

How has Following Jesus Impacted My Life Recently?

Stories from the
lives of Revive

2022
Revive
Stories

Volume
7



Table of Contents

- 1 *Andrew Tahmaseb*
- 5 *Damon Moon*
- 7 *Jennifer Kim*
- 8 *James Cho*
- 9 *Amy Hernandez*
- 12 *Joy Shin*
- 15 *Elizabeth Park*
- 19 *Yohan Lee*
- 21 *Gina Har*
- 23 *Damon Moon*
- 26 *John Har*
- 29 *Jiho Moon*
- 31 *Yung Kim*

*All stories here are testimonies of individuals and their stated opinions may not necessarily reflect the position of Revive Church.

Control

Andrew Tahmaseb

I always thought I could control my life. Get good grades, get into college, do well and graduate, then get a good job, find a wife along the way, have kids, eventually retire, and live to an old age, then eventually die. Up until graduating college I was in pretty good control, moving along just fine. It was a couple of months after graduating college, I just finished up a class to earn some certifications, and had started job hunting, and then the pandemic hit.

Covid was new, and no one knew how bad it was going to be. Was it going to be no big deal, or was it the end of times? How bad were the symptoms going to be, were they long lasting? There were lots of questions that could not be readily answered. But what we did know was that people with other underlying conditions, smokers, and overweight people, seemed to get it the worse, and a higher chance of death. At the time I was still living at home, and my dad is a lifelong smoker/vaper, and my mom and sister both have immunocompromising diseases, so the threat of covid was a great source of anxiety for me. Back then at the start of the pandemic, I thought there was a real good chance that one or all of them could die if we caught it, and as someone who wanted control over their life, this was something I could not control. Though I did think I could control it if we followed the safety procedures, and just socially distance/quarantine, wear masks, etc.





It wasn't until my mom tested positive for COVID-19 that I realized there are many things you just can't control. This was back before just about every office went remote, and it turns out that there was nothing I could have done to prevent my mom's coworker from going into the office when they had signs and symptoms of COVID. This among other things, made me realize how little control I, or anyone, could really have over their life. It felt like I no longer had any purpose or meaning, because if I cannot control anything, and anything can happen to any person for any reason, then ultimately what's the point of it all.

Now, I had heard about Jesus since I was little, and I was blessed to have a friend in elementary school who would tell me stories about Jesus and the Bible, and what he learned at church every week. He was always happy to tell me, and I was always happy to listen.

However, as you all may know by growing up, people and friends move, and he moved away shortly before junior high. Since growing up in a non-religious household, I never really went to church, or had the opportunity to explore beyond surface level knowledge or even knew how to go about exploring it. However, there was always a longing within me to learn more about Jesus, but I kept ignoring or delaying actually doing so, mostly because I felt like I was not worthy enough.

It wasn't until around the start of February of this year when I was still living and working in Minnesota that I felt like I no longer had any control over my life, that nothing that I did had any effect. No matter how bad things get, in the end, I realized that I was looking for meaning, for something beyond the here and now, remembered that longing felt, and I decided to ask God for help. It was along the lines of where I was at in life, the state of the world, how I know I'm broken and imperfect, that I've avoided God for a long time, and to please help me.

Well long story short, He gave me an opportunity to move to a new place and surrounding, California. But this was just the beginning. So after I moved here, my friend James invited me here to his church, and in the following weeks, I heard about Jesus Christ and who He is. But there was still something bothering me. It was a deep nagging sense that I just wasn't good enough, for anything. This then caused self doubt. So even though I really wanted to believe, I still didn't feel good enough. These were actually the same negative thoughts, and feelings of unworthiness that I felt growing up as a kid, still continuing to plague me into adulthood.

This is when Pastor Yung invited me to walk through the Gospel of John with him and with James, where we would meet Jesus by reading through, and discussing a couple of chapters every week. As I met with them and Jesus each Monday, I watched Jesus interact with broken people in those pages, some just like me, and offering them forgiveness and life abundant. As I kept meeting with Jesus through these meetings, I found that those doubts, and negative thoughts and feelings began to disappear. That God in His own words, gave us the right to be children of God to all those who believed in Jesus Christ. And this is when I put my faith in Jesus Christ.

That even though God made all things good and whole. We had rebelled and brought death and corruption into the world, and that not just I, but we all are unworthy. However, despite that, Jesus willingly went up onto the cross, bore all of my death, and sacrificed

himself so that I might be redeemed, and have eternal life. And this is for anyone. I realized in those meetings that I didn't have to be a "perfect" person, that I didn't have to be worthy to believe, in fact, I learned that the true gospel is that believing in Jesus makes me clean and thus worthy; worthy to take my place in the Father's house. **R**



Am I a Good Person?

