

The Story of Andrew Harrington

I was a very wicked man: A sexually promiscuous individual, somewhat into drugs, a pornography and a video game and movie addict, a liar, a thief, depressed, bitter, selfish, somewhat masochistic, angry at everyone; but above all, I especially hated Christians more than anyone else in all of existence.

For Christians believed in spreading a lie of false hope. But I knew the truth—there was no point to anything. Instead, these people vainly attempted to cover truth with a false hope. A lie. For when one eagerly desires something—a girlfriend, a new videogame, an unreleased movie—he is preoccupied with anticipation of the joy this long-awaited necessity will bring. That yearning soul is instilled with excitement and relief as the day draws near. But when the day finally does arrive, it does not satisfy as anticipated. And once deflated, the soul still longs for something more. And so the cycle goes on and on, hoping that something greater may one day satisfy. To my scoffing mind, Christianity was just another such human hope—only more deceptive, because satisfaction of this false hope is naively postponed beyond the completion of one's life. I regarded Christians' apparent joy as merely a psychological response to foolish hope in a future prize that did not exist.

Despite these hardened conclusions, a friend of mine, who was a Christian and fully aware that I utterly detested Christianity, invited me to a campfire which I did not know consisted of other Christians. I announced my arrival wearing a set of explicitly phallic-shaped devil horns. I debated with these fools much about the fictitiousness of God and scientifically disproved their silly fabrications. It was shortly after that night, that one of the men from the campfire telephoned me. After speaking to me about God's son, Jesus Christ, he said, "If you ask God to show himself to you, he will answer you."

I was somewhat of a reasonable individual. If this God was not a figment of the imagination, he would surely answer me (or otherwise provide a perfect opportunity to mock the notion). So I agreed with him, and I asked in his hearing for "the God that this man spoke of" to answer me if he was real, and that, if he showed himself to me in a way I could not deny, I would follow him with my entire life.

A few days later, after heavy protesting (for I did not want to go), those same people persuaded me to attend a local congregation of Christians. My devious mind was planning to offend a horde of stupid Christians by rousing arguments and contention. While nothing in the meeting appealed to me, it was during this time of boredom that I realized something shockingly new. My incessant depression and hating heart which I loved had temporarily entirely vanished from the time I had asked God to show himself to me. Completely! And I was not baffled. For I knew at that instant that God had answered my prayers and delivered me, as the man from the campfire had said he would. At this realization, a powerful presence surrounded me which I had never experienced before then. God's spirit covered me.

What happened next is indescribable. I know that there is nothing that can deliver a man from something that he wants and wholeheartedly desires. I myself wanted to do some of the most detestable acts imaginable; ones that I would have (sadly) enjoyed doing. I can only describe it like this: If you had a favorite movie, or video game, or song; no matter how hard someone tried to convince you that you abhorred your cherished possession, your mind would not yield to any argument or persuasion to the contrary. But despite the impossibility, in that moment, all my depression and all my destructive intents were completely wiped away. Not a sole desire to commit any loathsome act remained; those depraved intentions were suddenly so unfamiliar that it felt like they had never been mine.

At that moment, all alone without any prompting from another man, I said in my heart, "God, you have shown yourself to me in a way I cannot deny. Come into my heart, I will serve you. Forgive me for how long I have gone against your will. I have been your enemy. You have every right to destroy me and kill me. But you have had mercy upon me."

I was reminded of an incident I had miraculously survived only months prior. Although my entire car was demolished in a terrible expressway accident, I did not have a cut—not even a whiplash from the seatbelt. I now realized that God had saved me in that moment (likely through the prayers of a Christian family which I had just come into contact with a couple months prior). Had I died in that car wreck, I would have descended into everlasting torment forever apart from Jesus, because I was one of his most bitter enemies and certainly deserving of every moment of it.

Not only had I sinned, but I had wanted to destroy every single part of his creation. I realized then how much people hated Hilter, and he had not even done half of what was purposed in my heart. I knew how much God had hated me. But he had provided a way for me 2000 years ago, by sending his son Jesus die in my place on a cross. It was not until I was alone that night, that this awareness brought me to an hour of weeping. But now at the meeting, I only said in my heart, "My life is no longer my own. You have had mercy on me. I belong to you. Take me and use me. I will be your servant."

I told no one about this at first. But the very day of this event, a woman whom I had never met, having seen me enter the meeting and leaving as a totally different person came up to me and said, "You gave your life to Jesus today."

People who did not even know me knew that I had changed. From that day on, no one ever talked again of having bad vibes around me or any other discomfort as almost everyone before had felt around me. All the depression and murderous thoughts were scattered in a moment; and they have never returned, AT ALL, even until this day, over 15 years later.

I had never read the bible before. But I now I read it excitedly at every opportunity. The first book in it (Genesis) was read in a single night. The first weeks when I would read the bible, my entire body would feel as though it were on fire, something I had not experienced with any other book and haven't since. I attended meetings with Christians almost every night of the week. I sought every person I could find who seemed to have the greatest desire to serve God.

