

josiahs' testimony about **JESUS**

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I grew up in church my whole life. I have always believed that JESUS was the only way, and have always eagerly wanted to be a good Christian since I was 7, and this, even when I was deceived and heavily in sin. Because of that belief, I saw a number of notable spiritual things happen, even before I was all the way saved and connected to JESUS.

In 1987 (when I was 7 years old) I apparently had some kind of useful child-like faith because I eventually started doing things out of a desire to live for JESUS and bearing good fruit. While I saw others doing bad things I tried to do what was right. Unfortunately however, I quickly began to compromise by following in the footsteps of the bad examples that I was given by the people who falsely claimed to follow JESUS. They found ways around obeying the BIBLE and so I did too. In time, I did so more than they. They sinned and I learned from them how to sin worse than they did. I compromised the BIBLE by not simply accepting what it said, so that I could justify the sins that I committed. This I did because it was what I saw them do.

Heavy guilt hung over me just like my closest predecessors and just like them I began to be seriously depressed. I wanted to kill myself but because I was taught that it was wrong, I did not. I remember lying on my bed staring at the wall wishing I could only get up the courage to kill myself and I even practiced by holding my breath.

I was brought up to believe that once a person was saved they were always saved, and because of this I never had the idea that I was on my way to Hell. I never seemed to make the connection that my depression might have something to do with my compromising and sin. Although I had convinced myself to a point that what I was doing was not wrong, I still had something following me around. I had heard a BIBLE verse when I was young which says,

“...be sure your sin will find you out...” ([Num 32:23 KJV](#)).

Because I knew that the BIBLE was True, I was in constant fear knowing that one day the sins that I was doing in the dark would be found out. The BIBLE also says,

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light... ([Joh 3:19-21 KJV](#)).

This was the condemnation I felt. Church people always seem to say, “there is no condemnation” in reference to Romans 8, but that is not what it says. It says that there is none “...for those who are in Christ Jesus,” and this does not include those who are outside of Him as the verse shows. In that condemnation I was trapped.

Not only that, but I had also committed myself to an obsession with movies and the crown of my idolatry was Star Wars. All I wanted to do with my life was to make movies like those I polluted myself with. But again the BIBLE says,

...friendship with the world is enmity with [*or “hatred toward”*] God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ([Jam 4:4 WEB](#))

And...

Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Don't be deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, **10** Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor extortioners, will inherit the kingdom of God. (1Co 6:9-10 KJB; also see Gal 5:21)

When I was in middle school, everyone thought that I was the ideal Christian of Christians. And it was in the midst of this darkness that I had slipped in to greater and greater sins. In eighth grade, and at other times after that, I remember when the Scripture that I had always dreaded came true in my life, and people found out about my sin and the name of JESUS was completely shamed and discredited. The looks that were on their faces haunted me from that time on.

After many years I tried to stop sinning but I was addicted and trapped. I would stop for a week or two only to fall right back in. I had no one who could help me in my pursuit of trying to get free, only a conglomeration of religious people who gave me no hope or help of change.

After trying over and over and getting no where, I was finally able to stop my worst sins, but I still ignorantly held on to Star Wars. GOD was obviously dealing with me, because after that the impossible happened and I finally admitted to myself that Star Wars was wrong, but despite this I continued to watch it.

I knew that Star Wars was based out of new age religious beliefs and that the creator, George Lucas, openly admitted to this. Star Wars is a combination of Pantheism, Dualism, and Metaphysicalism, not to mention its obvious links to the Ying Yang. Twice in the original trilogy they even refer to “The Force” as a religion. I knew that the BIBLE said things like:

Eph 5:11 ALT And stop participating in the unfruitful works of the darkness, but instead, even be exposing *[them]*.

3Jo 1:11 LITV Beloved, do not imitate the bad, but the good...

Deu 18:9 KJB When you have come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to do the abominations of those nations.

So I had mostly repented, but still had things to repent of.

I will never forget the time that I was in the parking lot of my old church by myself while everyone else was inside for some service (I think I was skipping youth group because it felt so meaningless). I walked around and prayed in my frustration, “Is there anyone else who wants it as much as I do?!” I was frustrated and alone in my desire to *really* live for JESUS and I did not know how to do it on my own. I figured that the whole world was filled with religious people like I grew up with, and that there was little to no hope of finding someone who was really living it. I asked GOD to send me to such a people that really Loved JESUS.

Shortly after all of these things, in August 1996, my brother started dating a girl from Bucholz High School. So I went with them to a Monday night BIBLE study at that school lead by one of their history teachers.

When he spoke I was astonished because for the first time I saw someone who actually believed what he was saying. He was alive, and I knew what he was saying was True and it challenged me to the core of my being. He was displaying everything that I had ever wanted out of life, and did not know to pursue.

I think it was the second meeting I went to that he spoke about TV and idolatry. I was so convicted that night that I set a line in the sand and completely rejected Star Wars. I began to clean out my life and rid myself of all idolatry.

I started going to his dad’s house church, and in all of these things I began to Love the Truth. I was debunked from tons of false doctrine that I had been raised with. It was an exciting time because I had come to the point where I actually believed what the BIBLE said.

During the next 3 years things were intense. I started going after JESUS in 1996 as I started going to the Monday night Bible Studies. In addition to this, I saw miracles happen, and I started experiencing the reality of GOD. But despite all of these good things, I was still depressed and plagued with demons. For countless sessions and nights I was prayed for, over and over to no avail, except that I saw that these things were serious.

A lot of things happened during this time, and a few years later in 1999, 1 to 3 weeks before I was to graduate High School, I came to the First Assembly of God (in Gainesville FL) because of their youth group

named "Sweat." Shortly afterward, I was more or less forced not to go to the house church any more, and so I ended up going to the morning services at First Assembly as well.

To make a long story short, it was there that I was set free from all kinds of spiritual bondage being overwhelmed by the favor of God. When darkness was my destiny, the light of God shined in and did the impossible.

I have since been a leader in Sweat, a leader of two of their small groups, taught Sunday School, been considerably involved in their ministry internship program. For 5 years I went to First Assembly and worked close under the Senior Pastor Mike Patz, first as he was a youth pastor, and then on into the internship that he was over.

Many things have happen since then, but all of these things have culminated into a life of servitude for Jesus. I eat, sleep, and breath to be connected to Jesus, and to connect others to Him. Unfortunately, most of those who seem to be christians are not, and all of these things have born a fervent fire inside of me to see the visible church repent. If possible, I would give up my life to see this happen. After all of this I continued in as many ministry opportunities as I could get my hands on many of which are detailed on my website: www.trueconnection.org/BibleStudies/JosiahsMinistryResume.pdf

I know that the adventure has only begun. I wait and anticipate God's callings and promises to be fulfilled in my life and in those around me.



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