

Salvation Testimony – Austin Quintero

Before Christ, my life felt empty. I always felt like I was “destined for more,” and I searched for fulfillment in a better job, more money, my marriage, and my children.

I had a fairly normal childhood until around fourth grade, when my dad was involved in a life-changing motorcycle accident due to drugs. He went through nine months of brain and open-heart surgeries just to keep him alive. Once he was well enough to come home, he became aggressive and short-tempered. Eventually, he returned to drugs and partying and left our family when I was in fifth grade.

From that time on, I became bitter and angry. I spent much of middle school and high school getting into fights and being kicked out of schools. Then, in tenth grade, a teammate from my football team invited me to a Wednesday night event at his church. We played games, got a free meal, and heard a message at the end. I began attending consistently, and this was my first real introduction to Jesus.

At that time, I would have said I was a Christian, but you would never have known it by the way I lived. I still fought and had a terrible temper. I was vulgar and addicted to pornography. Even after meeting my wife, Cindy, in 2009 after moving to Alaska, I continued living that way. Cindy and I eventually got married, and by the world’s standards, we had a strong, loving, and faithful marriage, but we had no true moral standard to guide what that meant. I was still vulgar, still lost my temper, and still watched things I shouldn’t have.

At the age of 27, the opportunity to join the Army came up. After talking it over with Cindy, I went to a recruiter and signed up. I left for basic training, where God placed me in a platoon with a man who would ultimately play a major role in leading me toward a true walk with Christ.

I was blessed to have a one-on-one discipleship relationship with Connor Shedeed. We truly did life together. Connor shared the gospel with me, walked me through Scripture, and asked me hard questions about my life, death, eternity,

and the sin I was living in. We went through basic training, Airborne School, SFAS, and the Q Course together. Connor studied the Bible with me, dragged me to church services and fellowship events, worked out and ate meals with me, came to my house, spent time with my family, and consistently invested in my life.

After about two years of discipleship, everything came to a head in August of 2020. Connor had just walked me through Romans and explained how my sin required the payment of death—“the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23)—but that the God of the universe came in the flesh to pay that debt for me.

That same weekend, Pastor Sean preached about Abraham: how Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness—not because of his works, but through faith in God. A few days later, I was sitting on staff duty at the JAF watching American Gospel. They began explaining the gospel and made a distinction that finally clicked for me:

Faith → Salvation → Works

not

Faith + Works → Salvation

I finally understood that I had no part in earning my salvation. I had done nothing, and could do nothing, to earn it. My obedience could never purchase salvation; rather, my obedience was to flow from gratitude for what Christ had already done for me.

I realized that I had been living my entire life apart from a holy and righteous God. Yet this same God loved me so much that He gave His only begotten Son as the sacrifice for my sins, and He was calling me to Himself.

Sitting there at CQ, with all of this running through my mind, I was all in. **My life now belonged to the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Since giving my life to Christ, the Lord has brought about a dramatic change in me over time. I didn’t change instantly or overnight, but I began growing more patient day by day. I learned to turn my eyes away from lust. Little by little, I learned to tame my tongue, and I dove into the Word of God.

I shared my faith with my wife, and a short time later, she gave her life to Christ as well. Our marriage grew stronger as we began putting Christ above everything else. We grew closer and more intimate as, through the power of the Holy Spirit, I learned to turn my eyes and affection solely toward my wife.

God also redirected my aggressive and argumentative nature toward apologetics for His glory. I began proclaiming the gospel to the people around me—although, by God’s grace, I do it much more lovingly now than I did during those first couple of years.

Today, I strive to continue growing in my walk with the Lord, to love and lead my wife according to His Word, and to raise my children in the truth of Scripture with joy. My prayer is that the Lord would continue sanctifying me and use my life, my marriage, and my family for His purposes and ultimately **for His glory alone**.