Damon Moon

Am I a good person? I want to believe this to be true, and I work hard to make this a true statement. Whether the goodness is about character or capability, I generally have a desire to be a good person and become better everyday. But the harsh reality is that no, I am NOT a good person.

It was particularly difficult last year when I was faced with this reality of my failures all at once. While my wife was in Korea, my role as a husband, father, son in law, teacher, entrepreneur, and even a good Christian began to fall apart. Every single metric I measured myself against turned its head on me.

On top of that many small things in and outside of the home started to break down. Both of the cars we had major issues, the drain was clogged and the dishwasher was impacted because of that, and even my mountain bike broke when the supply chain issues were at its peak. Of course it was in the middle of the pandemic too. It became very difficult to manage them well by myself while juggling 2 intensive jobs and kids' schedules.

It was a depressing and difficult moment. Probably, the identity I was holding onto was a loving husband and father, a diligent and successful entrepreneur, and a good leader of the household. There are many metrics in life that validates the goodness and the performance of these roles. And sometimes life feels like it is a race for those metrics of accomplishments. But an identity built in these metrics is so fragile that it can be broken in a matter of several hours, if not minutes.

The real identity is that I am a sinner. The small good news is that this is an identity that couldn't be further broken down. Whether I think

about my past, present, or even the future, it can't be NOT true. I accept the fact that I am NOT a good person.

The big good news is that God didn't leave me there. He bound himself with me through Jesus' death and sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in us (Romans 8:9). He died for a bad person like me. He died for the ungodly. (Romans 5:6)

Realizing this and experiencing this, not just on Sundays, but in every part of my life at the same time was something new this year.

I noticed that regardless how much Joy and I love each other, just being physically apart for several weeks could have such a negative physical, psychological and spiritual impact. Yes, the two shall become one flesh, but we can be physically apart.

But Jesus gave me the Holy Spirit who is dwelling in me. Nothing, even death, will be able to separate me from the Holy Spirit. No matter what I do, where I am, I can't separate myself from the Holy Spirit.

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

– Romans 8:38-39

I want to live a life that is built on the identity that I am a sinner and as a child of God who received the Holy Spirit to live out the love that He poured out on the cross. I pray that I won't fall into the trap of the performance-based metric, but the Holy Spirit to take full control of my life. **R**

God's Word

Jennifer Kim

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

– Matthew 7:24-27

I started a new chapter of my discipleship journey this year not really knowing what to expect. All I knew was that I was missing something from my spiritual walk. I've been a strong believer in prayer and worship, but didn't feel complete. After a few sessions of meeting with my group and going over the lessons every week, it helped me understand the Bible. It was God's word that was missing in my spiritual walk. I knew verses here and there, but never really dug deeper into the Bible and understood what it really meant. It was more of a surface level understanding.

Now through this journey I feel I have been fed with more wisdom and understanding of a Christian's life. I honestly now can say I do believe this is a building foundation in a Christian's daily walk. This isn't the end for me, but a start. It has taught me how important it is to keep up with God's word to face the world out here. It has taught me to really meditate and build my relationship through reading His word, praying and worship. I feel that gap has been closed and my relationship with the Lord has gotten stronger.

This wasn't just a learning experience, but a blessing to share and bond with my sisters about our own spiritual walks and struggles. It was an amazing long walk I got to experience. **R**

Thankful for Community

James Cho

When I think about what I'm grateful for, something that stands out is the good people that God has placed, and continues to place, in my day-to-day encounters. My daily interactions at work with colleagues I enjoy working with remind me how grateful I am to have a socially stable work environment. My weekly interactions at church and small group and other gatherings remind me how blessed I am to be living in God's community and family. My monthly interactions with friends and family from previous chapters of my life remind me that God blesses me with good people in every chapter. As I think about God's plans for me and what He wants my life to look like, I'm constantly reminded that it always has to do with other people. In the coming year and all of its interactions, I want to remember God's love and show it all of His children, whether they know Him already or not. **R**



Grace in Friendship

Amy Hernandez

Two of the first things that struck me when we started coming to Revive were that people were warm toward us, and that I'd never heard a pastor talk about the reality of loneliness the way Pastor SooSang did. In the church, I'd always felt that if I was lonely, then I had to work to be part of the solution rather than the problem. Perhaps I wasn't in the Word and in prayer enough. Perhaps I needed to be more approachable. Perhaps I needed to reach out to others or serve with others. Even when I did all of those things, I still felt pretty lonely sometimes, but just continued to put in the effort. Then at the time we started coming to Revive, I went through a major personal crisis, and there was nowhere for that inner turmoil to go. I felt like I had a kind of cancer consuming me internally, but not sure whom to ask for help, or if anyone could help me. I had my close friends, sisters in Christ, helping me navigate the storm, but there is something to be said about having that in the church you are attending weekly.

