

Salvation Testimony – Nathaniel L. Gantt

Life Before Christ

Before Christ, I would occasionally attend church, but my understanding of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, sin, salvation, or the Christian life was minimal to none.

During my junior high years, I lived with my aunt in Georgia and attended church several times a week. That experience was horrific. The teaching was legalistic, salvation often felt coerced, and I did not see real joy in those who professed Christ. So, I resolved to stay away from church and anything associated with it.

From my teenage years to my late twenties, sports, pornography, and womanizing were my idols, and I pursued them with great skill and passion. I fathered two children outside of marriage and suffered two divorces. I was enslaved to sin and enjoyed it.

How I Came to Christ

While living in Baltimore, Maryland, I rented the basement of an East Baltimore house of Robin and Kevin Carter, a Christian couple. For three years, they shared the gospel, took me to church, and demonstrated life as a Christian that was different from what I experienced in my youth.

While living with them, I saw a marriage centered on Christ. I saw parents loving and discipling their children. I saw followers of Christ demonstrating mercy, grace, patience, and sacrificial love in the way they treated their children, neighbors, and me. I witnessed the Holy Spirit's presence in the lives of everyday people. I was intrigued, but not ready to follow Christ.

Several years later, I met Bianca, moved back to Fayetteville, got married, and began a family. One Sunday morning, Bianca decided she was going to church and asked if I would join her. I declined, and for several months, she attended without

me. However, I wrestled with questions like: Who is God? What is mankind's purpose? Why did God create man?

One Sunday, while Bianca was at church, I was reminded of Psalm 51 from my discussions with Robin and Kevin. So, I picked up a Bible from our bookshelf, turned to Psalm 51, and began reading it repeatedly. I couldn't stop reading it. As I read it, I began to weep uncontrollably. The Holy Spirit used Psalm 51 to speak directly to my heart and broke me. Weeks later, I surrendered my life to Christ, was baptized, and have followed Christ ever since.

Life After Christ

After surrendering my life to Christ, I thought the Christian life would be easy, but I soon learned differently. The sins I had once been enslaved to became daily struggles and seemed impossible to overcome. I battled depression and assurance of salvation because I couldn't shake the desires and often gave in to them.

Over time, by getting to know God through His Word, praying, fasting, and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, my desire to commit those sins decreased as I matured in Christ. The Spirit strengthened my faith, changed my desires, and now has chosen me to serve Him and His people as an elder. My testimony is one of many examples of God's mercy, grace, patience, and love toward an undeserving sinner. Soli Deo Gloria!