

ENCOUNTER

with

LIFE

how God transforms and blesses his people

BRIJESH CHOROTIA

ENCOUNTER WITH LIFE

BRIJESH CHOROTIA



*Encounter
with Life*

In memoriam

My Father, Late Mr. R. S. Chorotia

Encounter with Life

How God Transforms Lives and
Blesses His People

Brijesh Chorotia



HYDERABAD • COLORADO SPRINGS • LONDON

Encounter with Life
How God Transforms and Blesses His People

Copyright © 2008 by Brijesh Chorotia

First Edition 2008

www.aatmik-sandesh.com

All Rights Reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever, without written permission, from the author.

Scripture quotations taken from the Holy Bible, *New International Version*[®]. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. All rights reserved throughout the world. Used by permission of International Bible Society.

New International Version[®] and NIV[®] are registered trademarks of International Bible Society. Use of either trademark for the offering of goods or services requires the prior written consent of International Bible Society.

Contents

Acknowledgment	7
Preface	9
Introduction	11
COME	17
1. Why This Book?	19
2. Are You Prepared?	27
3. Family Background	35
4. God's Intervention	47
5. Transformation	55
6. Salvation	63
RECEIVE	69
7. Answered Prayers	71
8. God's Faithfulness	93
9. Blessings	107
GO	122
10. How to Live Godly Life?	125
Conclusion	135
Appendix	139

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the person of Lord Jesus Christ and to the Holy Spirit who gave me the abundant life, full of his grace and inspired me to write this book with an objective of reaching my loved ones who are missing the most vital part of life—the life itself.

Also to those who are lost in the myriads of ways suggested by this world to find peace and who are looking for the answers to those questions, which were once mine.

Acknowledgment

At the outset, I want to thank my beloved sister in Christ—Rashmi, who brought the gospel of Lord Jesus Christ to me and paved the path of my salvation.

My thanks to all brothers and sisters who were praying for me during this pioneer project of mine.

I would like to thank all of my friends and mentors who read the manuscript and gave me their critical comments. Special acknowledgment goes to Pastor Peter Kuruvilla (Agape Fellowship, Jaipur), Pastor Devender (DBF, South Delhi), Brother Rajkumar (Shanti Marg) and Brother Shishye Thompson (Shishyashram) for their encouragement, mentoring and proof-reading the original script and leading me in the right direction by their constructive feedback.

Special thanks to my mother, Mrs. Meera Chorotia who is a constant inspiration to me; and to my wife, Perna for her love and continued support.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge my brother Pankaj, sister Hema, brother-in-law Sanjeev, my pastors, friends and relatives whose names are included in this book without their permission. I could do it in the confidence of their love towards me.

Preface

📖 Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1 John 5:10–12

All those who believe in God through Jesus Christ, have a testimony of the exceedingly abundant life of God in them.

So do I.

Encounter with Life is an account of God's gracious work in my life. This is not an autobiography but a personal testimony of my life which has changed by the grace of God through my salvation (*moksha*).

I am a computer professional. I work in Geographical Information Systems (GIS). During my work, I often use satellite images for certain tasks. While doing so, I realized that some details can be seen only from high altitudes; which remain hidden when we see them from the ground level. When I look at life from the spiritual perspective, I am overwhelmed to see some aspects of life

which were hidden otherwise. I wish to show you those details of life in this book.

Being a Hindu, I had a mindset which did not allow me to comprehend and appreciate Christian faith immediately when I heard about it first. Many questions popped in my mind. In order to believe in the new concept which was brought before me, I needed the answers. God in his grace answered all those questions to the satisfaction of my scientific and critic mind.

In this book, I have tried to talk about those issues and doubts which comes to mind while we seek the absolute truth. I am sure that every person, who is born in faith other than Christianity, faces these questions. It happens when he/she comes to know the gospel and finds it converging in the Christian faith.

I am humbled looking at the vastness of the subject I have taken up to address. I am not a pastor, evangelist or a Bible teacher but am just a common man. I must admit that I am not learned enough to write about doctrines; therefore, this book is not a doctrinal explanation of the Bible, but a true story of my life in which God worked so marvelously to change it forever.

Since this is not a theological book but a personal testimony, you may have to bear with me at some places with certain details of time, location and names of the individuals. The incidents mentioned in this book are true to my knowledge, belief and memory. They may not be a time-wise orderly record of events; I have shared the testimonies wherever I found them suitable to elaborate my point.

I have taken liberty to mention the names of several individuals not to highlight their virtues or shortcomings but, because they are part of my life and all of them have been a source of blessings to me in one way or the other.

Introduction

Life!

Yes! This book is about LIFE.

It's about those who are living life to the full and about those who are missing it.

Do you ever feel that you want more from life?

Do you have a strong sense of missing something?

Do you ever long to live life more deeply and more significantly than today?