I may be introverted, but we need Christ's love from others, too. I long for deeper, more meaningful relationships and am blessed to have them. I need community, fellowship, accountability, safety, all the buzzwords that you hear but are not always sure what it looks like or if you really have it. Usually the church's way to address those in recent decades is small groups, an extension of pastoral care and a place to work through God's Word with others, and build up the body and work together to encourage reaching out and making disciples and growing that body. I know the purpose, and I've always

made small groups a priority my entire Christian life. And then I hit this wall. I could barely contain this pain inside, and I couldn't tell anyone, not even my family. In my GLF, I did not want to talk about some of those things because my husband was there, it was co-ed, and it just didn't feel the right setting for what I had to say. Maybe it was, but I wrestled with the benefit vs the negative consequences, and ultimately did not feel it was the best place to air my feelings about this particular crisis. Otherwise, GLF was truly wonderful, and helped us get through the pandemic times as we processed the sermons and what the Lord was doing in our lives.



When I was asked by Gina to join the LOLMD, she had already reached out and opened her heart to me, and she ended up being the person to whom I started "leaking" my heart. Eventually that leak led to a burst. After a year of dealing with so much of this alone, I felt so much relief, peace, and really love from her in dealing with this ongoing crisis. I know we are never alone in the Lord. Yet He also answers our prayers through people. He helps me personally by giving me a safe place to process things out loud, because that is how I process best.

The group formed and eventually became the three of us, Gina, Rebeka, and myself. The weekend getaway was life changing. For one, I had not gotten away in a long time, and at home sometimes I felt like I was swimming in a sea of stress and caring for others and trying not to drown and trying to figure out how to squeeze in time to take care of myself. So just by nature, I got to have a change of scenery and time away. Rebeka suffered an injury right before that weekend, and she still chose to go in pain, in love for us. And in that time we got to know each other, I definitely felt like this was what I had been missing for so long. I finally got to tell my journey and how I was working through things, and have

someone have compassion for my weakness and encouragement for my strength. I never once felt judged and I never once felt ignored. I've had that plenty in my life, so it was truly like new life breathed into me by these ladies. I don't always tell them how much the Lord has used them in my life, especially when they barely knew me at the start of the year, but I am so grateful for them.

Since then, we've seen a year of trials and triumphs befall us, and it's just so much better and healthier to go through that with sisters by your side. I'm thankful that if I have a bad moment I have someone in the church I can go to. I'm thankful for the one time we didn't all agree about something and could still talk about it in love. I'm thankful that they are just a phone call or text away. In this season of my life, I think I did less of the giving of encouragement than receiving, and I hope that will change, but in the meantime, I thank them for giving me a safe place for my soul to rest. **R**

God's Goodness in Suffering

Joy Shin

My name is Joy. My husband, Damon, and I are parents to a daughter and a son, Jiho and Teo.

This past year, I had to spend 6 weeks in Korea to help my parents and family with some challenging issues.

On the flight there, my heart was so heavy with worries and nervousness. But I am so thankful that I was able to come back with a much lighter heart in peace and thankfulness. I would like to share and give thanks for the ways the Lord has been good to me in this recent difficult season.

First, God reminded me of the power of prayers, the power of prayers with all my whole heart, and the power of intercessory prayers by many others.

In mid-September, I had learned that my father had a 2 inch cancerous tumor on his pancreas. It was devastating to hear of it. I cried, prayed and also started asking others for prayers. But before hearing this, a week before this news, I had told my disciples group sisters that I didn't have much time for praying desperately to God. I also said that I would like to try those kinds of prayer as well. But I didn't know God would give me that opportunity this soon.

On my first day in Korea, I was told that it seemed that the cancer had spread to many other areas in my father's body. I cried out to God to beg for his life. I slept, cried and prayed during that night. But early in the morning, I heard my Heavenly Father God saying to me, "My

daughter, I hear your prayer with cries. Do you believe I will heal him?" I cried and answered him, "Please help me to have that kind of faith in You".

My father had a series of complicated exams and 4 weeks of hospitalization in 2 different hospitals. The waiting time for a clear diagnosis was really difficult and I was often feeling nervous about the coming result. But then, I remembered so many people were praying for us. That was the biggest blessing through this time. Many of you sent words, encouragement and prayers which reminded me that I am not alone and Jesus is with me during this time of hardship.

