

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

It was 1973, almost 21 years ago. I found myself in an abusive, very unhappy 5 – year old marriage. I had married at 18; the Army unexpectedly sent my husband to the front lines of Viet Nam. He came back broken and hard – changed forever. We had a 2 – year old son, infrequent employment, meddlesome relatives and no friends. Both products of dysfunctional families ourselves, we did not know the first thing about being a family. I was constantly depressed and contemplating suicide the year before I got saved.

The whole of '72 I had been searching for meaning – devouring every book I could lay my hands on at the library. I leaned mostly towards books about ESP, the occult and Theosophy. One day in the summer of '73, however, the book “What Difference does Jesus Make?” caught my eye. That certainly did not fit in with the type of reading I had been doing; obviously it was God drawing me. The book stated simply on page 11, “Jesus Christ is not just a historical figure. He is real and He will help you if you call on Him.” I had never heard this before – not once in my whole Catholic School career. I was so desperate that I took the book at its word and decided to try calling on Jesus for help.

For 4 nights, I sneaked out of bed when my husband fell asleep. At first, I felt completely foolish – speaking, as it seemed, to the air. But by the second night, I became aware of a Presence in the room and I was getting answers back (in my head) to the questions I was asking. I remember telling Jesus that if He was real, I needed His help, because otherwise, I'd had it, I was going to kill myself. By the fourth night (Wed. Aug. 4th, the day I consider my “salvation date”), He became so real that it was hard to believe I was still in our dimension. I told the Lord that I wanted to give Him my life and work for Him. All of a sudden, I felt as if chains were literally falling off my spirit. I felt a supernatural love and peace that I had never known. I had met the Lord! My life would never be the same.

For 6 months I felt the Lord's Presence constantly and read the Bible avidly. Before my conversion, I had not believed in the reality of the Bible as God's inspired Word. Now the pages were alive for me and I couldn't get enough. Prayer was my greatest joy during that time.

My (now ex) husband did not understand, of course, my experience with the Lord. Being a new (and very zealous) Christian, I did a fair amount of preaching and naturally still didn't have much of a clue about giving agape love. My husband found a new girl; 2 years later he left me and our 5 – year old son. The Lord faithfully (and at times through miraculous provision) saw me through 7 years of raising my child alone. He planted me in a Catholic Charismatic prayer group to serve and grow until 1981, when I married my present husband, Ken. We have been together for 13 years now. My son is 23 and serves the Lord through his music ministry and missionary trips. I am confident that one day he will be the vessel God uses to lead his father and his father's wife to the Lord. Praise God!

Anna Behrens 3/18/94