

I Was Adopted

Personal testimony
of Amy Smith

Saved March 19, 1999

I have been in church my whole life. Ever since I was a little girl, my parents took us to church, no matter what. If the doors were open, we were there.

When I was about five years old, I watched the movie, "Jesus of Nazareth," with my family and I remember just sitting in my chair balling as they were crucifying Christ and wondering why they were being so mean to this man. It really concerned me. Soon after that, I prayed "the prayer" with my Mom and Sister, not understanding anything other than I wanted Jesus to come into my heart and didn't want to go to hell. We continued going to church, being very religious and trying to love God the best we could.

When I was around 11 years old, we went to a non-denominational church and we were there until I was about 15 years old. That was a time in my life where I thought I was better than any kid around me. I somehow loved God better than them and was more perfect and holy than they could ever be. I would see things they would do and think they were horrible - I would never do something like that. But the whole time, it was still there in my heart just waiting to come out. I even had a friend of mine tell me that I was just "Miss Goody Two Shoes." Well, I argued with her, but she couldn't have been telling the truth any plainer. I really did think that of myself and through the years, it only got worse. We went to another church when I was sixteen. I immediately fell in love with it. They had a worship band that had keyboards, guitars, drums, the works. I thought that was the best thing ever. I knew I wanted to start going there. We did, and a couple of months after we started, I got asked to be on the worship team. I couldn't believe it. I thought I had died and gone to heaven. After all, I must have been a pretty important person to be asked to sing in front of everybody every service.

We would get together to practice during the week and pray for our next services, and if you got in my way of being where the band was gonna be, you got put on the back burner. I hurt lots of people in my life being that way. It wasn't that I loved God more than anything, it was about music and the worship band. I was probably very sickening to be around and nobody would tell me. It was all about me and how I looked to people. I was so stuck on myself, so blind. During those years, God really kept me safe from some guys that could have really hurt me. I was put into some real danger a few times, but God protected me.

When I was 21, I went to Tyler, Texas to attend Youth With A Mission for a three month internship and two months out on the mission field. I can truly say that was one of the best times in my life. I heard speakers from all over the world, week after week, talking to us about our relationship with God. That was mostly what you were focused on, day in and day out. Some people went to find mates but that's not why I went. I really did want to be closer to God and thought this might help me. I really had always been trying so hard. After three months were up, you got to choose where your mission would be, so I chose Chicago. We went and performed "Toymaker and Son," a live production on the life of Christ, from beginning to end. I was chosen to be a demon of greed in the play. I thought it was so much fun to act out something that I was not. So I thought! After that was all over and we got back to campus, there were staff leaders and other people trying to get me to stay and become a leader myself. I knew, without doubt, I was not supposed to stay. I called my pastor at that time, and he agreed. My heart was settled and I was going home.

I got back and life got back to normal. I had been gone for so long, that they had replaced me in the band. I was so upset and worried I would never get to sing with them again. But after a couple of

months, the leader let me back in. I was so excited, but something was very different. It was almost as if someone had popped my bubble and it was never the same after that. I still kept singing even though there were times I would ask the leader if I could sit out that service because I needed a break. It almost became like a job to me, just having to work so hard to worship God. It's not supposed to be that hard.

Finally after years of searching and praying for the man of my dreams, I met him. Scott Smith came through the doors in January of 1996. We started dating in February, got engaged in July and married the next April, 1997. Life was good and I was happy. Even after all that deception through the years, God still wanted to be good to me. Thank you Lord. We had our first boy, Ethan, in September 1998 and when he was three months old, we decided to leave our church. Scott and I started visiting different churches on Sundays trying to find "the one." We were even going through the phone book in desperation for something else. It was weird to me that even after being in that church as long as I was and being so involved, I could let it go so quickly. But, I just had a hunger for something more and didn't even know what I was really looking for.

During this time of searching, my parents and Scott and I started thinking about moving to Dixon, TN, just outside Nashville to escape Y2K. We were so convinced it was going to happen that Scott and I even went to one of the churches down there a couple of times, and looked for houses. My brother Casey had been going to Lighthouse Baptist Church in Arlington, TN for a while because his friends Stephen and Joshua from across the street went there. Their dad was the pastor, Bro. Greg Moffitt and his wife Mrs. Janet. They loved Casey unconditionally, which he needed very much. They were having a revival one week and my dad decided to go one night. He heard the fireball preacher, Tim Rutherford, and really liked him. He told my Mom, "I think we need to stay here for a while." So, Scott and I decided to visit too.