Everything had changed, as quickly as turning on a light-switch. Almost every question about the world that had ever baffled me now was solved, now that I was aware that there is a spiritual kingdom of light and one of darkness.

Before I was saved, I hated children, now I was in love with them. I thought volunteer work was one of the most stupid concepts in all of humanity, now I was longing for opportunities to do it. I had been one of the most quiet people ever, now I had to learn social courtesies and restraints because I could not stop talking about Jesus. I had never wanted to talk in front of people, now I was eager to stand before people and tell them how my God had changed me. I boldly shared my testimony with my doctor and demanded that he get me off my anti-depressant medication. I have never been back on it! (nor have I had any need to) Praise Yahweh!

There was a man whom I had known before my conversion, who had been engaged in sexual sin and drugs. He knew what a wicked person I was, how much I hated Christianity, and all my dark and twisted thinking. When he saw that I had professed to be a Christian, he stopped his sexual activity and drugs, and returned to following God, knowing that if someone as evil and anti-Christian as I could become a Christian that God was real. And he is still serving Jesus until this day. Another man had conversed with me online about our hatred and destruction of Christians; after he heard, he was afraid to talk to me again. When he finally built up enough courage, he stated, "I would have thought the devil would have become a Christian before you."

Now that God had forgiven me for all my wicked works and thoughts, I was broken over the fact that I had wronged many people undeservingly, many who had only done good to me. I spent a few years making reconciliation with anyone who crossed my mind whom I had wronged, including my own mother (whom I could barely ask to forgive me because how much my weeping choked my words). And even people whom I felt I had the right to take revenge on for the wrongs they did to me, I found that I no longer had hatred against them in my heart. All I could think about was how much I wanted them to share this same relationship with God as I now had. For example, shortly after my conversion, I encountered an individual of whose death I would have rejoiced over for the wrongs he had done to me. But when I saw him now, I was so glad to see him that I ran up to him and threw my arms around him. There was not a speck of hatred remaining in me. All I could think of is how much I wanted him to be my spiritual brother.

Under the direction of no man, but God himself, I was burning my pornography within months. I got rid of my video games which contained wicked content (such as magic, demons, violence, and immodesty). Praise Yahweh God that the power of prayer and his faithfulness to deliver proved very evident in my life at this time. I was in critical need of such deliverance, because shortly after my encounter with Jesus, I was still imprisoned by things on the computer. For years, one of my greatest satisfactions was "reverse engineering" some wicked video games. My data was immense—thousands of hours of work. I had anxiously backed it up at three places to prevent me from ever losing it. For although this vain pursuit was robbing my time from God, I was too obsessed with it to break away from it. Yet I asked God, "Do whatever it takes to free me from this". Within a week, my harddrive crashed. Thanking God that I had my data backed up on a second one, I rejoiced. Within a few days, that harddrive was ruined because of a completely unrelated problem. After I thanked God once more that all my data was backed up online, within a few days, someone hacked into my website and deleted everything. Then I praised God, knowing that he was faithful to answer my prayers. He had delivered me. I rejoiced! I was free! I knew the power of God. I knew that he was faithful. And many other such things happened. Jesus had freed me and was willing to see me through to complete freedom.

My one purpose in sharing this message is this: That you may see God's power. That the miracle that he did in my life was so powerful and convincing that you want to turn from your practices and give your entire life to him too.

I will not deceive you. Living for God is not a mere accessory to be added to an already complex life, like football or video games. God wants all of you, your very soul. And when you give yourself up to him, you give up every dream, passion, hobby, deed – everything. The most wonderful thing is that God does not expect you to do this on your own; he will cause his own spirit to come and dwell inside you, providing strength to overcome every struggle. For God did not save us from our sins for us to continue to live like everyone else in the world, but to glorify him and to advance his kingdom, forsaking all the evil pleasures of this life, and clinging to purity, forgiveness, and love!

All I can do is urge you to do what was urged to me, "Ask God, the father of Jesus Christ, that if he is real, that he will show himself to you in a way you cannot deny."

When he answers, will you be willing to give up your very life to serve him?

The Story of Heidi Harrington

I grew up in a Christian home, knowing that there was a God and believing in him. Even with that fact settled in my heart, and knowing that God could see everything I did, I would still try to get away with a lot of things. I didn't like getting in trouble, so if I got caught I would lie or twist the story to get out of it. After all, it was just something small, wasn't it?

At the age of seven I prayed a little prayer, asking God to make me a Christian. I didn't want to just live a bad life and go to hell.¹ I was very happy after this prayer, but the happiness only lasted for a few years.

By the time I was in my very early teens, I was in what I call "my up and down years". Something would come up that would convict me of my sin, and I would go pray. I would start reading my Bible everyday, praying, and trying to do better. A little later, I would sink right back to where I had been before. Then, something would come up and convict me, and the process would repeat all over again. This constant up and down continued for some years. I thought I was fine since I had said a little prayer when I was seven—I was a Christian. But, deep down inside, something seemed wrong.