Second, God taught me the urgency of sharing the Gospel.

My father is a believer. Even though I knew he had salvation and eternal life with Jesus, I cried out to God for his life here in front of the possibility of death. Then I came to think, I cried this much for him, why did I have not cry out for someone who would die forever without salvation? The only reason I could come up with was I didn't love that person enough. It led me to become determined with an urgency to share the Gospel to people, especially those who are close, people whom I love.

My in-laws are not believers yet. I prayed on my way to meet them, "Lord, please help me to not miss the chance to share the Good News with them and give my lips words".

It was not easy to find a not-awkward time throughout the conversation, but at the end of the day, they mentioned their aging and plans for funerals and so on. Through the years of following Jesus as His disciple, I knew that He was giving me the opportunity to talk about eternal life when a person is pondering death.

I told my in-laws "Dad, Mom, this is not easy for me to say, but please listen to me. Caring for my father through his fight with cancer was

really hard time for us as a family. But the biggest relief was that my father has salvation through Jesus and eternal life in Heaven. And I hope and pray that you will be there too. Would you please consider this?"

I don't think I explained enough of the Gospel and our faith within the short chance. But this was my very first attempt to ask them to consider after 14 years of marriage. Damon and I are praying that we are able to share more deeply when they visit us this Christmas.

My father's tumor was newly diagnosed as autoimmune pancreatitis and he will have follow-ups to make sure there are no cancerous cells. The doctors also found cancer in his kidney but we are thankful that we were able to find it at an early stage.

The most encouraging parts of my stay in Korea was getting to know my two and half year old nephew. He just started speaking more and more and I got to teach him a couple of new words, even English like, "good job", "awesome", and "apple". I also taught him and sang along with him "God is so good".

It is so true that God is so good. Walking with Jesus is so good.

I am so thankful for my Lord today. He is with me, both in the good times and in the hard. **R**

The Presence of God

Elizabeth Park

As a pastor's daughter, church has been huge in my life, but I don't think I became a real Christian until recently.

When I was younger, I had a hard time understanding how God could exist when I couldn't see or hear Him. I went to church to hang out with friends. I didn't think about what it really meant to be Christian or to believe. I didn't take church seriously in a spiritual sense. I loved it because it was a joyful place, and it felt like home.

During middle school, I concluded that God does exist, but I still thought He was distant and that He didn't actually care about me. I knew I wasn't a genuine Christian. I didn't truly believe in the gospel. I stopped praying and singing praise songs because surely there was no reason to say things I didn't genuinely believe. However, I continued to attend church and be a "good Christian girl" because my family went to church and that was the reputation I felt I had to uphold.

I felt guilty for not being a real Christian. I felt hypocritical when I went on mission trips and shared with children that Jesus loves them and that they could and should trust in Jesus. I myself didn't even believe in Him, so who was I to tell them to do so?

Around 7th and 8th grade, I lost friends and struggled socially. My old church split. There was a lot of tension in both church and my own home. It felt like I had lost both of my homes in one moment. I experienced a lot of internal conflict. I felt lonely, empty, and hollow. I held a lot of self hatred. Intrusive thoughts frequented my mind. My thoughts screamed: "What's wrong with you?" "People don't want you because you aren't good enough." Things escalated from there.

“Why do you exist?” “What if you didn’t exist?” “You shouldn’t exist.” “I want to cease existing.”

My thoughts and feelings blurred together into immense and frustrating pain. I could feel this ache in my heart even though I was physically well. I’ve had failed friendships before, and along with this growing pain, I became really scared of making friends for fear that they too would leave me. I made a couple of good new friends, and the terrifying thoughts died down as I entered high school. I thought I’d left my dark feelings behind for good, but they returned soon enough.

At school, many of the non-Christians around me seemed very content with themselves and the lives they led, so why do I need God? So many people who didn’t have Him seemed to be doing fine — in fact, they seemed to be doing much better than I was. But that turned out to be wrong.

Covid hit, and so many friends reached out to me about various dark topics, personal struggles, and loneliness. I found that they were actually suffering so much more than I could have ever imagined. I was astonished as to why I could never see their suffering before.

The intrusive thoughts returned, but this time, they were quite different. Or rather, they felt different. In middle school, I had believed myself to be the source of these thoughts. In contrast, these new thoughts felt like a separate voice speaking to me. The voice constantly degraded me.

