

Jon's Life Testimony

Being strong in Faith

Key-verse: Isaiah 7:9b

“If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.”

Part I: Seeking human love.

I grew up in a very Christian family. I never had to experience death at an early age, or struggle with any major alcohol or drug abuse of any kind with my family or relatives, because of this, I knew that God blessed my family very well, and I knew that from the beginning, so I had no reason to doubt God or my faith. I even started going to a Catholic school in Kindergarten, but later moved to a public school. And, even though I had friends at the Catholic school, I struggled to make friends in the public school. I was viewed as an outcast in society, because I was different, and I was really frustrated on why that was. During most of my middle school year, I would always sit alone at the lunch table, yearning for someone to reach out and talk to me, but no one ever did. I would often envy those that I saw being happy and talking with their friends, because I never have that. There was a spotlight on me however, and because I was different, I would often be insulted and ridiculed. I also screwed up a lot at home, so I was often yelled at and ridiculed at home as well, and because of that, I felt really incompetent in life towards the end of elementary school. That led to me to fear failing in middle school. I determined that failing was the reason why I got hurt so often, and why I didn't have friends. So I figured if I did not try anything, and had no expectations about it, that, logically, I could never fail. Therefore, I wouldn't have to worry about getting hurt all the time, or ended up accidentally hurting others. I started becoming paralyzed in my life, and “just going through the motions”. I became that way with my life. I just did what I was “suppose to do” and nothing more. My life was hanging on by one thread...hope. But that thread would end up being the strongest thread.

However, I did have one true reliable friend, and he was the greatest friend I could ever hope for. Most every night, when I was younger, I would spend that time

talking to him until I was too tired to talk anymore, and fell asleep. I kept asking him why I was lonely, and I was upset that I didn't have any more friends. He became my only friend, the one in whom I admired and respected the most. And, as Matthew 7:7 says "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." I asked him for wisdom, and he granted it to me. I used it for selfish ambitions, however. When someone would make fun of me for being different, I would just say "That's how God made me. Deal with it." I used it often to defend myself, and even though it stopped the criticism, I still struggled with love. My friend knew my struggle, and revealed his great love for me through great revelations that I could not understand at the time. He showed me, through his suffering, his great love for me for a failure like me. Here is one of the many revelations that he revealed to me. (Read But I fail). Despite his great revelations to me, I still questioned why I felt so lonely, and so I tried to find human love to satisfy my loneliness. So after high school, and after an unsuccessful semester at COD, I made the decision to move to Florida to try and find work and make new friends. I dated a girl down in Florida just so that I wouldn't feel lonely, and started focusing on making friends and receiving human love. Once I got that human love, I felt like I didn't need to have a personal relationship with God anymore because I had it with other people. I stopped talking to God and stopped going to church. Because of this, there was a void in my life that kept getting worse, and I kept trying to fill it up with human love. My desire for human love became even more evident when I left Florida just to be with a girl from my hometown. Even when I came back home, however, I still did not focus on God, but on my relationship with my girlfriend. However, after several months, the relationship was getting worse. I also attempted to do well in school, but failed miserably again. I saw that everything that I was working for was falling apart, and so I cried out for help from God. It was then that God answered my prayer, and helped me be a part of UBF ministry.

Part II: God's loving revelation.

It was from last year's International Bible Conference that I started reaching out towards God and seeking a personal relationship with him again. However, it would be a long process. Even though I was a part of UBF ministry, I still had the question of why I felt so lonely, especially after my girlfriend and I broke up. Once again, I searched for

human love, and lost my relationship with God. Through another brief and disappointing relationship, God trained me to Seek His Kingdom First, based on Matthew 6:33. And he wanted me to be planted in good soil and to remove the rocks and thorns in my life, based on the parable in Matthew 13. Both of which were revealed to me at this year's Summer Bible Conference. Thank God for helping me getting involved the UBF ministry, and helping me to grow to find Christ in my life. I finally was able to interpret and understand his great revelations to me. And, during a long walk with God, God revealed to me that he has always been with me, even when I was not with him. It was then that I realized that I did not need to search for human love anymore, but to search for God's love and his calling in my life. God revealed two parts to me: First, he told me about his great love for me, and for the world through John 3:16. Secondly, God revealed to me what he wants me to do, and it was through Matthew 28. He wants me to go and make disciples of all nations. Then, he told me what it means to go out and to love the world and make disciples of ALL nations. He gave me the opportunity to go on the European Summer Bible Conference in Germany and going on the tour to Paris, France. During that time, God opened my eyes to see how big and how vast, but yet how much the world is in need to have people proclaim the word of God to them. And, I pray that God may conquer my fear of hiding in my own little world at COD, and to open my mouth to testify his love for me and for the world, and to give hope to all nations, one person at a time. It will be a long process, I know, but I pray that God may be with me during that process, and that I may learn to hold strong to my faith through that. Thank God for UBF ministry to help me understand the importance of first having a personal relationship with Jesus, and to also help me to grow to have a heart for people and to have a great love for them.

Part III: Decisions through faith.

Ephesians 6:10 says "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power." God wanted me to be strong in him, so he revealed my life-key verse to me "If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all." This hit me in two different ways. First, God was challenging my faith again. God reminded me that I was still weak in my faith, and that I needed to make it stronger and stand more firm on it if I am to do his will in my life. Secondly, the idea of "you will not stand at all" made me face my fear of failing again, as well as that ever-important fear of God, into my heart. God was telling

me that I was bound to fall if I did not make my faith stronger. As James says, "Faith without works is dead." In my past, I never reached out to people, for fear that I'd be rejected and insulted. However, I need to start putting my strong faith into action and to reach out and start having 1:1 Bible Study. I also need to conquer my own fear of failing in school, and so God helped me to enroll in one class at COD. By doing so, he reminded me that I am living to do his will, not my own. Please pray for me as I begin to conquer my fear of failure, with faith, and to learn to be successful at school through Christ's power. While conquering school studies, may God give me courage to teach 1:1 Bible Study at COD with his almighty word planted in my heart. May God help me to grow to be a disciple maker of all nations, and may I remember that he is always with me, in his great love, through the end of the age. Amen.

One Word:

Be strong in faith, receive his great love, and make disciples in his name.