If your answer is "yes," then join me in this journey.

I was once missing the meaningful and fulfilled life, but today I have it. I feel I am able to live my life now richer, fuller and more significantly because of something special that has happened in my life. Above all, I have peace and joy which surpasses my own understanding and I have confidence

in God as my true friend, father and Lord; who is controlling my

—○○○○○○—
"I believe that we all have been created with a purpose by our creator. In fact, I know that even before we were born, our Creator planned the purpose of our lives. The key to the deeply satisfying life experience is in finding that purpose and fulfilling it. I am doing it and we can learn to do it together."
—○○○○○○—

life, making my paths straight, blessing me everyday and making me victorious in the daily affairs of my life. I want to share everything with you in the following pages.

I believe that we all have been created by the Creator with a purpose. In fact, I know that even before we were born, our Creator planned the purpose of our lives. Even we plan in advance before inventing anything with a pre-defined purpose. The key to the deeply satisfying life experience is in finding that purpose and fulfilling it. I am doing it and we can learn to do it together.

Bertrand Russell, British philosopher, historian, logician, a prolific writer of many philosophic writings and known for atheism, said, “Unless you assume a God, the question of life’s purpose is meaningless.”

It is similar to the principle we learned in our secondary school where we used to make certain assumptions to prove the mathematical theorems. We were able to solve the questions based on our assumptions.

Nobody ever questioned—why did we start in the first place with an assumption. So, even if you do not have faith in God or if you took life as it comes and did not ever bother to think about God; before we start our journey, just believe that God exists and he is interested in us. If you cannot understand it at this juncture, then just assume it and go ahead.

No matter who you are, what you have achieved and where you have failed, I want to tell you that he has the bigger picture, whereas we see life only from the perspective which has been given to us by our family, our culture, our religion in which we were born, our circumstances, our education and experiences.

You have this book in your hand it means that you are looking for more in life. In due course of time, you will experience it because you want to. By the end of our journey you will also know God’s

purpose for your life. If you will take the decision to fulfill it, abundant life shall be at your disposal.

Before I start, I want to share one more thing which is very essential in setting the right framework for this reading and its application.

Let us see an illustration of a medical scientist.

Assume that this doctor X made a vaccination of some simple illness like headache (or something similar) which rarely happens and is not of much concern to us, would we be interested in knowing about it?

I guess not.

But, what if the vaccination was made for something deadly like AIDS or Cancer or some other contagious disease that you know, is serious, dangerous and fatal; probably eyes of the whole world would turn towards his invention. Everybody would want to know more about it and obtain it for themselves and their family.

Similarly, if we fail to understand the importance of the journey that we are embarking on, there is very high probability that we would not notice the details. In that case, possibly after the end of the journey, you would feel as if you simply read a story and would forget about it in due time.

Life is crucial and sin is fatal. It has graver consequences than AIDS, Cancer and Hepatitis. It destroys this life and the life after death. I want to warn you that life is something very special, very vital, even more than how much we understand it. It comes only from God.

In spite of the latest advancements in medical sciences and technology, scientists have neither been able to generate a new life nor are they able to bring life into a dead person. Some might want to argue with me about the clones which were made by scientists. However even cloning was not possible unless one original tissue

or cell or DNA was imported from an already existing life, created by God.

One of my very close friends, who is a research student of Microbiology and Biotechnology; during our discussions about God, creation, sin and salvation, once said that he could claim to be God because he may possibly generate new organisms—bring new life into existence, by synthesis (or whatever process it takes) of certain chemicals.

As much genius as he is, I am not doubtful that he would have done such an experiment, yet I am not sure he was successful. I wish to ask one question and would give one advice to everyone who would make such claims. My question is—who created everything that exists; especially chemicals in the above case—did you or did God? My advice is—if you do not trust in God, its fine, you might some day, but do not commit the terrible mistake of rejecting God or even worse, claiming yourself to be God.

God loves you, if you cannot understand it, just believe it.

I am sure even the scientists do not do a DNA test before agreeing—who their father is. We just believe it on the testimony of our mother, family and others who know our family for long. Probably this doubt never comes to anybody's mind. So is the case with God. If you have not seen him, better believe in the testimony of millions of those who have experienced him, seen him, walked with him and are living the peaceful blessed life in his grace.

There are several things in life which we just believe and do by FAITH. They are just impossible to understand or prove, in fact, we do not feel a need to investigate and prove them at all.

For an instance, we do not ask for the driving license of the driver before sitting in the bus (or taxi or train) nor do we enquire about the pilot's qualifications and previous successful records of flying before setting out on an air travel. How often do we make sure before we comfortably sit on a chair that it can bear our weight?

Do we make medical and chemical tests of the contents and effects of chemicals used before taking the medicine?