It drove me to tears and whispered to me, feeding me ideas of hurting myself. I felt like I was drowning in despair and couldn’t reach out to others. I was afraid of how they would perceive me and my family.

I attended a youth praise night in April of this year. My father spoke that night, preaching on 1st Corinthians chapter 1. He talked about God’s foolishness and the foolishness of the cross, how they were



much more profound and powerful than the greatest secular wisdom. God chose the weak and despised over the smart and strong. I thought about a lot of the people I knew as well as myself. Toward the end of his sermon, my father asked, “What are you most fearful of?”

I started crying because I was scared of so many things. I finally worked up the courage to speak to my father about my situation. When discussing my past broken friendships, he asked a question which broke things open for me: “Do you think you have to be lovable to be loved?” I struggled with believing that God loved me because I didn’t understand how He could love a sinner like me. My father provided a simple explanation, but it really blew my mind. He said, “God loves you because He loves you. Because He loves you.” That night, we asked Jesus to come into my heart, and although I was afraid and didn’t know whether I really believed in Him, I asked for Him anyway because I really wanted Him to be a part of my life.

It’s pretty amazing how my life has changed. I feel so much more at peace and everything seems so much more beautiful. Worshipping is wonderful. It means something. Praying is no longer talking to an absent audience. I’m still in the middle of building a strong relationship with God, but I know that whenever I am doubtful of my place as a child of God, I can look back at 1 Corinthians 1:27-29:



But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.

And know that God chose me to be His. **R**

To God be the Glory

Yohan Lee

When I think about how The Holy Spirit has been working on me this year, it's nothing short of a miracle. What I mean by this is that I look like a different person on May 2022 than I did in May 2021. The easiest ways to describe it are Evangelistically, Professionally, and Spiritually.

Evangelistically, I had the joy of studying and training to be an Elder with my spiritual brothers, Damon and John. I honestly cannot believe God and our members gave us this chance to love and care for the church. The role is daunting, but along the way The Holy Spirit has changed me to share the gospel with random people everywhere I went. It used to be harder, and suddenly, it is easier. I think it is a classic case of living up to a role I did not feel qualified for until it happened. And every day I see a member of our church, I see a beloved brother or sister that I want to get to know, love, and serve - in that order.

Professionally, I was at one place in work where I was comfortable and hard at work with the regular pressures of a Silicon Valley company last year. Again, God moved quickly at the start of this year to open up a new job I never would have felt qualified for. But the real transformation has been that The Father has finally helped me put work in the right place in my heart and mind. Work is important because He has gifted us with skills, and He expects us to be productive and diligent and exemplary in our work. We also need it to provide for our families so as not to be a burden on others. But the freedom has come from being convinced and affirmed and encouraged that when we place Him (and our identity in Him) #1 - work is no longer "who I am", but "what I do to glorify God". Again, nothing short of another miracle.

Spiritually, I am finally starting to understand what it means to have Jesus as my friend. This is an outrageous and too-good-to-be true statement for me. Yet I timidly, but tearfully believe it is true. And it is the most wonderful thing that could be true on this earth after the resurrection. I grew up in church, and this phrase always seemed perhaps too simple, something that only happened for holy pastors, or perhaps was blasphemous. But through no effort of my own, somehow it just felt true. I am now convinced that nothing is more valuable and wonderful in this life than having and knowing more of Jesus Christ. I pray more to get more of Him, and less of the ‘stuff’ that I need to do, or deliver, or be nowadays. Or as Matthew 22:37 says, “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind*”. *It is the best kept open secret to life. God bless everyone. R*

Fight for Joy

Gina Har

People have said to me, “You always look happy” or “You are a joyful person.” I don’t know if God thinks of me that way also. For the last 18 months, I have had to fight for joy. There were a series of unfortunate events in my family: 4 fractured or bruised bone injuries, 2 ER stays for a heart-attack condition, 2 ambulance rides, a car accident that led to a 10-month-long house garage repair and 3-month-long car repair, a house fumigation for termite control, 3 Covid cases, and the loss of a main income source.

I thought I was doing well finding God’s grace and being joyful even though hardships were difficult to bear. But God revealed a pattern in my reactions whenever things seemed to go wrong in my eyes. I would always complain first and ask a lot of “why” questions to Him, then try to find a few reasons to be thankful and finally thank Him. I was afraid of what suffering would come next. But I eventually, realized that fear was coming from the enemy who is eager to steal my joy. I repented of my unbelief about God’s goodness and faithfulness, and I proclaimed that I would no longer be afraid of hardships or complain. Instead, I would praise Him first, because he is always right and makes no mistakes.

