

*By Rick Zorehkey
as told to Kirk Noonan
photography by Aaron Funk*

JESUS saved me and my marriage

Judging from outward appearances everything looked swell. I had a pretty and devoted wife, good kids, cars, a nice house, vacation properties, a booming business and cash to spend.

I also had no problem disarming people with my easy smile and cool head — especially when things got heated during business negotiations. Character, honesty and integrity seemed to be the cornerstones of my life.

Problem was, I was living a lie. I was cheating on my wife. As a result, any positive character traits I possessed were severely undermined.





As most cheaters do, I justified my indiscretions by blaming my spouse. *She's putting the children's needs ahead of mine. She's replaced romance with practicality. Sex is an afterthought ...*

All were common refrains and reason enough — for me — to climb into the beds of other women. But my justifications unraveled on the evening of Sept. 20, 2001.

At a restaurant Evangeline, my wife, and I were out to have a good time. But suddenly, she

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got deadly serious.

“Are you having an affair?”

“Of course not,” I lied, trying to laugh off the inquisition as if she was way off base.

“Is there someone else?” she pressed.

“Yes,” I heard myself confess.

“There is.”

Being honest about my failures as a husband left me feeling liberated.

Though confession was cathartic for me, it proved a crushing experience for Evangeline. She was angry, hurt, sad, insecure and pained beyond measure. I couldn't blame her. But, remarkably, in her pain and suffering she turned to God and kept a cool head.

Rather than kick me out of the house, she allowed me to stay. Evangeline later told me the reason for allowing me to stay was that she didn't know what God wanted her to do with me.

That was the first step in the right direction we would both take on a long road to redemption.

Transformations

Though Evangeline had been raised in a loving, Christian home, she had strayed from Christ. But suddenly, I saw her retreating to the only solid ground she knew — her once-vibrant faith.

Almost immediately she began going back to church, reading her Bible and praying. Soon after, she rededicated her life to Christ. It was an amazing and beautiful transformation, yet I didn't believe it was real — I was waiting for her to fall.

As I waited, the weeks turned to months. It became evident her faith was on track to be long-lasting and genuine.

Though skeptical of her beliefs I asked to attend church one Sunday with her.

It was a shocking experience.

The pastor and his message fascinated and surprised me. He talked of having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and loving neighbors unconditionally.

He said, “These were the two greatest commandments, and if you aren't doing one and two,

you're getting the rest wrong.”

I didn't even know what the rest were, but I was pretty sure I wasn't doing the first two. Still, at many levels I could understand and agree with the pastor. But I was not convinced I needed to commit my life to Christ. Instead, I set out to discover if Evangeline's faith was true or not.

Raised Jewish, I attended Hebrew school as a child and had a bar mitzvah. I believed God was the Creator of everything and that the miracles recorded in the Old Testament were legitimate. Yet settling on Jesus as Savior seemed impossible. However, I could not deny Evangeline's ever-growing faith had my interest piqued.

I started studying history, biblical archaeology and prophecy. I had coffee with rabbis and ministers whom I grilled on the tenets of their faith and nuances of their traditions.

For a Jewish man I came to some startling conclusions. The first being that the New Testament was not new — it was the Old Testament continued.

As I learned more about Jesus I became a voracious reader. I studied various translations of the Bible. I read the Torah and the three-volume *Answering Jewish Objections to the Messiah*. I also read everything I could by Lee Strobel, Josh McDowell, Arnold Fruchtenbaum, C.S. Lewis, Rick Warren and many others.

During this time I continued to go to church. I loved the music and the simple messages I heard. I wanted to be more



involved, but I still didn't believe. My wife suggested we join a small group. We did, and I made it clear to the other members I was only there to seek truth and was intent on proving Christianity right or wrong depending on the evidence I found.

After almost four years of studying Scripture, reading books and talking to believers, I committed my life to Christ during our church's Good Friday service in March 2005. It was a wonderful moment in my life.



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Released

I believe my wife's faith and forgiveness were instrumental in bringing me to such a decision. Recently, I learned there were many nights when she would leave our bed and go in another room. There she would cry for hours as she prayed for my soul and that God would give her strength to get over the hurt. She would then quietly crawl back into bed so that when I woke I would never know she had left.

Despite the pain I put her through she recently told me she

make amends and live a godly life, she slowly learned to love and trust me again.

Today we look like the couple we once only pretended to be. We love each other deeply, but God is our No. 1 priority. If I have a life-verse it would be, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5, NIV).

Evangeline's would be Philipians 4:6,7: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your

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would go through it all over again to be where we are today and to see me come to Christ. Those words floored me. Not only did my Savior die for me, but my wife embraced suffering too so that

I might know Him.

Through Evangeline's relationship with the Lord, my eyes were opened to spiritual things. Through my genuine desire to

requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

It's amazing how different it feels to live in the truth rather than in a pack of lies. Now, we truly live on earth today for eternity tomorrow.

And for that we praise God. **tpe**

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