The contracts that we make are executed on faith. We work for the whole month believing that we will receive a salary and we do feel safe by putting our money in the bank just by faith.

When we travel in a car or bus, we know where we are heading to. We see the signboards, hoardings and directions marked and thus we can be sure where we are going; however, when we are seated in the airplane, thousands of feet above ground, where we do not see anything but clouds and if even higher—dark sky, yet we have faith that our pilot knows where we are going and how to reach there. Just because we know that he brought the plane from the same place few hours ago, we believe that he will take us there safely.

If we can believe in a pilot who himself is dependant on the best functioning of the machines, why cannot we believe in God who created this whole world and is sustaining it everyday?

In this physical world, a saying is used very often: Seeing is Believing; but in spiritual world, the order is reverse: Believing is Seeing. If we want to see God, we must believe that he exists, and rewards those who diligently seek him.

The point what I want to make here is an individual's testimony is still valid and important in solving and deciding most of the legal cases worldwide, this book is the word of my testimony of God's wonderful interventions in my life. I have made every effort to keep to the truth and reveal all the necessary facts to show what God does when he touches our lives.

I am giving here details of my life—who I was, how God encountered me, how he transformed me and gave me the salvation from a remorseful problem called sin, how he set me free and gave me abundant life and how he leads me everyday to live this life richly by fulfilling the purpose he made me for.

Let us together go into the journey of my life. You may overrule

some aspects as irrelevant to you, but I hope the book will serve its purpose.

- You would consider the biblical references wherever mentioned, as holy and living Word of God, irrespective of differences in opinion (and religion, if it is so).
- You would read the Scripture portions aloud and think about it for a moment before you proceed further. God will speak to you and will explain the things which I could not. You may feel free to make your conclusion on the Scriptures after (but not before) you meditate upon them.
- Though you may or may not have known God as I have explained, still you would consider him a true and living person, who is present at the place where you are reading this book. You can talk to him as you would talk to any other living person; he will hear and answer you. You can hear God's voice from his Word—the Bible.
- We will go ahead in the assumption that you are genuinely looking forward to know God and would do all needful to meet him.
- You will see the details and explanations given in this book as my personal experiences and views. I believe that if you would look for him genuinely, he will not disappoint you.
- Read and meditate on the Scripture.

At the moment, as you continue to read this book, my prayer is that God will answer all questions that you have in your mind for years.

Let us pray together before you read any further:

Our Creator God, we acknowledge that you are all-powerful God who has created the whole universe, our planet earth and everything that is found in this earth. Give us the grace to understand the ABSOLUTE TRUTH about you. Help us to seek your face and receive your salvation in our lives personally. Forgive our sins and fill us with your Holy Spirit so that we may know the truth and truth may set us free from all physical, emotional and spiritual bondages. Amen!

COME

1. Why This Book?

One may wonder about the fact that while there are so many books already written about God and faith, probably few hundred thousands; then what is the need for one more book?

Let me tell you something. More than a book; for me, it is a written record of my life's experiences. It would keep reminding me of what God can do and really did in my life. It might show the reader what God does to the special species created by him on earth, called "human beings."

Some people do not like the idea of relating God with anyone's experience because it is difficult to judge one's experience while it is easy to evaluate and judge his doctrines. However, during my research about God, I realized that we cannot learn about God but we can only experience him. This does not mean that he is not real; he definitely is; but it is difficult to define him.



"It is imperative for all of us to believe in God. It does not matter what religion we belong to. God does not care for our religion but he cares for us. To me, religion is nothing but traditions and rituals or systematic conclusions of people to find and worship God, as designed by human beings."



If you are one of those, who do not like to hear of experiences but doctrines, nevertheless, I would encourage you to read on. You will realize what God can do in the lives of people and how he blesses them.

God gave me a burden since long time to write the testimony of his goodness in my life before I forget the details. I wrote it once in my yahoo profile on internet. Several readers who read it on internet encouraged me to elaborate it. I made it into a three page long testimony. Later, when I joined Gideon's International as one of the comrades, they wanted me to share my testimony with other Gideons. They asked me to give more details and I further elaborated it. I had never thought of writing it in the form of a book.

However, recently I heard of a story which inspired me to write of my experiences in as much detail as possible. The inspiration behind this task was to reach those people who are yet away from God and are struggling with the same questions which I came across due to my mindset of the particular culture I was born in. On reading this book, one may find it easy to understand the good news of salvation.

The story was told about a boy called Brian, who died at the age of seventeen on May 27, 1997. It is considered to be a true story. Brian writes an essay before his death in the story called "The Room" written by Joshua Harris based on his dream in his book, *I kissed Dating Goodbye*.

The story goes on in which Brian saw a dream of a room the wall of which was covered with small index card files. They were like the ones in the libraries that list titles by author or subject in alphabetical order. But these files, which stretched from the floor to the ceiling and seemingly endless in either directions, had very different headings.