I’ve experienced that God’s presence is the most real when I walk through the wilderness. I can’t rely on anyone else but God alone, and not surprisingly, He has

shown His love beyond my imagination — not only with the daily manna that He promised for His people but also through loving support and encouragement from families in Christ that were given to my family and me.

Sometimes, I prayed for friends' or my needs, and God literally answered them right away, whether they were to find a lost wallet, restore broken relationships, or fulfill wishes for my favorite foods. Can you believe that I traveled many times to various places with incredibly low costs? God knows me so well that I am the happiest when I get great bargain deals!

I have learned that though I may not always feel joyful, I can still choose joy because of who God is. He is trustworthy, so in Him I am secure. **R**

“But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you.”

– Psalm 5:11

Taking a Step of Faith

Damon Moon

Looking back, 2020 was a tough year. I probably didn't even realize what I was going through at that time. The impact was more spiritual and psychological than physical or financial. It was the anxiety to build something quick. The goal wasn't about getting rich quick, but at least have some certainty and financial stability for the family sooner than later.



It's now early September of 2021. Things haven't changed much, but I can say that I have more peace in my heart than 6 months ago.

The company I started last year has made some progress in terms of the product, but it is nowhere close to where I wanted it to be. I am continuing to teach at San Jose State University, now with 4 classes this semester.

The difficult part last year was accepting that I can't do this with my knowledge and experience. This year, it was anxiety.

The breakthrough was going to Bishop this year. Originally, I didn't

want to go this year. I don't have my life in order, and taking that much time and money didn't make any sense. I told pastor SooSang that I won't be able to go this year during one of our Bishop prep meetings. He encouraged me to think about it again after the preparation trip in mid-May.

It wasn't because I could be earning so much more money if I used that time, or that someone didn't approve of my PTO. It was a self-imposed, anxiety-induced version of workaholicism kicking in without even noticing it. I felt like there is an unlimited amount of work that I didn't complete and I couldn't afford to take time off when we didn't have proper income for the last 14 months.



The May preparation trip was a treat. I realized that I didn't step outside Santa Clara county for more than a year. It was refreshing to meet people and be in a space that is not my bedroom. The conversations we had with the brothers from the Spectrum Church were also sweet.

When I met the Native American teenagers, they were happy and excited to meet us. They weren't afraid of COVID. I could see the deep loneliness in their eyes, the loneliness that was there even years before COVID. They were asking how their San Jose friends were doing and they wanted to meet us again this summer. Coming back, it became very clear to me that I knew I had to be there this summer. I decided to go regardless of whether anyone else was joining me this summer.

On Father's Day, I got a Facebook message from one of the teenage boys that immediately put me into tears. "Happy Father's Day, Damon". It may have been just one of those messages that people send on Father's Day. He may have just copied and pasted them because everyone else was doing it. But to receive such text from a growing teenager who doesn't have a father was heartbreaking.

For most people, Father's Day is probably just another annual occasion for a gathering, have family dinner, maybe get some presents and a card. But for him and many others on the reservation, Father's Day is probably one of the most meaninglessly painful days.

I just couldn't compare the reason why I didn't want to go, and the reason why I had to go. What is stopping me from being a father or uncle for them just for a couple of days?

Suddenly, I realized the flexibility and freedom that God gave me at this season of our lives. He gave it to us for a reason, not as a problem to solve.

I have been trying to cover up my insecurities through achievement. But God is asking me to practice having faith in Him.

Several weeks ago, I started riding my mountain bike after dropping off my kids at school. I suddenly felt God's love for helping me let go of that anxiety. I am asking myself, what made me so busy that I couldn't afford an hour a day to exercise?

The problems are still there and maybe there will be different and bigger problems that I will have to encounter. But by trusting in Him and taking a small step of faith, I can say that I am starting to understand what the benefits are of taking steps of faith in uncertain situations. **R**

A Jealous God

John Har

God is a jealous God. Sometimes, He intervenes and take things away from us because we won't let go of what's hurting us.

I tell people I left my job last September to take a long needed break. That's to keep the conversation simple and comfortable for everyone. But the truth is that I was asked to leave because I wasn't performing. It hurt my ego a lot to hear that, because I had always been a high performer. But, I couldn't deny it. I had nothing left to give to the company after two years of intense, non-stop work. My health had deteriorated considerably, days literally blurred together with the long hours, and I had no motivation to work except to feed my family.

It got so bad that my family, especially Christopher, was praying for me to change my job. I even knew that things like my mild heart attack were God's way of telling me I have to change now. But I kept thinking, "Just a little while longer until we IPO, and then I can quit." I didn't realize how much I was fooling myself that I could go on like this. It wasn't just about my health or relationships. I had no real time to serve God and his Church, which was especially troublesome if I was going to be an elder. I had no time for discipleship or a consistent prayer life.

