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Sharing My Experiences

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Preface

Here I am, someone who dreads recalling details and describing events writing down my experiences. It has never been my dream to write a book. So what is it that prompted me to write, and write about my experiences with God at that? The answer is a promise made – my promise to God. And dare I break my promise to Him? Not at all because I know from experience that God has a superb memory! The promise which I made to God on 23 September 2002, if He were to heal my mum from cancer, is in Psalm 66.

It has now been more than four years since the demise of my beloved mother. Although she passed away despite what I had hoped God would do, I find He has ultimately answered my prayer, in His wisdom, not mine.

*Praise our God, O peoples,
let the sound of his praise be heard;
He has preserved our lives
and kept our feet from slipping.
For you, O God, tested us;
you refined us like silver.
You brought us into prison
and laid burdens on our backs.
You let men ride over our heads;
we went through fire and water,
but you brought us to a place of abundance.*

God's promise to 'heal' my mother and delivered my family from this painful trial.

*I will come to your temple with burnt offerings
and fulfil my vows to you –
vows my lips promised and my mouth spoke
when I was in trouble.
I will sacrifice fat animals to you
and an offering of rams;
I will offer bulls and goats.*

*Come and listen, all you who fear God;
let me tell you what he has done for me.
I cried out to him with my mouth;
His praise was on my tongue.
If I had cherished sin in my heart,
the Lord would not have listened;
but God has surely listened
and heard my voice in prayer.
Praise be to God,
who has not rejected my prayer
or withheld his love from me!*

My promise to God for His deliverance.

In this book, I'd like to share with you my experience with God in the various aspects of my life – family, career, marriage and children – starting with my conversion to Christianity followed by personal stories of salvation.

Hereby, I wish to take this opportunity to convey my heartfelt thanks to:

All my family members for being my greatest source of support, encouragement, pride and joy;
Irene & Evelyn for their editorial help;

All my friends and colleagues who have crossed my path, adding so much colour to my life; and most of all, to **God** who has blessed my life so abundantly.

I hope you will be greatly encouraged by my testimony, to the glory of our Living God. Your feedback and inquiry are most welcomed.

Disclaimer: The testimonies written here are real and without exaggeration. They are written based on the writer's personal experience. If by any chance, the stories have similarities with any other written work, it is unintentional.

God & I

Let me tell you a bit about my background.

I am an identical twin. My sister, Cheryl and I, are the first two children in my family. After eight long years, our sister, Nicole was added on to the family. Chia Yee followed two years later but she did not live beyond three years due to a malignant brain tumour. Like most Chinese families, we claimed to be Taoists, sometimes Buddhists, without really knowing what these religions actually meant. We worshipped our ancestors, Tei Chi Kong (God of the Land), Kwan Yin, Buddha and Kwan Ti without questioning much of their origins.

Since young, I had always been curious about the existence of human beings. I often wondered who created this world and what this Maker looked like. There were also nagging questions that bothered me: Why do we exist? Where do we go after death? Why can't there be just 'nothingness', a total emptiness? I received no concrete answers to these basic questions of life. Thus subjects like history, evolution, geography and the supernatural interested me a lot. I read about Darwin's Theory and The Big Bang Theory but at that time, could not make much sense of it.

The Christian seed was sown early in my heart during my primary school days. I was enrolled in a mission school – the Methodist Girls' School– in Ipoh, where I did both my primary and secondary education. During those days, there was a chapel in school, and I still recall one particular teacher, Mrs Yong, who told us many stories about Jesus. Of all the many biblical stories I have heard and read, one stands out in my mind, even now. It is the story of Zaccheus climbing up a tree in order to catch a glimpse of Jesus as He passed by the town. There was also a song that further complemented this story, and even though I first heard it more than 20 years ago, when I was in Year Three, I still remember the song clearly. It goes like this:

Now Zaccheus was a very little man,
A very little man was he,
He climbed up to a sycamore tree,
For the Saviour he wanted to see,
And when the Saviour passed that way,
He looked into the tree,
He said, "Now Zaccheus you come down,
I'm coming to your house for tea."

I simply loved the biblical stories told during chapel time and enjoyed some of the children's gospel songs. I had Christian friends throughout my schooldays who seemed to me to be more cheerful and optimistic. Overall, I had a good impression of Christians at that time. However, I was not curious enough to find out more as my parents and most of my relatives and neighbours were non-Christians. And so that was my early exposure to Christianity.

Life for me was not unlike that of other children during the first 10 years of my childhood. It revolved mainly around my family and school. We were not allowed to mix around much, as my mother was afraid that we would be exposed to bad influences. In the early 1980s however, our carefree childhood days came to an abrupt end. During the economic downturn, my father, who was in the construction industry, was badly affected. Owing to some bad decisions and misplaced trust, he was heavily in debt. Having no choice, my mother who had been a homemaker, was forced to shoulder the burden of bringing in income. Being a very smart, resourceful and industrious lady, she came up with the idea of opening a snooker centre, a hype then. It was an extremely tough time for us. We nearly had to stop schooling due to

financial difficulties but my mother was adamant that we were well educated no matter what happened. She did not want us to end up being under-educated like her.

My twin and I were compelled to help out with the finances seeing as to how hard Mum was working to bring in money. Besides managing the snooker centre, she took on other odd jobs such as tailoring and selling snacks. Dad was practically out of a job then. I started giving tuition when I was in Form Two. During the school holidays, my twin and I worked as temporary workers in a shoe factory. The pay was only a meagre RM5.00 per day but it put wide smiles on our faces. In fact, I could not stop smiling the day I received my first ever monthly salary – RM150! We also worked as cashiers, promoters, waitresses and interestingly enough, even made paper shoes for the dead (which were used as offering during Taoist funerals and Cheng Beng – the annual Chinese Ghost Festival).

During this tough time, we had little help from relatives, what more friends. Sadly, some close relatives even made sarcastic remarks about us instead of offering to help. When we were well-off, the so-called friends and relatives my parents had were like bees hovering around flowers. But when our luck turned, so too did their backs. It made me realize just how conditional human love was. Not knowing the love of God at that time, I came to the conclusion that this was a selfish world. People did not love genuinely and sincerely. Thus, I made up my mind not to trust anyone except my mother and sisters. My father? I resented him for the fate that befell us. It was my ambition then to earn as much money as I could when I grew up. I wanted to show the people who had looked down on us that I could make it big. I was proud and revengeful!