As he drew near the wall of files, the first to catch his attention was one that read “Girls I have liked.” He opened it and began flipping through the cards. He was shocked to realize that he recognized the names written on each one.

Brian writes in his essay, “This lifeless room with its small files was a crude catalog system for my life, in a detail my memory couldn’t match. A sense of wonder and curiosity, coupled with horror, stirred within me as I began randomly opening the files and exploring their content. Some brought joy and sweet memories; others a sense of shame and regret so intense that I would look over my shoulder to see if anyone was watching.”

He continues to write about various titles he saw and was thrilled to see the exact details of his life. At the end of every card, his own name and signature was marked.

A file named Friends was next to one marked “Friends I Have Betrayed.” The titles ranged from the mundane to outright weird. “Books I have read,” “lies I have told,” “comforts I have given,” “jokes I have laughed at.” Finally he came across a file marked “Lustful Thoughts.” He mentions in his essay that he felt a chill run through his body. He pulled the file out only an inch, not willing to test its size, and drew out a card. He shuddered at its detailed content. He felt sick to think that such a moment had been recorded.

He mentions in the essay, “One thought dominated my mind: No one must ever see these cards! No one must ever see this room! I have to destroy them! In insane frenzy I yanked the file out. Its size didn’t matter now. I had to empty it and burn the cards. But as I took it at one end and began pounding it on the floor, I could not dislodge a single card. I became desperate and pulled out a card, only to find it as strong as steel when I tried to tear it. Defeated and utterly helpless, I returned the file to its slot. Leaning my forehead against the wall, I let out a long, self-pitying sigh.”

After a series of few more thoughts, he fell on his knees and

cried. He cried out from the overwhelming shame of it all. The rows of file shelves swirled in his tearfilled eyes. He was just thinking no one must ever, ever know of this room. It should be locked and the key should be hidden.

In the middle of this, he says that he saw Jesus entering the room and reading every file. He writes that he saw sorrow in the eyes of Jesus, deeper than his own. Jesus took each card representing every sin of his life, and signed his name on them taking the penalty of every sin upon him.

On seeing this, Brian could not prevent himself from stopping him from signing. But there it was, already written in red so rich, so dark, and so alive. The name of Jesus covered his. It was written with his blood. Jesus signed every card and took every sin of Brian over himself.

When I heard this story first time, it filled my eyes with tears. It inspired me to write this book because I know that this is not the situation of Brian alone, but it could be a story of anyone of us.

Just give a thought to what all you have done in your life which you would like to hide from everyone; your failures, your mistakes, the times when you thought ill of your parents and your siblings. The times, when you criticized your best friend, your efforts to lure the girls or boys you came across, your lustful thoughts, the list of books and stories you read, television programs and videos you watched. What about the choices that you made through your life, the lies that you spoke and the people you hurt for your selfish desires? The list can go on and on.

If you can be truthful to yourself, you would know that what I have spoken is true. You can trust me to lead you through in this journey. Have faith in God.

Faith is the foundation of the spiritual life experiences; and

one would need to believe in the Bible to know about God. He or she must take it as an authoritative document of God to reveal himself to mankind. I can try to prove through various logics and physical evidences, that Bible is the Word of God; nevertheless, you will still need faith to believe in it and accept it.

However, even if you do not believe in the Bible, think for a moment—what if the Bible is true. So if the Bible is true and what it says would surely come to pass someday, where will you stand? Where will you spend your eternity? Bible says in the *Gospel according to Luke, chapter 12 and verses 2 and 3:

“There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.”

Brian’s dream is a divine illustration of what will happen in future. We all will have to stand before God who knows every detail of our lives. Would you be able to stand before the judgment throne? No, unless all your sinful records are purged and removed as if they did not exist ever.

This is what Jesus did on the cross by paying the price for our sins. He paid the full price to remove all our sins as if we never did it. I just experienced it by faith. I want to tell this news to everyone and this book is just a part of that endeavor. Let us see this illustration to understand it more clearly.

Imagine that I was a poor man and I had a fatal disease which could not be cured by any physician in my city. I was told of a doctor living in a different country who gives treatment at his

*The Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are the good news of God coming on earth in human form for redeeming the mankind from the bondage of sin and death. All the four Gospels are written by four different disciples of Jesus by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God to reveal different attributes of Jesus Christ. They reveal the immense love of God for us.

own expenses and he knew the cure of my sickness. I contacted him and he came to see me, treated me and cured my sickness. He knew of my inability to pay the expenses and so he did not ask for any fee.

—○○——○○—

We all are suffering with the fatal disease called “sin” which eventually brings “spiritual death,” that is eternal separation from God and a life in hell forever.

—○○——○○—

Would it not be selfish on my part if I see someone around me suffering with the same disease and yet kept quiet? Would you not tell others about this doctor who could cure your fatal sickness, which was otherwise incurable?