So, when I was told to look for another job, I was at first scared because I wasn't prepared financially or mentally. But in the days that followed, I saw how God was doing this to give me a time of rest and to refocus on Him.

God is a jealous God. When He takes something away from us, it's to give us something much better.

It wasn't long after I officially left the company that Pastor SooSang asked me to join his LOLMD group. It had just started, but the group was willing to let me join. Now that I had time, I jumped immediately at the opportunity. I knew I needed some structure and accountability to refocus.

This was actually my second time with LOLMD. My first Journey group was three years ago. I was doing the "work" and study, but I had no space in my life to really be changed by God. This time, not hurried by work meetings, I could pause a little longer to sit and hear and meditate on His Word. I could spend much more substantial time praying, especially for others. It has been really refreshing.

My heart also softened towards being missional. This year, I became bolder in approaching homeless people and engaging them spiritually. I not only had no fear, but also more love towards them. If you know me, I have struggled for years with how to deal with homeless persons. Similarly, I was able to engage in spiritual conversations with people I have known or got to know this year. I am much more actively starting the conversations rather than waiting for them to initiate.

God is a jealous God. He wants us for eternity and to live for that today.

Over the year, I was reminded of how much God has a greater purpose and life planned for us. I knew this in my head from Pastor SooSang's sermons, but my heart had not accepted the fact that I had been living otherwise. I was living like a mercenary.

It wasn't always like this. Twenty-five years ago, when I started working, I had grand visions of how I could use my gifts as an engineer to build a Christian company and do great things for His kingdom. It is shocking that, over time, even our godliest dreams and purposes can morph into nothing more than twisted, worldly ambitions.

This spring, I started reading Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Life with my son, Ryan. One phrase stood out on Day 4: "living in light of eternity." It opened my eyes to what went wrong for me. I had lost sight of eternity and started living for today. Everything I prayed for or the decisions I made was focused on the here and now. This was particularly true in my work; I had lost sight of eternity when choosing what jobs or companies I'd work for. But it was also true in how I spent my time, or rather didn't spend time, with people. I didn't see the eternal impact of the time I give to others, so it was easy to avoid people using my introversion as an excuse.

This shift to living in light of eternity is still a work in progress. But I think that the LOLMD group and the process of becoming an elder has cemented in me that I must not let go of God and living for eternity. **R**

Taking a Step of Faith

Jiho Moon

Throughout my whole life, I knew Jesus was real. That was an absolute for as long as I can remember. I was born into a Christian household and into the Church, which I am thankful for, however, I did not seem to have a personal connection with God. Some components of my faith were there, I knew that I am a sinner and of Jesus, I knew of God and the story of His resurrection, but this all seemed distant and incomplete, not something I had an active connection with. At the time, I did not fully comprehend the depth of it, nor had I really realized what He had done for me.

Not that long ago, I was just going to church, learning about Jesus, but I felt like I was just there, being taught the same things over and over again. I did not experience the joy of fellowship among Christians nor did I have a rooted relationship with God.

Last year, I transferred to a Christian Discipleship school, thus becoming immersed in Christian culture and influence. I remember thinking “wow this is a completely different environment than what I was living in.”

I realized the possibilities of God as I heard all these miraculous testimonies of how He changed their lives. I also got to dive deep into Jesus’ teachings and what they meant for us as believers. One day, I was inspired by the put-together lifestyle of some of my peers and I started asking myself: “What do they have that I do not?”

As I approached this question, I examined their lifestyle which seemed, and was, so organized and mature and I tried to replicate it over that summer. I started waking up early to read my bible, and having meaningful prayers with God. Reading my bible helped me personalize

my relationship with God and deepen my faith in Him. Although consistency was and still is a problem, I have grown from that step and implemented it into my life more and more.

Around this time, I came across a bible verse, John 13:34-35,

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

I loved this verse as soon as I heard it. The love one has for one another can reveal if we are a disciple of Christ! I think that is really exciting. I realized such love has been poured out to me and to my life by the grace of God through people around me. Through this, I have started to nurture my heart and soul, enriching myself with the Gospel, and growing in the footsteps as a disciple of Christ. I decided that I want to commit to showing that same kind of unconditional love to others. I thank all those who God worked through to shape my life onto the path that I am on now. **R**



God's Goodness in Suffering

Yung Kim

The last few years of my life had been full of trials and tribulations, particularly in regards to the total devastation of my previous home church which I loved and where I began my young pastoral call way back in 1997. This was the church where I met my wife, and where we eventually had 2 of our children and were baptized, and where I made lifetime friends many of whom I still see at our current church every Sunday. I've had many conversations with God about the sadness and outrage experienced at that church, and many tears shed. So coming out of all that, I was *so very ready to move on*, and I was asking Jesus for mercy and for a new season. Well... Jesus answered with a bang! I was thrilled and humbled to get the absolute privilege and honor to meet some new friends, and to also help my new friends meet my best friend.