Still, in spite of our difficulties, by the grace of God, Cheryl and I completed our Form 6 in 1993 and I passed with flying colours. We each got a place in a different local university. It was such a proud moment for us. A few weeks before we left home, we had a casual talk and as usual, we shared our deepest thoughts with each other. Somehow our conversation led to spiritual matters. At that time, strangely enough, I told her without much thought, “If I were to choose a religion, I would like to be a Christian”. I could have been influenced by the joy and peace I had witnessed among many Christians whom I met. Cheryl told me she preferred to be a Buddhist. I had used the word ‘if’ because I knew that converting to another religion would involve many challenges which I was not ready to take. Little did I know that from the moment that sentence came out from my mouth, God had already marked me for his kingdom.

My first week in university was orientation week. Everything was all right except that we had to attend so many activities, it was exhausting. Every night, I slept like a log despite the new bed and new everything. However, orientation week ended with bad news for me. Unlike previous years, not all students were given a place to stay in the campus hostel during their first year. I was one of the *unlucky* ones. So, I had to look for accommodation outside of campus. Little did I know that this was a blessing in disguise – God’s arrangement actually.

In the process of looking for a room, I met a senior, who instead of ragging me as seniors were expected to do, helped me and a few others to look for rooms outside campus. She introduced herself as Pat. I was especially touched to know that there were still kind people around in this world after all! She and her housemates invited me to dinner at her house and offered to share their simple packed rice with me. I declined of course, not because of the food but because I was a big eater. They were genuinely warm and friendly. I will never forget the prayer she said to the Lord before dinner that day. She thanked the Lord for my presence! Here I was bothering her but she still welcomed me so warmly. Perhaps this gesture of hers indirectly attracted me to her belief.

I finally managed to find a room, at a hostel outside campus. Pat and her housemates paid me visits now and then. Knowing my fondness for food and eating, they invited me over to cook at their place. I was

delighted as I could show off my own culinary skills and have home-cooked food. Once, after a hearty dinner, SL, a senior invited me to join her for a simple Bible study session. I was told to choose my own time for the study but I quickly declined. Subsequently, I was invited a few more times but on every occasion, I said 'No' as I could guess what they wanted to do – brainwash me! Even though I enjoyed their company and the food, I was not ready to be evangelized to.

There was one particular night the Lord decided to start me off in my journey of knowing Him. I was revising and suddenly craved for char siew pau and longan juice but I had no means of getting them at that hour, which was about 10.00 pm, as I had no transport. To my delight, my wish came true as SL and a friend came knocking at my door, bringing exactly what I had wished for just moments ago. The Lord really is all-knowing! They again invited me for Bible study. This time I gave them a nod. Indeed, I was touched by their sincerity and determination – imagine climbing up to the 4th floor to bring free food to a junior. This time, my suspicion of their 'brainwashing' intentions was neutralized by my belief that I would be firm and intelligent enough not to believe everything preached to me. "Well, after all, they cannot force me to convert, can they?" I thought.

So we had our first Bible study session on a Monday. On every session, I posed many questions on mystical issues. I was gleeful when my questions could not be answered and felt a sense of victory or superiority. We went through four chapters discussing matters about God, Man, Christ (Jesus) and Life. I enjoyed the study sessions but as usual, there were agreements and disagreements on my part regarding certain teachings of the Bible. When the last day of our Bible study session arrived, I knew it was decision time. I noticed that there was a section at the end of the study booklet that invited students to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. It claimed that Jesus, the Son of God, had come to this earth to suffer and die on the cross to wash away our sins so that our relationship with God would be restored. I was trying to make a decision so I would be ready when the important question was asked.

These were thoughts that crossed my mind then:

"Statistically, (I was an Economics student), there is a 50-50% chance of the reality of heaven and hell as claimed in the Bible. In other words, if it is totally unbelievable, people would not have believed it for generations. Thus, if all I learned at Bible study were real and I wish to get to heaven, there is no harm in believing. If I don't believe and it turns out to be real, then my 50% chance of getting to heaven would be gone completely. In my mind, believing was more of a win-win choice rather than one of conviction. If it were true, then I'd be safe. If it were not true, well, no harm done. If along the way I find this religion unacceptable, I can always 'make a U-turn'."

So when that day came and the question was posed to me, I agreed to accept Jesus Christ into my life. "This is probably just temporary," I thought. However, my decision made SL and her friend very joyful. They told me that the angels in heaven were celebrating my new life in God's kingdom. I really did not fully share their joy as I could not comprehend what impact this decision would make on my life.

After this event, life went on as usual for me. I had no profound experience of God. I was invited to join worship sessions but I declined as I was occupied with studies. I believed that the more time I spent on studying, the better grades I would get. With good grades, I would secure a better job and earn more money! This went on for a few weeks before something happened. I was revising for Macroeconomics and could not understand a topic even after repeated attempts. I was getting extremely frustrated. So, when I was invited to attend a worship session, I agreed, taking it as a much-needed break. The worship started with a few songs. All of a sudden, my heart lifted with such joy and amazement when this particular song was sung. I felt as if it was speaking to me directly:

*What a friend we have in Jesus
All of our sins and griefs to bear
What a privilege to carry
Ev'rything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit!
O what needless pain we bear!
All because we do not carry
Ev'rything to God in prayer*

*Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged
Take it to the Lord in prayer
Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness
Take it to the Lord in prayer*

*Are we weak and heavy-laden
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge
Take it to the Lord in prayer
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer
In his arms He'll take and shield thee
Thou wilt find a solace there*

At that moment, I felt really touched by the presence of God in my heart; I truly felt His assurance of help and guidance. I realised that I was not alone in my struggles. My eyes welled up with tears but I hid my emotions. When I went back to my room that night and continued my revision on Macroeconomics, I understood it without any problems. Some might say that my mind was clearer after relaxation but I attribute it to God's help. He wanted me to learn to depend on Him rather than on my own wisdom.

With this positive experience, I began to pray and read the Bible. Then I began to experience Him more and more. The Bible seemed to come alive as I obeyed its teaching. Until today, there are just too many incidents of God leading me and fulfilling His promises through the Bible for me to recount all of them. Hereby, I have picked two incidents which were very significant to me to share with you in the hope that you will see how God can be so personal and specific in dealing with His children.

Exam

The first incident was when I was preparing for a finance paper exam in my third year. As I had never failed in any exams before, I felt proud and confident. I did not even humble myself to pray before the exam. It was a 25% objective test and imagine my shock when I found out later that I had failed!

I cried and demanded that God gave me an answer for this 'unfair' predicament. I was angry with God. When I opened the Bible, He told me bluntly in 1 Peter 5:5 – 7:

“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

There was nothing truer than these words of His. I knew my problem straightaway. Thus, I decided to humble myself and depend on Him during my revision, especially on this subject. I recalled praying three times before entering the exam hall to sit for this subject. Faithful to His promise, He guided me through and I managed to obtain a B for this finance paper. Praise Him! In addition to this joy, I was awarded the Book Prize that year. It was a proud moment for me because the Book Prize was given to only a few top students in a faculty. God indeed blesses His children with more than what we deserve if we trust and obey Him.