We all are suffering with the fatal disease called “sin” which eventually brings “spiritual death,” that is eternal separation from God and a life in hell forever. Believe it or not, this is the truth.

One may say that I do not believe in God or hell or salvation (moksha), these are all thoughts devised by some weak human beings who did not have courage to face this world on their own strength.

Had I not experienced God in such a personal way, I would have been among those who claimed so. But, by my experience, I know that God is real, Jesus truly existed, he is the eternal Son of God and fully God; Holy Spirit of God is an actual person who empowers us everyday to live a fulfilled life.

Anyone’s disbelief cannot change the facts.

If I say that I do not believe in anything called “car” and I stand in the middle of the road, I cannot escape the consequences of a car coming in high speed and hitting me while I walk on the middle of the road.

The most terribly affected people of Tsunami in Indonesia, SriLanka and India; Katrina and other hurricanes in USA and Gonu cyclone in Oman were the people who either did not believe

in the possibility of happening of any such catastrophe, or the ones who chose to ignore the warnings. Most secured ones were the only people who believed that it is coming. They took all precautionary measures based on the warnings signaled by the government, and moved to safer places.

God, heaven, hell, sin, death and salvation—all are facts. We may choose not to believe and/or to ignore the warnings of the danger of spiritual death due to our sins. Or we may choose to believe in the given warning, take steps to obtain salvation and move into the safer refuge—Lord Jesus Christ.

God exists. I feel that people who contradict this fact simply keep their eyes closed. If we see the whole universe and the systematic natural processes in it; it would be more than sufficient for us to know that there is a very intelligent God behind this whole creation and obviously or part of the creation itself. In fact, in my opinion, it is rather difficult to disprove God's existence.

It is imperative for all of us to believe in God. It does not matter what religion we belong to. God does not care for our religion but he cares for us. To me, religion is nothing but traditions and rituals or systematic conclusions of people to find and worship God, as designed by human beings.

The objective of writing this book is not to criticize any religious practices or hurt the feelings of any individual or faith group, rather this is my humble effort to put the facts together as per my experience of God's handy work in my life. I want to encourage you to believe in God, trust in his faithfulness, experience his love, walk in his power and manifest his glory in your life so that you may live a fulfilled and satisfied life on this earth and beyond.

On earth, we have only a temporary residence for a time span which is infinitely short in comparison to the life we are going to live after our earthly life. This can be considered as a dot on a line drawn from here to the sun. Infinite means one which does not

have any end. It may be beyond our comprehension. The God, who has put the nervous system of the length equivalent to three times circumference of the earth, in every adult human body, can do things beyond our understanding. Is he not capable of taking us to heaven on his own strength? Does he need our efforts? But this is what we do in religion.

In further reading of *Encounter with Life*, you will see how the true and living God transforms lives when he encounters with our lives on his own terms and conditions. It is not about me but about him.

2. Are You Prepared?

Twenty-one years of my life, I lived without blessings and peace of God. I was living in misery along with my family. I never knew that I was missing a very vital part of life; the LIFE itself.

At the age of twenty-one, I heard that God is the eternal source of happiness and joy, which are not dependant on our temporal state. He offers his peace and hope which becomes more prominent in tough times. He gives confidence and faith for dealing hopeless situations.

After coming to know Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior, I gave it a deep thought—why did it take a long twenty-one years to obtain the true peace and blessings in my life.

At the end of this whole research, I concluded that before knowing Jesus Christ as Lord, I never bothered to live in the abiding presence of true God. I was either struggling or was satisfied with my life as it was going, and started

—○○○○○○—
“Probably, it is possible for religions to teach us ways to lead a noble life but they all equally fail in bringing the eternal life. It is possible to meet God and have eternal life with Him only by having genuine relationship with God. We all who are born in flesh need to be born again in the spirit because God is Spirit. Are you ready for this?”

taking everything as part of life, or as was the popular saying, already written in my destiny. Even if I believed in God, it was very shallow, not acknowledging him the sovereign Lord of my life, whatsoever.

My conclusion is that true happiness and peace can come only from God. Instead of looking for it in money, fortunes, relationships, sex, fame and/or other worldly avenues, start longing for God, and he will meet you. He shall fill your life with joy, peace and blessings.

For any person, who really wants to meet God, the primary questions that he or she needs to ask to his or her self would start with “WHO.”

Who am I?

Who is truly God?

Who is the creator of the whole universe?

Who is the judge of right or wrong that I do?

Who can set me free of my sins?

Next series of questions that we need to ask ourselves in our quest for seeking God would start with “WHAT.”

What is really sin?

What is the result of my sins?

What do I need to do to be able to meet God?

What is the purpose of my life?

What happens after death?

What is heaven and hell?

