

Michael E. Simons
Christian experience

My salvation experience

When I was growing up in Central Florida, my mother and I attended a small church that had an even smaller youth group. However, there was not enough money for a full-time youth minister, but my mother wanted me to get in to a good youth group, so after spending years searching for a good church, we finally found one that had a growing youth group and a fulltime youth pastor.

The youth pastor took an active interest in me, and it was during this time that I thought I was saved. However, when I was seventeen, I recognized that I needed to accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord after hearing a message from an evangelist about the Great White Throne Judgment. On February 18, 1980, Jesus Christ became my Savior and Lord as I accepted Him into my heart. I repented of my sins, admitted that I was a sinner doomed to an eternity apart from Christ; I also recognized that there was no possible way to enter Heaven other than through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His substitutionary atonement for me. I claim I John 5:9-13 as my verses of assurance.

I further accept and believe that, upon that moment of salvation and receiving Jesus as Savior and Lord, that the new believer receives redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, according to Ephesians 1:3-14:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:
According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:
Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,
To the praise of the glory of his grace, in which he has made us accepted in the beloved.
In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;
Which he has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;
Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he has purposed in himself:
That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:
In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will:
That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.
In whom you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Although there have been times that I have wandered away from the Lord, I recognize and accept I John 1:9 as a verse of confession and cleansing and that my fellowship needs to be restored. Upon doing this, my fellowship is restored and I am in a right position with the Lord Jesus Christ to be used for His service. I believe that the Holy Spirit indwells all true believers and that He convicts the saint of sin and righteousness. I further believe that it is possible for Him to be quenched and grieved by the believer. When I am sensitive to Him and His leading, then He continues to lead me down the path so that my life can be effective in the Lord's kingdom. This is what I desire my life to reflect.

What is important in maintaining my family's spiritual walk with the Lord?

I believe that regular attention to Bible reading and prayer (2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:17), as well as regular attendance at a Bible-believing and teaching church (Hebrews 10:25) are areas that enable me to maintain my walk with the Lord. I do not believe in sending my wife to church; I take her with me. Perhaps it would be better stated that we both go together. We both believe that instruction in the Christian life from those who are called to be teachers is one of the best ways to do this. Unless providentially hindered due to accident or sickness, we believe that as Christians, we have a duty to be in attendance at Sunday School and church. While we are on vacation, we both attend a local church Sunday School and worship service of like faith and practice.

In addition, we maintain personal daily devotions consisting of a Bible reading schedule that allows us to complete the Bible in a one year period (1 Timothy 4:12-16). My wife and I read from this same schedule and we can share our thoughts on what we read on any given day. We use a simple chart-type form that allows us to jot down verses and thoughts from that day's reading and allows us to refer back to it for further study. Due to job requirements that take me away from home for several days at a time, this can be difficult to maintain, especially on my end. I'm grateful for the opportunity to talk with my wife via cell phone, although this is not what I truly desire nor what I believe to be the best solution, although it is what I have for now. We seek to take time during the day to share thoughts with one another about what we have read. As the spiritual leader and head in our home, I feel and believe that it is my responsibility to see that I instruct my wife in areas beneficial for her spiritual growth. My wife would also tell you that she must also take time for her own Christian walk and I must make time for my own as well. I desire to maintain consistency in this area. Early on in my Christian walk, regular Bible reading was not a habit that I cultivated, but I have been able to read through the Bible at least twelve times since making a vow to the Lord several years ago at a Bill Gothard seminar.

We also look for ways to share our faith (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). One way we do this is leaving a Gospel tract with a tip at restaurants, as well as looking for opportunities to speak with someone one-on-one. One ministry that has excellent Gospel tracts is The Way of the Master ministry led by Ray Comfort and Kirk Cameron. We enjoy using their

tracts, and there have been few times that people have not wanted to take what we've offered to them. I'm strongly desirous of offering this to the youth and adults at our church, but the time to arrange such a schedule has not been opportune for me as yet.

Christian service involvement in my local church

Due to job requirements that take me away for several days at a time, I regret the fact that I cannot be in attendance at midweek services and activities. However, this is not a valid excuse for not having a place of service! Looking at Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12, we are to use our spiritual gifts for the building up of the body of Christ! I've been able to serve as a Sunday School teacher for grades six and seven for about three years now, but have been forced to step down due to occupational reasons. There have also been times when I've been able to combine classes with the eighth grade teacher in a series, and this is especially enjoyable to me. Doing so allows me to use my spiritual gift of teaching and the youth I have taught seem to enjoy our times together each week.

In the past, I have served as a substitute teacher for the adult class of which I was a part; a FAITH Sunday School outreach evangelistic team member, and a member of the adult choir.