Giving

Talking about generosity, I was never very good in this area. I was worse when I was just a baby in God's kingdom. As a new believer, my older brothers and sisters in church encouraged me to contribute financially to the church according to my ability. Mind you, this message got me very sore and I avoided this subject as much as I could. I was thinking, "Well let the rich fork out their money. I am just a poor student and I can't afford to give to the Lord!" You might not believe me, but in truth, I did not contribute a single cent after every church sermon for a long time. Nevertheless, after much encouragement, one day, I decided to give to the Lord but not without condition. I saw a promise of God in Malachi 3:10 and I wanted to experience its fulfillment. It said:

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

As I put my first contribution of RM5 to the Lord, I reminded God of this promise. I guess there is hardly anyone on earth as stingy as I was! But God showed me His faithfulness in a big way. A few weeks later, I was granted a scholarship from a renowned foundation worth RM9000 for my third and final year in the university. With this, I did not have to work part-time during my semester breaks. I was so thankful to the Lord. Indeed He kept His promise!

I was baptized in a Baptist church in Ipoh on Christmas Day in the year 2000, a declaration of being a child of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

God & My Family

I was the first in my family to open my heart to Jesus Christ. It was a privilege that came with responsibility indeed! As my conviction in the Lord grew, I had a deep desire to share Christ with my family members. My biggest motivation was my desire for them to go to heaven and not to end up in hell. I claimed Acts 16:31 for their salvation. It says: ... *"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household."* And by the grace of God, within 8 years, all my family members accepted the Lord as their personal Lord and Saviour! What an amazing grace from the Lord! Far more blessed than striking a big lottery.

When I first accepted Christ I did not tell my parents. I only shared this 'secret' with Cheryl whom I considered a good listener. She was a good start for me in terms of sharing the gospel. She was and is still the closest to me in my family. She was studying in UKM then and was staying in the campus hostel. I used to visit her occasionally. On one weekend, I had decided to visit her and spend the night there. While on my way to her place, I felt a very great need to share Christ with her. I simply wanted her to know my newfound truth. It was, I recalled, a few months after God had found me. Thus I prayed for the right words to be put into my mouth. We had a good chat that night and I was able to share with her. She listened with agreement but had not decided to accept the Lord. I had asked for help from a few Christian friends who were studying in UKM to follow up. After a year, she finally accepted the Lord as her personal Lord and Saviour. Hallelujah!

My youngest sister, Nicole, was an easier 'target'. Of course it is the Lord's grace; not my work after all. I was her tuition teacher and mentor during her primary and early secondary schooling years. Thus, she was rather receptive to my advice. When I went home during one of the semester breaks, I shared the gospel with her and she accepted the Lord then. It was almost about the same time as Cheryl's conversion. She grew in her foundation in the Lord by having fellowship and receiving encouragement from many of her Christian friends in school, which by the way, was also Methodist Girl's School.

After my two sisters joined me in becoming members of God's kingdom, I felt more confident and braver in sharing about God with my mother. It was mum first and not dad because he was working outstation and we did not see him very often. At the very beginning, I revealed my new identity in Christ to her in a very subtle manner. My first tactic was to leave my Bible lying on the sofa whenever I was back home during the holidays. I did not receive any objections so I knew she had got the message. Then I proceeded to discuss spiritual matters with her. She told me she considered all religions to be good but cautioned against fanaticism. Then we talked about the teachings of the Bible. Sometimes, when we were in disagreement, she would tell me to let her follow her own religion and similarly she would not interfere with mine. She was comfortable with the belief in karma as most Chinese are. At times, she agreed with the teachings but voiced her disappointment in her belief in Taoism; she found no peace and joy in it after all her years of believing. She said half-jokingly that she might join us one day but she had to wait for the right time! And by God's grace, the right time did arrive. I will tell you more about her conversion and God's plan for her under the section **God & Mom**.

As for dad, he was the last in my family to be part of the kingdom of God. In fact, he was not very happy when he knew about my newfound faith. He warned me against being a fanatic. Dad had always regarded Christianity as a western religion and associated Christianity with negative western influences e.g. rebelliousness, disobedience, excessive freedom. His biggest worry was that after belonging to Christ, we would become westernised thus losing our Chinese identity, culture and values. Nevertheless, he did not object strongly. God worked through us and as the days went by, my sisters and I became better children. We had proven him wrong. Occasionally, we even wrote him affectionate letters telling him about our thankfulness and love for him. I believe he must have been touched by our efforts. If we had not known the Lord, we would never have done so; first because we did feel some bitterness towards him and

secondly, it was just not a practice that the Chinese are prone to do. The love of the Lord had indeed compelled us to forgive and love unconditionally just as Jesus Christ who died on the cross for us did while we were still sinners.

Whenever the opportunity arose, mum and the three of us would deliberately discuss spiritual matters loudly so that he could hear us. When I got hold of some cassettes on testimonies or interesting teachings relevant to unbelievers, I would bring them home and play them with the volume turned up. I knew he enjoyed listening to those tapes especially those with good humour and he remembered the facts. He would sometimes repeat some of the quotations accidentally and unintentionally (to my delight). He listened quietly and gradually, God changed his heart and perspective.

I also bought him a Bible and gently challenged him to read it as he boasted about his love for history. Well, I must admit that he was good in history especially the history of China. He finished reading the Bible in less than a year while I was still struggling with mine! What a shame that he finished faster but then again, this was a competition I was glad to lose.

Interestingly, before my dad's conversion, I had a dream of the coming of Judgement Day. I could sense the urgency of the Lord's coming and I did not want to see dad left behind. In my dream, I knelt down before him and pleaded with him to accept Jesus Christ. With a satisfied look, he nodded his head while smiling widely. I was relieved that he finally accepted the Lord but then I woke up... and felt disappointed that it was just a dream.

When mum was diagnosed with cancer, dad had desperately requested us to pray for her. We in turn encouraged him to pray to Jesus on his own too. It was then that his heart began to open further. He began attending church with mum and went with us to some prayer and healing sessions organised by some churches. And one fine day, in the Lord's own time, he admitted to being a sinner and accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour in Puchong New Life Church. Praise the Lord!

God & My Career

A good career is every undergraduate's dream. Being a good student in UM, I was anticipating a high-paying job after my graduation. Unfortunately, I came out in 1998, a year of major economic downturn. The unemployment rate was soaring and many graduates were jobless and had to put up with very low-paying jobs.