Another series of questions that we need to ask ourselves in search of the absolute truth would start with “why.”

Why do I believe that God exists?

Why do I have the urge to meet God?

Why did God create me and all other human beings?

Why do we sin?

Why there are sicknesses and diseases?

Why does death occur?

Finally, the last series of questions that we need to ask ourselves towards completion of our research would start with “HOW.”

How did God create this whole universe?

How did God create me?

How can my sins be forgiven?

How can I meet God?

How can I have a peaceful and blessed life?

We need to find answer to the above questions and may be few more in order to find the absolute truth. If we are able to do so, many obstacles in meeting God will vanish. I encourage you to do a thorough research into the above questions.

First thing which I did after hearing about Jesus Christ was that I retraced all the knowledge I had about God, religion and salvation (moksha) from Hindu scriptures, *Radhaswami satsang*, Sant-Mat, Buddhist philosophy and Dr. Ambedkar's literature in order to analyze on the questions proposed earlier. I did a thorough analysis and summarized that they all taught good things in different ways. These are noble teachings to live earthly life but did not answer my questions satisfactorily.

During my research for the above questions, I also read the Bible. I realized that it starts with the description of how God created everything in our universe and especially on earth, which was one of my questions. It continues to explain why and how did God create Adam and Eve, the first human beings.

It also explains how first sin was committed which became a reason why we all sin and have sicknesses and bondages to various habits. Also, why do we have problems in our lives, what is the specialty of only this creation that it longs for God? Bible teaches how God specially created Adam and Eve in his likeness to have fellowship with him. Though after his Fall, man is separated from God; but this is the reason why he still wants to meet God and invents different religions in different times to reach him.

It shows us the full nature of God and his plan of salvation to redeem mankind from the consequences of their sins. Bible answers

all the above questions clearly. The most important point to note is that Bible is translated in every popular language so that it becomes easy for us to understand these realities in the simplest way, in whichever language we are comfortable.

You may choose to get a copy of the Bible today and find all the answers to the above questions. This is a unique book which brings life. It talks to us when we sincerely read it to hear the voice of God.

Bible is the living Word of God written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. It is a full library given to us today in the form of a book which is collection of sixty-six books written by forty different authors of variant intellect and different professions (few were shepherds, few were kings, one was doctor, one was tax collector, one was a fisherman etc), over a period of fifteen hundred years in three different continents (Asia, Africa and Europe), in three different languages and yet carrying a very simple and common message of God's love for us without any single contradiction whatsoever.

Isn't it amazing? These facts are sufficient to prove that Bible is authored by God himself and was written down by different men by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. If you do not believe so, I would like to give you a humble challenge of finding such sixty-six books in any one library of this world, which are written by forty different authors of different spheres of life, in three different continents, over a period of fifteen hundred years, yet talking about the same subject complementing each other. I am sure you will find none but the Holy Bible.

In essence of my experience of God, I can say one thing—we cannot learn God. It is because of his infiniteness and our limited wisdom. Nevertheless, nothing can stop God from finding us. This is what he did by coming on earth as a human being—Jesus Christ. He is not a foreigner but our same Creator God whom everybody

wishes to meet and pray. Though we may not understand him, we can experience him by faith.

I can suggest only two ways of receiving forgiveness of sins and obtaining assurance of eternal life. First, that you believe in Jesus as Son of God who came to pardon your sins and open the gates of heaven for you. With this belief, you start following him. Or, second, to do a through research of the truth as I mentioned above and finally when you conclude that it is only Lord Jesus Christ in whom all questions are answered; believe that he is the only way of salvation (moksha) and you need him. Receive him by faith and follow him.

Both the ways, you will need to repent from your sins, ask him in prayer to come in your life and be your Savior and Lord by trusting in him. Only that you would loose time in going about the second choice, which I would encourage you to go for, if you are not already convinced about the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.

—○○○○○○—
Both the ways, you will need to repent from your sins, ask him in prayer to come in your life and be your Savior and Lord by trusting in him.
—○○○○○○—

In my personal life, I was least bothered to find God, yet in his own love God found me and showed me the right way to live life to be able to see blessings in this life and the life which has to come after death.

I was born in a Hindu family. We were not ardent followers of our religious system and its practices; rather we were in the alternate way—meditation. I would not think much about God; yet, whatever knowledge I had of him, they were not in any other terms except what I learned from my family and culture.

Normally we do not choose to follow a religion; it is determined by our birth; like we do not have an option to choose our sex either. Even without being taught, we naturally start following the religion

in which we are born. This is also the main reason why we confine ourselves to the boundaries of the practices, customs and rituals of “our” religion and thus constrain from learning the truth(s) that may exist outside the boundaries of our religion or culture.

