

Jeremy Rice

## **Early Life**

My testimony begins 6 months prior to my birth. My father was arrested for drunk driving and while he spent the night in jail my mother, who the Lord had been working on her heart, gave her life to Christ. Shortly afterward my Father also gave his life to Christ. I was raised in this Christian family which became very involved in our church.

My faith began at the age of six when one Sunday at kid's church our Sunday school teacher was teaching through the bible using the letter "C". She started with Creation... Cain ... and when she reached crucifixion, this was the first time I understood what Jesus had done for me on the cross. Later that day I prayed with my parents to accept Jesus as my savior.

My parents decided that in order to give us the best education possible in a Christian environment they would homeschool me and my siblings. Being homeschooled allowed me to focus on my passions in a sheltered environment. When I was about 10 years old my father lost the only job I remembered him having. My father decided to open his own business, a sports trading card and memorabilia store. I worked at this store for the rest of my childhood. It was not until college that I realized how poor we were during this time. I saw God provide in so many miraculous ways. Every time something would break or need replaced a customer would come in and spend the exact amount needed for the repair. This was a real life demonstration of Matthew 6:31

"So do not worry saying "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?"

In high school I began questioning my salvation about the same time the "Left Behind Series" came out. I felt like a "Sunday Christian" where I would attend Church on Sunday, know all the answers to the questions, but not actually living my life for Christ.

## **College**

I left for A&M excited about being out of the sheltered world in which I was raised. The first day at "Fish Camp", a freshman orientation at A&M, my leader quoted Philippians 1:21.

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

After Fish Camp I came back to my dorm room and committed my college life to Christ. I began to go to a freshman bible study. I grew so much in my faith during this year. During my junior year I became involved with leading a bible study at Grace Bible Church. My growth in my walk with the Lord exploded at this point. I was being discipled and was discipling others. I met Katie my senior year and the next semester we led a bible study for other leaders. I knew early on that she was a special woman that I definitely wanted to spend more time with. Shortly after Christmas, I asked her on a date. We have never looked back and were married the next summer.

## **Fort Worth**

We moved to Fort Worth for my job and started attending CCBC the Sunday after returning from our honeymoon. We were plugged into a small group, Sunday school class and found our place to serve with the Special needs ministry.

After children I started searching for my identity. The days were a blur of family, work and then church on Sunday. I failed to make God a priority and I was missing Christian community like Katie had developed. With each of our children the demand on my time continued to grow. Our last pregnancy with Anna was particularly hard with Katie having some related health concerns that limited her activity.

We learned a great deal about the importance of placing God first in our marriage. I learned that when I fail to intentionally plan, I intentionally plan to fail. This is true for both my relationship with the Lord and with Katie. It also led us to asking forgiveness for many areas where we had caused each other pain, intentionally or unintentionally. Little did we know that we would have the opportunity to apply many of these lessons.

In 2016, Katie experienced signs of a stroke. After two days in the hospital, we were finally given some answers. She had a TIA or “mini-stroke”. While all of this was happening I did not want to deal with the emotions related to Katie’s health. What if I lost my wife? What if I had to raise children alone? I was scared. Unfortunately, this made me distant from Katie when she needed me most. I was just trying to survive and keep our family going, but she needed me to be there emotionally while leading her spiritually.

“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.” 2 Corinthians 4:17.

Shortly after this time, I was asked to serve as a Deacon in our Church. The next four years were spent growing in my walk with the Lord and in fellowship with this amazing group of guys. I had never been with such a transparent and selfless group. After about four years of serving as a deacon I rolled off the deacon board just as I was starting to question my career. In the process of interviewing with another company, I was approached by my current company about the possibility of moving to Oklahoma (OKC or Tulsa). In all my prayer about my career I saw this as God opening a door and surprisingly when I asked Katie she said yes.