When I graduated, I decided to stay on in PJ. I had committed to serve the Lord there in a student ministry for at least a year. Being the eldest in the family, I had to find a job quickly, firstly, to support myself and secondly to contribute to my family. I was secretly expecting God to provide me a good job since I had promised to contribute to His Kingdom. "He had better do so or else I would have to break my promise," I thought. I was practically threatening God! In my desperation, I did not seek God quietly. I did not wait for His provision. I did not have enough faith. I wanted to be in control.

I called the interior design company which I had worked for temporarily during a semester break. I knew it was not a very good company but I had to get a job quickly! So I got a job there as an Administrator. As I had ignored the still small voice in my heart which had already spoken, I had a bad time working there. I was underpaid, had to lie occasionally on behalf of my manipulative bosses and was sandwiched between two lady bosses who did not see eye to eye in almost everything. I was so disappointed and bitter towards God. I was jealous too because my sister, who did not do as well in her studies, got a very good job. "How could God be so unfair?" I asked.

I dreamt of quarreling with my bosses during the night and swallowed all my anger and pride during the day. Outwardly, I looked fine but I was actually weeping inside. Finally, I couldn't take it anymore. After about seven months, I wanted to quit, but I was afraid, very afraid that I would not get a job for a long, long time. I decided to get some advice from my Christian friends and one of them said something that struck me. It was a simple question really – "Why don't you seek the Lord about this matter?" This statement made me realise that I had not been seeking the Lord about my career and future. I had depended on my own strength.

I went back to my room to pray, very desperately. Amazingly, that night, God spoke to me very clearly in Exodus 14: 12-15:

Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"

Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on."

I personalised it as:

Didn't I say to myself in this present company, "Leave me alone; let me serve the lady bosses? It would have been better for me to serve them than to be jobless in this bad job market!"

God answered me, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The bosses you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." (And truly, I tell you, I have not seen my bosses at all since I left the company!)

Then the Lord said to me, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell yourself to move on.

With trust in God who held my future, I tendered my resignation a few days later, not knowing when I would land the next job. I was actually very afraid! After my last day, I decided to go back to Ipoh for a short rest. After just a few days there, I was getting very restless and anxious. One night, I just broke down and cried to the Lord in anguish and anger. I asked God for an answer and He replied in Psalm 37: 1-9. He knew my heart absolutely.

*Do not fret because of evil men
or be envious of those who do wrong;
for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away.*

*Trust in the Lord and do good;
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
Delight yourself in the Lord
and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

*Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him and he will do this:
He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn,
the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.*

*Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him;
do not fret when men succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.*

*Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;
do not fret – it leads only to evil.
For evil men will be cut off,
but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land.*

... But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace.

After a few days, a publishing company called me for an interview. I got a job as an Editor, something that I quite liked. This time before I started work on my first day (15/12/1998), I prayed and asked the Lord whether this was the job He had planned for me. I was afraid that history would repeat itself. He replied giving me His assurance in Hebrew 6:13-19. I was overjoyed. Nothing is better than a promise from our faithful Almighty!

When God made his promise to Abraham, ...saying, "I will surely bless you ..." And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. ... Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.

Just as God had promised, I was very happy working in the company. My colleagues were wonderful people, fun and helpful. My bosses were good people, understanding and kind. Even though I was just an insignificant editor at that time, God created many opportunities for me to perform well in front of my superiors. When I handled a few important projects, I received help and cooperation from my seniors. I

knew it was God behind it. Nevertheless, I was still not very contented with my pay. After about a year, the economy had improved slightly and I was tempted to seek a higher paying job. There was an attractive job offer which paid double of what I was getting but it would be a very hectic job. God knew that if I took the job, I would have no time for Him. Being uncertain, I decided to seek God's opinion. Then again, He instructed me clearly. He spoke to me through Deuteronomy 5:32-33:

So be very careful to do what the Lord your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.

I heeded God's advice but was quite unsettled with my future. Although I actually enjoyed being an editor, I was not contented to being one for the rest of my life. I wanted something more dynamic, exciting and challenging, and of course, with a higher pay. I was thinking of a marketing job, something related to my studies. One day, when I was walking past the Marketing Department in my company, I whispered to God in my heart that I really wished to be working in that department. Nevertheless, I did not ask God earnestly on this matter. I was thinking that it would be impossible to ask for a transfer. I was sure that the management would not agree. Besides, there was no opening in that department.

A few weeks later, on 9/12/1999, I was called to see the General Manager. Since editors were supposed to report to the Publishing Manager only, my heart nearly stopped beating when I was called. It must be a serious matter, I thought. As I was walking towards the GM's room, my thoughts were filled with pessimism. Would I be sacked? To my surprise, the GM offered me a transfer to the Marketing Department. Truly God knows everything and he cares about my desire! My heart leapt with joy. However, I did not accept the offer right away. I wanted to consult with God. To my delight, God spoke to me in Isaiah 42:16 – 17. He said:

*I will lead the blind by ways they have not known,
along unfamiliar paths I will guide them;
I will turn the darkness into light before them
and make the rough places smooth.
These are the things I will do;
I will not forsake them.
But those who trust in idols,
who say to images, 'You are our gods,'
will be turned back in utter shame.*

Thus, with His promise, I accepted the offer on 13/12/99, knowing that I would face many challenges ahead but the Lord would help me. Again, just as the Lord had promised, I learnt many things from my new engagement, and I enjoyed my new job. I received wisdom from the Lord whenever I faced difficult or new challenges. On many occasions, when I ran out of marketing ideas, I prayed to the Lord and presto, I found inspiration! The management seemed to find favour in my work too. I knew God was behind all these blessings. As I look back, I can see God's plan in pruning me to be a good worker for His glory. Praise Him!

In my contentment, God gave me a reminder in Deuteronomy 8: 10 – 20. I have claimed it as my life's promise.

When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase

and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

If you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. Like the nations the Lord destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the Lord your God.

What a good and faithful God I have!

God & My Spouse

Talking about marriage, mine was indeed an arrangement made by God. I had thought that I would remain single. I had this feeling because I saw myself as being very vocal, independent and opinionated as well as assertive. I thought it would be difficult to find a man who preferred this type of woman. But God thought otherwise. He had a different plan for me!

I never had a date or a boyfriend during my schooling years. My parents were strongly against the idea of any of us having one. Moreover, I studied in an all-girls' school, making it even harder to have friends of the opposite sex. In Form Six, there were a few who showed interest but I did not find them attractive; they were either too tall or had lower academic achievements. You see, I wanted an intelligent husband who was not too tall as I am rather short! That wasn't too much to ask for, right?