I did not convert my religion nor did my religion change my life; therefore, I want to neither disregard one religion nor endorse the other. I feel that religion binds us in traditions, rituals and practices, while God sets us free. Religion constrains us to follow it while God gives us freedom to choose to follow him or even reject him. I would ask you to make yourself comfortable before reading any further knowing that I am not going to talk of religion but God.

Based on this, at this stage, I suggest you to clear your mind from all prejudices to understand the concept I am bringing before you. Just read on and see what God can do when he wants to meet his people.

Whether you are a Catholic, Hindu, Muslim, Christian (not born again), or the follower of any religion or faith system, the truth is that God did not create any religion. Hence it is useless to discuss or debate on the premise of religion. In my opinion, it is impossible to find God through religion.

Probably, it is possible for religions to teach us ways to lead a noble life, but they all equally fail in bringing the eternal life. It is possible to meet God and have eternal life with him only by having genuine personal relationship with God. We all who are born in flesh need to be born again in the spirit because God is Spirit and we can commune with him only in the spirit.

I grew up in a lower middle class family doing all sorts of things which normally young boys do in their growing ages. I went through times of joy and times of hardship. Life was real and it was going on until I had an encounter with God who is the author of life.

My life was entirely changed by knowing and believing in the

true and living God. He made himself known to me through his chosen vessel.

Often we think that it is we who have to search and find God. On the contrary, the truth is that God loves us so much that knowing our fallen state, He sent his human incarnation, one of the persons in godhood, Lord Jesus Christ to set us free from the bondage of sin and reconcile us with God. Jesus came on earth and lived a very humble and simple life. He faced all temptations that we do but he never sinned. He took our punishment on himself even to the point of death. He died on the cross for us and rose again on the third day. Death could not overpower him. He lived for many days on earth after his resurrection and then he was lifted up in heaven in front of many people. He came, so that we may enjoy continued communion with him forever on earth and then in heaven.

I believed in this fact and made a personal commitment to love God and follow him by making a relationship with him as his child. It changed my life forever.

If you have got this book in your hands, it is the plan of God to reveal his goodness to you. Are you prepared to receive the blessings of God? Are you prepared to make a commitment to know God more personally?

3. Family Background

Dadaji and his faith

I was born on February 17, 1977 in a *Raigar* family in Jaipur District of Rajasthan, India. *Dadaji* (Grandpa) was an employee in Indian Railways. Later he resorted to railway coach cleaning supervisor position from train driving occupation due to continued illness of my grandmother which restricted him from traveling very often.

During our childhood, we enjoyed lot of love and respect in the village, every time we paid a visit. Dadaji was known as *Angrez Baba* (English Grandpa) among children. Dadaji was a devotee of Radhaswami faith—a lineage of Sant-Mat (an esoteric spiritual path stressing the unity of all religions) and partially we all were into it.

The expression Sant-Mat cannot be adequately translated into English, but it means the “point of view of the Sants.” “*Sant*” can be translated in English as “Saint.” The term Sant has taken on the more general meaning of “a good person,” but is properly assigned to the poet—sants of medieval India.

Since medieval times in India, Sant-Mat was a loosely associated group of teachers that became prominent in the northern part of the Indian sub-continent from about the thirteenth century. Teachings

of Kabir, Meerabai, Namdeo, Tukaram etc were distinguished by an inward, loving devotion to a divine principle, and socially by egalitarianism (equalitarianism—the doctrine of the equality of mankind and the desirability of political and economic and social equality) opposed to the qualitative distinctions based on caste, creed and religion.

They presented the idea that actual religion was a matter of surrendering to God “who dwells in the heart.”

I am tempted but will not do a thorough explanation of the phrase “who dwells in the heart” in contrast to the biblical view of welcoming God in our heart personally after repentance and confession of sins. It can take place only after renouncing all prejudiced ideas about God, salvation (moksha) and self-righteousness. I do not want to go away from the focal point of this book, yet in brief I can say that God does not dwell in our hearts unless we welcome him to take control of our lives and crown him the Lord and king of our lives so that we would not do our own will but follow his leading in our hearts and lives.

The Radhaswami movement in North India is one of the main repositories of the Sant-Mat tradition and their teachings. Their philosophy teaches a personal path of spiritual development which includes vegetarian diet, abstinence from intoxicants, a moral way of life and the practice of daily meditation. Radhaswami believers are not supposed to take part or do any kind of idol worship.

It is taught that a Radhaswami follower should meditate on the sacred *naamdaan*, which is not supposed to be shared with anyone, two and a half hours every morning and every evening throughout his life (ideally). In this way only, the follower may earn favour of *guru* so as to suffice for his need of moksha (salvation).

So, central to this philosophy is a spiritual teacher (Guru) who explains the purpose of life and guides and instructs members on a method of spirituality based on a daily meditation practice. It is believed that without the teacher, salvation cannot be achieved.