Holding to this prayer that I had made as a child as my foundation, I was immersed in water when I was fourteen in obedience to the command of God. I honestly believed that I was a Christian and that my life was all right... Except during those times, when something deep within me trembled at the thought of death or at Christ's return, I always stuffed it deep inside. I didn't want to think about it, for it made me afraid. Now about this time, some sins, which I shrugged off as "no big deal sins", began to lie very heavily on my conscience. The weight grew to the point that I could no longer bear it. So I went to some people and confessed what I had done. I felt very liberated after doing so.

In the fall of 2005, as a searching fifteen year old, I attended a weeklong Bible school. God began to do a major digging in me at this time. Something was awakening within me that was crying out for something more to life. I was feeling empty. Life itself felt empty.

I came home very troubled, as my comfortable little world was being torn apart by the mighty hand of God. I kept asking myself why my Christian life did not match God's standards. Those days, my journal was full of questions, turmoil, and despair. I had doubts whether I really was a Christian, for something was very wrong in my life. Something was missing. I had no joy, no peace. I was afraid of death. If anything intersected my path, others had to deal with my terrible attitudes. My life was empty, so I was grasping for *something*. The turmoil and questions went on for some weeks, as my heart was getting lower and lower. I was reaching a point of desperation. There had to be something more to life than what I had. There had to be something that was *real*!

In February of 2006, I hit the bottom and cried out to God with a desperate heart. I poured out my sins to him. And knowing that about two thousand years ago he had died in exchange for me, so that I did not have to pay the penalty for all my lies and other sins which I deemed small, I accepted this truth, and dedicated my life to serving him for the love that he had shown me.

Praise the Lord! I was instantly free! The weight that had been upon me over the last months was completely gone! I was no longer afraid of death. I was full of overflowing joy and at complete peace. My life was absolutely changed. I read the Bible now because I wanted to, not as a duty. I wanted to pray, and I was filled with

¹ The final destination of all the wicked (who do not cease from their wickedness and confess their evil deeds and received forgive from God, and refuse to follow the commands of Jesus Christ the son of God) where their sentence is eternal punishment.

a love for others. There is a stark difference in my journal at this time. It went abruptly from pages filled with questions and turmoil, to pages filled with rejoicing!

Not immediately, but quite some time later, I realized that in February 2006, I had truly been reborn, and not when I had been a young child like I had previously thought. After receiving counsel from a few people, and bringing it to the Lord in prayer, I was immersed in water again in June 2008, only this time as a genuine follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Something was very real to me that day, which had not been there a few years before. This was indeed a day of rejoicing for me!

Shortly after this, I went through a very difficult time in my life. God was bringing me to a deeper surrender. I was recognizing my need to let go of things in my heart, and consecrate them to him. After those difficult weeks were over, I felt the presence of the Lord like I had never experienced before. I praise the Lord for the victory that it produced in my life.

My life was much different after the beginning of 2006. I was growing, and learning, and rejoicing. But there was something else that God still had to do before my life was in a place that he could freely use me to the fullest. Throughout my teenage years, there was one thing which I refused to let go of and simply trust that God would perfectly guide me in. For I had my own plans for this area of my life, and I was afraid that if I let God have it, he wouldn't give it to me: Marriage. This was my focus; I just wanted to get married. Once I got married, then I could start living life-or so I thought.

This lack of surrender put me into bondage for over four years. It greatly hindered me from growing spiritually the way God wanted. In April 2010, one night while I was in prayer, I surrendered this consuming desire, and decided to trust that God would make provision for that area of my life.

Afterward, I embarked on a precious journey through the next year and a half. I learned that God was a Father to me, and I was his precious daughter. He had plans for me and I needed to simply rest in the assurance that his love would bring about what was best for me, even if it was difficult to endure. I had finally found true contentment in Christ. My happiness did not rely on marriage. I was satisfied in Jesus!

I had a growth spurt! This obstacle no longer hindered my path. I felt like I was sprinting down it at top speed. Suddenly everything was alive! I was seeing God all over creation! I was no longer blinded by my own ideas and plans. God had complete control of my life. My heart was fully surrendered to him. The only thing I wanted was for HIM to receive glory and honor from my life, because of the price he had paid for me when, as a sinless man, he was condemned and crucified in my sinful place! And, two years later, God did give me the precious gift of marriage; but only in his time and his way, and when I was perfectly content to remain single for his glory!

And now I stand in awe of God's grace! It is the only reason that I am where I am today. It would not have taken much for me to throw everything away, and to be living a worthless life. Without the grace of God, I could have been one of those people whom we look at and say, "They're a hopeless case." I rejoice in the mercy God had upon a sinner like me! He can do the same for you! The same grace and mercy that has been on my life is there for you as well.

I stand here as a testimony that God is real! I would have ruined every part of my life, if I had lived it on my own. I praise God for his love that kept me in his hands! I rejoice that my life is still in his hands. He alone is worthy.

May Jesus Christ receive all the glory!