Since accepting the Lord, I was encouraged to seek a Christian life partner. I thought it was logical since having a spouse with the same values and perspectives would make life more wonderful. So naturally, I extinguished any interest shown by a few non-believers. As a result, when I graduated, I was still very available.

Then when I started working, I was more often than not surrounded by females. The few 'leftover' males were mostly married. So, there wasn't much hope. Although I did not have a strong desire to find a spouse, I still wished to share my life with someone whom I loved. At one time, I suspected a brother from my church having interest in me. I felt rather excited but after a period of guessing and waiting, I became frustrated and gave up hope. I thought that if he really was interested, he should have been more frank and direct. Or, perhaps I myself was mistaken about his interest.

After that episode, my frustration made me decide to concentrate on my work. At the same time, I began to pray for a spouse occasionally. I was feeling the pressure from my parents. Moreover, my twin sister already had a boyfriend and they were planning to get married soon. Mum, who had just accepted the Lord, told me that she was praying hard for me on this matter. Then not long after, God told me in Ecclesiastes 4: 9 – 12 that I was not meant to be single. He said:

*Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their work:
If one falls down,
his friend can help him up.
But pity the man who falls
and has no one to help him up!
Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.
But how can one keep warm alone?
Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves,
A cord of **three** strands is not quickly broken.*

From these verses, I took it that God was telling me to be prepared for marriage. At first, I did not understand why a 'three' suddenly appeared in the last verse. Then God helped me to see that the third person was meant to be Him. He would be the strength in my marriage!

After a few months, I was engaged in translation work which required some knowledge about legal terms, which of course I had none. But I knew of one lawyer in my church who could help. He was none other than Boon Cheong (BC), my husband now. Without much hesitation I called BC at home. He was not in, so one of his housemates gave me his handphone number. This housemate of his quickly contacted him to

let him know that I would be calling. Only after our marriage, did I find out that even before I contacted him that day, some of my church members had already planned to introduce me to him. At that time, BC had been praying for a spouse for a few months and I appeared in his mind during prayer. So my call that day was the very beginning of our relationship. I believe it was not a coincidence but God's plan.

At the beginning of our courtship, I was not very sure whether he was the one for me. I had some doubts because BC and I had rather different personalities. He was more cultured, quiet, reserved, serious and introverted. I was quite the opposite; more bubbly, sociable and unrefined (*chor lor* as we say in Chinese). Imagine, I did not even know that I chewed my food loudly until he told me gently one day! As I was thinking about this one night, I joked with one of my housemates about BC being a good husband that could be 'bullied'. God heard this joke of mine as well as my prayer for his confirmation. I woke up unable to sleep at 4.30 am the next morning. This had never happened to me before. Usually I would have been snoozing comfortably away at this time of the morning. Once awakened, my heart urged me to read the Bible. I told God that I would just read the page that was open then. It was Ephesians 5: 14 – 33. God said right to my face:

*“Wake up, O sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”*

Be very careful, then how you live – not as unwise but as wise, ... Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ... always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, ... so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

... “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ... and the wife must respect her husband.

We have been married for more than six years now. We have our little ups and downs but I can say that overall I enjoy my marriage and have no regrets. We complement one another well. He has taught me to be more detailed and considerate while I have influenced him to be less complicated and more positive. Of course there is still much more room for improvement for the both of us! However, I am proud to say that we have grown together, encouraged one another and influenced one another (for the better, hopefully). And guess what? He chews more noisily than me sometimes!

From my marriage, I can confidently say that God is our best planner. He knows what is best for us and it is absolutely safe to follow His direction. Glory to God in the highest!

God & My Children

I love children. I had been a teacher and tutor and I find teaching children to be very fun and rewarding. Of course there are times when children can drive you up the wall and be a pain in the neck. I wanted to have children but not right after marriage. My husband and I had agreed to wait a while, before we started trying. So we had a bit of freedom for a few months, before my parents came to stay with us. When mum was diagnosed with cancer, my parents came to live with us as she needed care.

When we decided to start trying for a child, we prayed. Then, I went to a recommended gynaecologist to have a check-up. I was expecting everything to be fine, but I was told that I had a mild form of endometriosis, a condition where menstrual blood backflows into other parts of the abdominal area. This condition could cause infertility or difficulty to conceive. In addition to this, my womb was lopsided. I was quite shocked to know that such a thing could happen. My chances of conceiving were further lowered although not impossible. When I asked the gynaecologist for the best solution, he told me that pregnancy would be the best cure. What an answer! I felt very stressed after that visit.

That night, I prayed to the Lord. Actually I did not have much faith as I had heard a few of my friends having difficulty conceiving and some had miscarriages. I had forgotten that our God Almighty was an all possible God. On 22/8/2002, God spoke to me in Jeremiah 17: 5 – 8:

This is what the Lord said:

*“Cursed is the one who trusts in man,
who depends on flesh for his strength
and whose heart turns away from the Lord.*

...

*“But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord,
whose confidence is in him.
He will be like a tree planted by the water
that sends out its roots by the stream.
It does not fear when heat comes;
its leaves are always green.
It has no worries in a year of drought
and never fails to bear fruit.”*

The Lord had reminded me that I should trust in Him alone. In fact, before I went for the check-up, I had already prayed to the Lord for a baby. Our good and faithful Lord had given me a promise in Jeremiah 31: 3 – 9. These were the verses that stood out from the rest as I read them:

*“Sing with joy for Jacob;
shout for the foremost of the nations.
Make your praises heard, and say,
‘O Lord, save your people,
the remnant of Israel.’
See, I will bring them from the land of the north
and gather them from the ends of the earth.
Among them will be the blind and the lame,
expectant mothers and women in labour;
a great throng will return.
They will come with weeping;
they will pray as I bring them back.*

*I will lead them beside streams of water
on a level path where they will not stumble,
because I am Israel's father,
and Ephraim is my firstborn son.*

I told God that if it happened as He had promised, I would name my firstborn son Ephraim. Despite God's promises, I was still doubtful. In my second month of trying, I almost gave up. How impatient and faithless I was. But God was good. I conceived in the third month. That was very fast for a person with my medical condition. My pregnancy was confirmed on 11/9/02. It was a miracle from God. My family members rejoiced; it would be my parents' first grandchild, my sisters' first nephew. Things went well until I was in my tenth week of pregnancy. I had sudden unexpected heavy bleeding one evening. I was rushed to the hospital and admitted to the emergency section. Since I was bleeding quite a lot, I thought I would lose my baby. But my youngest sister reminded me of God's promises. She reminded me to hold on to God as He is faithful. I was told by the doctor that my pregnancy was unstable although he could not see any major problems. The baby was still all right. After about two weeks of rest and medication, I was much better. Nevertheless, I was plagued with worries and fear, constantly asking God for His protection.

