

Mike Garibay baptism 07-21-2013

I've believed in God and Jesus as far back as I can remember. I know I will spend eternity in Heaven with God, and, although I cannot pinpoint the exact moment, I have accepted that Christ is my Savior. I believe he is one with God and he died on the cross for my sins. Through his grace he has opened up eternity for those who believe.

My roller coaster of faith has never been an issue of believing in Christ but rather my commitment of following him. I think even at my lowest point if pushed I would have said I believe Christ was God but my challenge with Christianity was with the accuracy and relevance of the Bible. I know this is a fine line to make a distinction on but it was His word I struggled with not the fact that Christ is the Lord.

I went to a Catholic Elementary School and Mass was a weekly event for me. So, the concept of God was never a foreign topic in my life yet my home life didn't support what I was being fed at school.

My childhood memories are scarred with numerous painful events that go hand in hand with a dysfunctional family and parents who eventually divorced. I was being pulled away from my early belief in God toward anything that would give me control. If you were to ask my teachers at that time, they would have described me as a bully, a troublemaker, class clown or even troubled.

My lack of faith hit bottom my second year of college. All the parties, chasing girls, and newly found academic didn't give me the happiness I was looking for; rather it just sank me deeper into despair. I was hungering for answers, looking to make sense of my childhood pains, my lack of close friendships, and how not to be alone for the rest of my life.

Within a year of my emotional and spiritual low, the Lord put my future wife, Sarah, into my life. I truly believe the Lord brought us together at the right moment not only for her to be my wife, but to cultivate the seeds He planted so many years earlier during my Catholic school days. I learned following Christ isn't in conflict with academic but actually compliments it. My intellectual pride began to crumble away. Even my hardened heart began to soften once I accepted the unconditional and secure love of Sarah. I began to realize, I was worth being loved and I could love without being the cause of pain or eventual failure.

Brick by brick the Lord was rebuilding me into a Christian man. Sarah and I were married, we began to have children and we made High Point Church our home church. But I was still holding back from totally giving myself to Christ. Again it was Sarah that led the way. She kept urging for us to get more involved with the Church and I always had a reason not to. It wasn't until God shook me again, three years ago, through Sarah's persistence, Nic taking over as Pastor and a number of couples from High Point who came into our lives. It was as if the Lord was saying, "Just try to go around this blockade. Look at all of these examples of Christian men and women who aren't any different than you, except they aren't holding back. Come with me,

follow me!” This time I listened and began to follow. The Lord is now leading me in wonderful directions, from leading my family in prayers and Bible time, small group participation and fellowship, Men’s Ministry and the desire to be baptized today.