One day, through a married couple at our church, I was introduced to a couple of their neighbors, a husband and wife with their young daughter. This couple was interested in meeting and learning more about Jesus, and asked our church couple if they could do a Bible study together. They asked the pastors if one of us could lead that study, and so I decided to meet with them. So together with them and with the other couple, we met weekly, all for the purpose of also meeting with Jesus too.

We met Jesus through the Bible, which is how YHWH, the living God, chose to reveal to us that which is perfectly sufficient for us in order to know Him, to know ourselves, and to know others, all for the purpose of loving us and saving us from eternal death and giving us Himself and eternal dwelling with Him. By reading the Bible, specifically the gospel of John, we were able to meet and observe Jesus by watching

Him and His many interactions with people. So it wasn't just a "Bible study", or a study of a written document, what we were really doing in essence, is meeting the Author of the Bible, YHWH Himself.

And so by the time we reached the 14th chapter of John's gospel, this couple had gotten to see and listen to the many conversations that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had with all kinds of people along the way. We saw how Jesus is so gentle with people, yet speaks with a power and wisdom that blew the minds of even the most learned and respected rabbis and scribes. We saw how Jesus was able to speak only truth, but also spoke it with compassion and mercy, but never compromising. We saw how Jesus demonstrated His authority as Creator over Creation by performing both spiritual and physical feats that transcended the laws of physics and metaphysics that we are not able to supersede in and of ourselves. And finally we saw how Jesus willingly laid down His sinless life as a substitute to pay the costs for a justice that we had violated, all so that whoever believes in Him would be credited as newly justified and righteous, going from unclean to clean and thus become eternal members of the household of YHWH who is holy, just, absolutely righteous, and lovingly generous to us. What is His, through the Son, is now ours.

And so when I asked the couple what their response to Jesus' lavish, personal invitation to them would be, they said they wanted to trust Jesus, and after watching and observing Jesus for all of the previous weeks, this couple came to the conclusion that they could trust Jesus, and they received His invitation into the Father's house.

And now this couple, born again as new creations in Christ, have the foundation of truth that they are part of YHWH's family and have a seat at His table, and that place can never be taken from them because the blood of Jesus washes and cleanses all who put their trust in Him for now and for all time. As Jesus said on the Cross, "it is finished", and so our place with Him too, is final.

Since then, this couple has been taking steps of faith to grow in their embrace of their new identity as individuals who belong to YHWH and to all others across the world and time who have faith in Christ Jesus. They're even sharing the good news with their loved ones and neighbors, with the hope that they too will meet Jesus. YHWH is amazing in how His love spreads with joy. I can't fully express the joy that YHWH has given to me in getting the chance to help my new friends meet Him.

And Jesus, as if to emphasize His extravagant goodness, a few months later gave me another chance to introduce Him to someone else. This was a young man who had come to Silicon Valley from another part of the country, and was invited to our church by one of our members. He returned a couple of times, and so it seemed that he was interested in something. So I asked him if he would like to meet Jesus, not knowing how he would answer, and to my gladness, the young man said he would be interested in meeting Jesus. So I asked him if he'd like to meet Jesus together with the friend who had invited him to our church, and the 3 of us ended up meeting once a week, with Jesus through the Gospel of John. And similar to the couple a few months before him, this young man observed and listened to Jesus' conversations, and when Jesus invited him into the Father's house, he accepted. A few weeks after, he was baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and later became a member of our church, committed to helping others know Jesus too.

The joy of getting to witness these new births and seeing people passing literally from eternal death into Christ's house has dulled the pain of those previous years and are now but a memory. YHWH reminded of His many promises to those who place their trust in Him. Here's just one of those: "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you".

Thank you YHWH, for always delivering on your promises, and for being faithful always even when we are not always fully faithful to You. Give me your strength and mercy because I desire to be fully faithful to you too. And I hope that many other people will someday soon... get to meet you too. 

Revive Presbyterian Church
of Silicon Valley

477 N Mathilda Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94085

revivepres.church

2022
Revive
Stories

Volume
7