In 2/5/2003, my first son was born. He was a small baby, only 2.35 kg but was healthy and very active. He was very rosy and cute. I saw God's faithfulness and miracle in him. As promised, I named him Ephraim. It is a very uncommon name but very meaningful to me! People would usually ask why I named him as such and I share God's promise with them. Indeed, he lives up to the specifications I had asked God for; cheeky, mischievous but intelligent. Nevertheless, he can be very stubborn and short tempered. Thus, for my second child, I asked God for a happy and easy-going little chap. One who would smile and laugh a lot.

God is always good. He blessed me with another boy; this time, a chubby little fellow weighing 3.4 kg at birth. Before birth, I had decided to name him Isaac which means 'laughing'. Indeed, he is a very lovely and happy child who smiles a lot. At the time of writing this testimony, Ephraim is already four and a half years old and Isaac is about 7 months old. Now I am a mother of two, all because of God's grace and blessing.

Praise God for His goodness and faithfulness. Hallelujah!

God & Mum

Mum. She is the whole reason why I am writing this testimony.

Mum had been a very influential figure in my life. She was a hardworking person, besides being intelligent, creative, resourceful and assertive. I remember once we had no tomatoes left in the fridge to cook with squids. She saw some apples and oranges and 'taa-daa', we had apple orange squids that night. And when we ran out of carrots once, we had papaya fried rice.

Mum had a difficult childhood. She underwent about 5 years of primary schooling but did not complete her studies due to poverty. She started doing all kinds of odd jobs since she was 11. Although under-educated, she could read, count and write well in Mandarin. Her encounters with all types of people and a tough life had made her strong. Throughout our years of growing up, she had been a tailor, food caterer, confinement lady, practised reflexology & *guatsa* (a form of Chinese medical practice) and even fortune-telling which she had learnt from a Chinese master.

During the recession in the 80s, mum was the pillar of the family as dad was practically out of job. With some capital in hand, she started a snooker centre although she knew next to nothing about the business. She was a firm believer that nobody is born to know everything but one can always learn. When we were on the verge of giving up our studies due to financial constraints, mum insisted that we continued and the burden be left to her. She believed in the importance of education, especially for daughters. She was progressive in her thinking and a learner by nature.

When it came to religion, mum was a moderate Taoist. She would ensure that joss-sticks were in their places at the right time. She was not extremely superstitious but believed in the supernatural world. She knew there were spirits and claimed to have witnessed some throughout her life. Since her father was a fortune-teller, she possessed some knowledge of divinity according to Taoist beliefs.

She reached her spiritual crossroads in the 80s when we were facing financial and family problems. She prayed for divine help then but received no comfort, guidance or revelation. In her anger and frustration, I remember her telling me that all these statues we were praying to were useless. She casually mentioned that she might want to find help from Jesus in the church. She had a few Christian friends who were former Taoist believers who had always encouraged her to go to church. Nevertheless, due to work and family commitments and the many struggles in our daily lives, her intention remained a mere statement.

When I accepted the Lord Jesus as my personal Lord and Saviour and had the opportunity to share my newfound faith with her, she was receptive. However, she adopted a wait-see-and-know-more-first approach. Since I did not go home very often, I prayed to the Lord to send people to reach out to her. When I got hold of any interesting sermons (especially in Cantonese) in the form of cassettes or VCDs, I would bring them home for her. She enjoyed listening to topics about mystical, supernatural and spiritual matters.

As answer to my prayer, God sent an old-time Christian friend to mum. God certainly has a sense of humour too. Knowing that mum could be very argumentative and sharp, He did not send an 'intelligent' person. Instead, He assigned a very blunt and simple-minded person with a thunderous voice. We simply called her Auntie Ah Mi (AAM). She would cycle frequently to our house and ask mum out. Then in her conversation, she would say, "You believe in Jesus-lah. You know Jesus is good and He will bless you. Come to church with me-lah!" She was never put off by my mum's excuses or arguments.

Due to AAM's constant persuasion and friendly 'harassment', mum finally went to church with her. Her attendance was not regular initially. She would give excuses saying she was tired or it was raining. Mum

would then joke that Satan was the one who created those obstacles. Who knows, it could have been true! After about a year, mum accepted Christ during an altar call in an evangelical meeting in Ipoh. Since then, with the help of the Holy Spirit, she became keener to learn more about the Bible. She was taught how to pray and attended Bible study. God was gracious and mum seemed to be blessed with fruitful prayers.

She prayed for many things and God answered most of her prayers. There was once when mum challenged God with a request. She had become a bankrupt as she had been a guarantor to my father's business loan. Mum told God that if He could get her out of it, she would be baptised that year. When we heard about this challenge, we urged her to trust God for nothing is impossible for Him. Nevertheless, deep in our hearts, there were doubts. We wondered whether God would answer this prayer of hers.

That year, Cheryl and I wrote a letter to the Insolvency Department of Malaysia offering to settle and release my parents from bankruptcy. Due to lack of money coupled with very little faith, we offered a settlement of less than 20% of what my parents owed. We did not think they would even look at our handwritten letter. We did not have a computer then and did not even bother to find one as we were not really serious. We felt sure that the officers would laugh at our naivety. But as I have said, nothing is impossible for God. A few weeks later, we received a letter inviting us to the department for further discussion. We were stunned, really stunned! Upon discussion, our offer was accepted and my parents were freed that year! Oh, what a miracle!

Mum was baptised that very year, in 2000, on Christmas day. After this, she attended church regularly and grew well spiritually.

A few months after her baptism, she was diagnosed with a growth in her womb. Upon assessment, the doctor recommended a hysterectomy. Despite having to undergo this surgery, her young faith did not waiver. Her recovery was smooth and the growth was found to be benign. Things went well for a while after this. It was indeed a period of thanksgiving. Little did we know that a great testing would come our way.

I was married in June 2001. A few months later, in December, my parents travelled from Ipoh to Singapore to attend to a relative's wedding. During their stopover at my house, mum complained of frequent abdominal pains and feeling nauseous. We did not think it would be anything serious. When she went back to Ipoh, the frequent bouts of stomachache persisted. Upon consultation with a doctor, she was diagnosed as having appendicitis and had to be operated on.