The very first time we went was in February, 1999. Ethan was only five months old then. It was on a Sunday night and everyone was so loving and friendly that we really felt comfortable there. They sang every verse in the hymn they sang and Scott and I thought that was so weird. We were kinda sitting back chuckling and being very critical. Later on, Bro. Greg started his sermon and he was preaching on salvation and what it really meant to be saved. At first I thought, well, I guess someone in here needs to be saved. I didn't understand why he kept bringing it up so much. Church let out, and when we were walking back to my parent's house, I asked Scott if we could come back because I really liked it. He said, "I don't know, we'll see."

We ended up going back and I got in a mess. It was now every service, Bro. Greg was preaching on what real salvation was. I was now really getting worried. I had always propped up on my five year old experience, but all those years, I struggled with it and didn't know why. Through the years, I prayed "the prayer" over and over again at night just to make sure it took and God heard me. I was terrified of dying and going to hell but yet supposedly was saved. It just didn't add up. When Bro. Greg was preaching on sin and forgiveness of sins and having a time and place when you got saved, I could understand all that but still couldn't put it all together yet. God was really working on me very strong.

I told my Mom one day that when I got saved, I just didn't have a lot of sins to repent over. After all, I was only five years old! How many sins could I have committed? I just had no understanding at all. One Sunday night after church, Bro. Russ Pelfrey was talking to Scott about how he was sorry for

individual sins when he was lost, but he had never seen himself as a sinner until God revealed that to him. Boy, that was me. There was no way at five years old, I was going to understand all that, and yes, I had always been sorry for doing wrong but I had never seen myself in the way God saw me. In my eyes, I was oh so innocent, but not really. I had to see that even if I had never committed those sins outwardly, I would still think about them and want to try them, but didn't. It was still in my heart but fear kept me from a lot. Thank you Lord.

I went home that night really upset, not sure what to think, but wrestling with the fact that I might actually be lost - that there might be a reason why I lived in doubt and fears my whole life and struggled being right with God. Everything was making sense now. I still didn't want to admit that I might be lost though. Maybe it was the devil making me think that to confuse me. One thing that really bothered me was that I might be a lost mother. That scared me.

The next Wednesday night service, I was sitting there in my seat and all of a sudden, I saw me as a black sheep and there were all these white ones around me. God spoke to me and said, "you're not like them, but you will be when I get through with you." I didn't know if I should be excited, scared, or what, but I knew it was God. I walked out of church and told Scott, "I am lost and know it, but I have a peace that He will save me. I'm not scared anymore." Then, from the time we left and got home, fear overwhelmed me again. I told Scott what happened and he said, "Well, at least you're not a goat". He was laughing. I was not. I started crying and said, "God might as well just send me to hell right now if that's where I'm going anyway. What's the point?" He tried to console me but I wouldn't have it. I wasn't getting saved and that was that - end of story.

The very next Friday, I was up very early cleaning the house and Ethan was still asleep. Scott drove down the drive way to go to work and I fell apart. I was still questioning everything that had been going on and said, "God, if I'm not saved, please make it plain to me. I can't stand this anymore." Right then it was as if He was next to me saying, "You are not saved, you're lost. You have never repented." Right then, I knew without doubt, I was lost. No more struggling in my head, it was just the truth. For the first time ever in my life, I saw who I really was, just a sinner who needed God. I felt like the leper in the Bible who was covered with leprosy from top to bottom. No part of his body was untouched by the disease. I almost felt like I had a film over my eyes. God was making it that real to me that I was covered with it. Right then, I sat down weeping and saying, "God, please forgive me from my sins, please save me from myself." Somewhere in that moment, faith came and He saved me. I had a peace that I had never felt before.

That day, He gave me a new mind, a new heart, new understanding, and a new life - one that I'd never known before. Thank you Lord that on March 19, 1999 I was no longer a guest in your house, but I was a member of your family.

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