints on a daily basis; whether it is at work, in a different city, in an airplane, at home, or at church. My life mission has been refocused from serving myself to servanthood. Once I was a slave to sin and now I'm a slave to Jesus, for you cannot be a slave to neither. To God be the glory.