She went for the operation without much thought as it was to be a fairly simple procedure. Dad and Nicole, who accompanied her to the hospital that day, was told by the surgeon that the operation would only take about half an hour. However, after almost two hours, there was still no sign of mum. Finally, when she was pushed out of the operating theatre after four hours, it was bad news. The doctor had discovered a growth next to the appendix during the operation. He suspected that it might be cancerous. The operation was extended due to this as the surgeon wanted to remove the abnormal growth. A biopsy revealed that it was malignant. When we heard this, we were shocked and devastated.

When mum came out of the ICU and could talk a little, we broke the bad news to her. We knew she would be brave enough to take it. And indeed, she was calm and consoled us, asking us not to be overly worried. She recovered very slowly after this. The year 2002 until her passing in 19 June 2004 was a difficult period. We were plagued with many worries and fear. She came to live with me as she needed care. During her chemotherapy and radiotherapy, our schedule revolved around visits to the hospital. We tried all kinds of alternative medicines, diets and prayed for divine healing. There was also the anguish of waiting for results of the CT scan and all kinds of tests. Despite all the pain and uncertainty, mum

remained strong emotionally. She reminded us that life is always in God's hands. She would cook, wash and sew whenever she could. She did not live like a sick person. Her faith in the Lord remained steadfast. Whenever she was in hospital for chemotherapy, she would share her faith with other fellow patients. We had to salute her for her determination and courage!

During this period, we prayed much and experienced God's comfort and many 'little miracles'. There was a night when Nicole's friend saw three angels at my mum's bedside in the hospital while we were praying. They were wearing bright white robes and golden sashes. A miracle also happened when mum went for a CT scan in the hospital. That morning, she had to drink a big jar of pink liquid (I guess it was barium) which she said tasted like toothpaste. Then she was given an injection before being wheeled into the scanning room. She remembered being wheeled into the room by a young lady nurse. She was then instructed to put her hands up and clasp them over her head during the scanning. As the room and the machine were very cold, she prayed quietly for God's protection and comfort. Then she felt a pair of warm hands holding her hands together. She was very glad to know that there was such a kind nurse who would sacrifice her own health, being exposed to the hazardous rays, to keep her hands warm. Before she could think further, she heard an announcement from the speaker by the nurse telling her to relax and not be too stiff. She knew at once that it was not the nurse's hands that had held her. It must be the Lord Jesus' hands!

A few days before her passing, we requested the pastor from Cheryl's church to pray for mum. When he arrived, the pastor told us that God had impressed upon Him to hold the Holy Communion for her. It was an indication that God would either heal her or take her back with Him. In the next few days, her condition deteriorated very quickly. When she began to purge and became unconscious one evening, we sent her to the hospital. She managed to pray with us and some of our church members the night before she passed away. She was taken to be with the Lord at about 11.00 am on 19 June 2004.

While her body was being prepared for the wake that night, we went home to get all the necessary done. That evening, as Cheryl lay down on her bed before taking a shower, she prayed to the Lord for a word of comfort. Needless to say, we were all terribly sad. Suddenly, Cheryl heard mum's familiar voice calling out to her in Cantonese. When she listened intently, mum told her that she was at a very beautiful place. She told Cheryl to tell us that we should not be sad as she is now very happy. She met my youngest sister (who passed away at the age of 3) in heaven and she was all grown up. Mum wanted to thank the three of us for telling her about Jesus Christ and knowing Him as her personal Lord and Saviour. She also mentioned that we would meet very soon. Before her voice faded, she mentioned once again that heaven was indeed very beautiful. Then the voice was no more. After hearing this, Cheryl was comforted yet dazed as she did not expect this to happen. Since she was afraid that it might be her own hallucination, she prayed to the Lord for confirmation. The Lord told her then that it was indeed mum He had allowed her to speak but it would be the only time. When this message was conveyed to us, we shed tears of joy. How gracious had God been to us. Praise Him!

God & You

Dear readers, I am sure after reading my testimonies, you will see that God loves and cares for every detail in each of our lives, no matter how insignificant. He is a living God! For those who do not yet know Him, I wish to share this message of God's love with you. Please read on although you may disagree with me. You are entitled to your own opinion but please give yourself the chance to find out the truth.

The Bible is actually a message of love from God. It tells us that God wants to have a good relationship with men because He created us. He is our Father in heaven and we are God's precious children. Are there any parents who do not love their own children? However, most of us do not realize this truth. Some even feel that God does not care. This is because man is separated from God. It is stated in the Bible in 1 Timothy 2:5 that:

God is on one side and all the people on the other side...

So, you may ask, "What is the 'thing' that is separating us from the love of God?" Can you think of the answer?

Well, the answer is SIN, our sins. It says in the Bible that all men, including you and I are sinners and we have not achieved the full standard (100% pure and holy) set by God.

*Your sins have cut you off from God.
(Isaiah 59:2)*

*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
(Romans 3:23)*

Some may argue, "Who says I am a sinner?" I have not murdered or stolen. My heart is right and my conscience is clear. How dare you say I have sinned!"

But remember, sin does not only include serious crime. It includes lying (black or white), having evil thoughts (even though they are not put into action), jealousy, anger, selfishness and the list goes on. So, whoever says that they have not sinned is actually sinning!

Well, men have already been sinners since the time of Adam. We are in fact born sinners. For example, a small baby is never taught to throw tantrums. However, this baby will do it naturally. So, you may say, "It's not fair. God can overlook our sins." But remember that God is a Holy God (absolutely without evil). He cannot tolerate unpunished sins. Just like when we quarrel with someone, we may make up later but the hurt has already been done. You could probably say, "OK, I admit that I am a sinner just as everyone else. So what? Will anything bad happen?" Where does this separation lead to? The Bible tells us that:

*Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgement.
(Hebrews 9:27)*

*Those who do not know God...will be punished with everlasting destruction
and be shut out from the presence of the Lord.
(2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)*

Well, it's bad news! Our sins do not only separate us from God but bring death and judgement. God tells us that we will be judged according to the good and bad things we have done on earth (on Judgement Day) after we die. Everyone has to die once, whether we like it or not. According to the Bible, there are 2 types of death:

- physical death
- spiritual death

Physical death is the death of the human body which happens to everyone regardless of whether one is a believer or not. Spiritual death means we have no personal relationship with God and we do not know and experience Him. Someone who is spiritually dead will not meet the Lord and will not be with Him after he/she dies. In simple words, this person is NOT going to heaven.

Everyone has a spirit. The existence of a spirit in human beings can be seen through our tendency to worship 'something', whether that something is true or just an imagination. We may even worship money, ourselves, our career, ambitions, someone we love and the list goes on. Unfortunately, the worshipping of a wrong God brings destruction. This can be illustrated by a relationship between a father and son.

A father brought up his son with much love and care. Unfortunately, this son grew up becoming defiant, ungrateful and had an indifferent attitude. After a while, he chose to leave his father to gain freedom. He wanted to live his life the way he pleased. There were times when he was unhappy and he would say, "I hate my father for bringing me into this cruel world." However, when he was happy, he did not remember that his father was the one who brought him into this world. When he grew older and began to think deeper, he thought, "Well I wish to go back and be a filial son". But alas he couldn't find his father. And so he said, "Well, any old man can be my father since I can't find him. I'll respect anyone I can conveniently find. All fathers are the same anyway!"

Well, you may think that this fellow is indeed very foolish. But this is exactly how many people are treating God. We cannot deny that God is the one who gave us life (through our parents). Most of us believe that there is a God who is in fact our Heavenly Father. So, we acknowledge that we have a Father and we agree that we must respect and love our Father. But, unfortunately, some mistake someone else as their Father while some want to choose their own Father. So, then, it is not surprising that many people say that "all gods are the same" and they just pick or choose one whom they like to worship or who they say they are "fated to worship" or "used to worship – we follow tradition". Not many of us bother to find out the true God. They have the right intention and attitude but alas they worship the wrong God. How sad it is to have worshipped in vain! This is because we have an attitude of simply worshipping any god and do not bother to find out the truth.

Now, you may ask, "So, if I am condemned, is there a way out? I wouldn't want to go to hell but how do I go to heaven?" According to most beliefs, one can go to heaven through good works or rather good deeds. But according to the Bible which is God's message, eternal life or citizenship in heaven is given by the **grace** of God. It is stated in Ephesians 2:8-9 that:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-not by works, so that no one can boast.

If we do not agree, just ask ourselves one question, "How much good works should we do to compensate for our sins (daily, monthly, yearly) which will be enough to bring us to the heaven's door?"

The concept of reincarnation is also questionable. Say if we do enough good, we will go to heaven but if we accumulated much sin (which is actually what all of us are committing every day unless you do not

admit it), we will become animals such as a pig or a dog. But then, how can a pig do good works so that it can be reborn a person in the next life? If we really ponder over this, it is illogical. Unfortunately, many believe in this theory including the educated. Hereby, many may ask, "So, does this mean that Christians are not encouraged to do good works?"

The answer is a big NO. God says in Galatians 6:9-10: *Let us not become weary (tired) in doing good... Therefore, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to all people...* The fact is, good works are much encouraged but we are told that good works do not bring us salvation and give us a 'passport' to heaven. The Bible says: *Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.* Since we cannot wash away our own sins, through our own effort, God did it for us. He provided a solution for us. God loves His children dearly and He does not desire us to be separated from Him because of sin. Well then, what is the ultimate solution? The answer is:

Jesus Christ who died on the cross for our sins. He is the only way to God.

God is on one side and all the people on the other side, and Christ Jesus, Himself man, is between them to bring them together, by giving His life for all mankind.

(1 Timothy 2:5-6)

Christ died for sins once for all... to bring you to God.

(1 Peter 3:18)

The solution is Jesus Christ. He is the Lord who came down to earth through the Virgin Mary to save us. We are like dirt and Jesus is like a clean white cloth who came to wipe away all our sins and filth. This is because we ourselves are like dirty pieces of cloth who cannot wipe away our own sins. So, the Lord came as a man, pure and without sin to carry our sins and suffered on the cross † (nailed to the cross) on behalf of each and every one of us. This is the punishment we deserve but God does not bring it upon us because He LOVES us.

This following parable illustrates the meaning of Jesus' death on the cross:

Once, there was a disobedient son whose father was a judge. One day, he was caught stealing from a supermarket because he had no money. So, he was brought before his own father for trial. As a good and just judge, his father could not free his son without punishment. The father set a penalty for him, fine RM1000.

After he had announced this punishment, he came down, took off his position as well as attire as a judge and offered his beloved son the money to pay the fine. If the son humbled himself and took the offer, he would be set free. However, if he thought this was just too easy and chose to pay by himself, he had chosen the difficult path!

It is the same with God. We have all sinned and deserve to be punished. However God paid the penalty/punishment on our behalf. Since our sins are forgiven and washed away, we can come before God because through His sufferings on the cross, we are made clean and holy. All faithful Christians (not people who only claim to be Christians but do not practise the truth) have this great hope of seeing each other in heaven one day.

Unfortunately some people refuse to believe that it is this simple. They would rather believe in something more complicated. In fact, not many people grasp the significance and meaning of His death on the cross because as mentioned in the Bible:

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. (1 Corinthians 1:18)

It is stated in the Bible that, narrow is the path that leads to heaven because people cannot believe in it. They would rather believe in themselves, worship man-made idols and many other things but not God. So one may ask, "If God came to die for all of us, then we're all saved. We all have citizenships in heaven."

Yes, but only those who personally receive Jesus Christ into their lives, trusting Him to forgive their sins, can cross this bridge.

To all who receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)

Well, yes, God came down to die for us, all of us. But only those who believe and accept Him (Jesus Christ) can have this gift. In other words, the way to heaven is there for everyone. But only those who accept and believe can receive this free gift. For example, if someone receives a present but does not open it, that gift remains in the box and does not truly belong to him.

Perhaps some may say, "If our sins are forgiven and since God loves us, we can continue sinning, and still go to heaven. How unfair!" NO. If we really believe in the Lord Jesus, we will not continue sinning intentionally. We will still sin because this is our nature.

However, when we realise and repent, asking God to forgive us, He will. The Bible says that:

If we confess our sins. He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

In fact, it is because we are sinners that we really need the Lord to forgive and help us. In Mark 2:17:

Jesus said..., "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

Therefore, if you have understood and believe and would like to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, it is very simple. All you have to do is to say the prayer below sincerely and your name will be recorded in heaven.

Jesus said, "You may ask Me for anything in my name, and I will do it. (John 14:14)

Therefore, if you pray sincerely, asking Him this:

**Lord Jesus, please come into my life
and be my Saviour and Lord
Please forgive my sins,
and give me the gift of eternal life.**

He will do it now.

The choice is yours. No one can force you. Don't do it out of obligation but with sincerity and goodwill. If you say this prayer with true intention, wanting God to forgive you, as surely as the Lord lives, your 'passport' to heaven is guaranteed.

However, if you have decided not to, well maybe you need more time and want to know more. If you have doubts or questions, seek advice from Christians around you. You could also find out more from your nearest church.

For... "If you hear God's voice today, do not be stubborn. (Hebrew 4:7)

Thank you for taking the time to read this piece of good news! Give yourselves a chance to be truly blessed.

GOD LOVES YOU, my friend!