Nevertheless, despite all efforts, belief and hard work, everything depends on the favor of the guru on the seeker.

Bible verses and other Scriptures are used occasionally in their literature to prove the validity of their concept; however, most of the Bible verses I read were interpreted altogether in different way contrasting to the original context. I do not agree with their explanation of the biblical passages, since they use only couple of verses picked up sparingly and explain them out of context. I realized that such mixed use of various philosophies does not answer all the questions I posed earlier.

I would say that such philosophies—which are much near to the absolute truth—when scrutinized for the analysis of the real teacher (*Satguru*) might finally converge in Lord Jesus Christ. There are several good things in Sant-Mat (unlike many other religions); however, eventually it all boils down to “salvation by works,” which, in my opinion, is impossible to gain.

I have yet to come across that one person who is able to answer all the questions I had, without consulting the Bible. Though many of our family members are still followers of Radhaswami belief, I have not found even one person in our whole household who could confidently say that they have found God and is sure of their afterlife, as much as I am now.

My faith

Either due to lack of knowledge or understanding, dadaji had many misconceptions due to which he could not answer my questions. When I went into depth, I found that he was far from the absolute truth and he did not find God even after his faithful belief in the meditation practice for several decades.

Being influenced by this philosophy, our family was not into practice of idol worship. When I was very young, papa used to take us to satsang (spiritual discourses by spiritual teacher) every Sunday. Later on, these visits became rare and finally stopped because he

could not abstain from meat and alcohol. As I grew up, I started visiting temples too, but only along with friends.

Dadaji's lifelong faith did not bring any good spiritual virtues in any of us. Consequently, we did not become strong devotees of this faith either. The negative effect of this partial spirituality on my life was that I did not care about God and did not seek him in any way. Meditation and living that kind of life was a tough stuff and I did not have any faith in the idols either. Eventually, I became careless as if there was no God and turned to be a faithless and godless person.

Dadaji used to go religiously to Beas for such spiritual discourses, until Jesus touched his life. He would propagate his faith to as many as he could. He has a great contribution in making most or all of our extended family believers of Sant-Mat tradition.

The positive side of not being idol worshiper and being Radhaswami devotee was that we had a very broad upbringing and thus were open to all religions and faiths. I call it positive to be not involved in idol worship, because I always would wonder that how could we create God (who has created us) by our hands, or even an idol or image of someone whom we have not seen ever. Later on, I learned from the Bible that God does not delight in idol worship.

Moreover, in my earlier belief, I had learned that we must not garland picture or idol of a person who is still alive. In fact, this practice starts only after the person is deceased. I used to wonder that if God is alive, what are we showing by creating his image (or idol) and garlanding it?

I could not digest the idea of neglecting our own basic fundamentals in our practice of faith. I always believed that we must never insult God by doing something which we would even do to a fellow man. Bible teaches that God is an eternally living God, whereas, we try to limit him into perishable handmade idols based purely on our imagination, which is not right. Bible teaches so in various scriptures in Old and New Testaments: *"Do not turn to idols*

or make gods of cast metal for yourselves. I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 19:4).

“Do not make idols or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it. I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 26:1).

I am still unable to understand why one might need a physical object to worship God. Some people say that they need something (a photo or an idol) in order to believe. How many of us believe in air after making its idol? We believe in electricity—do we do it by seeing its picture or just because we see the fan running by the power of unseen electricity flowing through the wires? Are there not enough evidences in this world to see God operating daily in an intelligent and a powerful way?

—○○●○○—

Are there not enough evidences in this world to see God operating daily in an intelligent and a powerful way?

—○○●○○—

Papa

Papa told us many incidents of his childhood. He had experienced good and bad times in his early life. He shared with us stories of those days when he sold stuff on railway platforms; he had to give tuitions to take care of his own needs. Due to various circumstances from his childhood till his youth and reasons better known to him or God, he developed a rebellious nature. Probably this was the reason why he would not give ear to anyone’s suggestions.

He also told us that he saw few Brits around in early days and that he had few so called “Christian” friends during his youth with whom he learned “drinking.”

I never got any opportunity to explain him that a person does not become “Christian in real sense” just by taking birth in traditional Christian family but one becomes a “true Christian” only after being born again irrespective of his physical birth. I did not get the opportunity for many years to introduce my friends

who were born in Christian families but did not know Christ until twenty-five, thirty and forty years. I wanted to explain him that one becomes a true follower of Christ by dying to his sinful self and taking spiritual birth in Jesus Christ by going through repentance and salvation experience. A person may be born to Christian parents but may remain detached from Christ (and remains non-Christian in actual sense) for many years or even throughout his life. He is equally good (or bad) as any other religion's devotee as far as Jesus is concerned.

Papa started his career through MES (Military Engineering Services). He switched to State Bank of India as clerical staff and was a leader of the employees' union. He had the ability to deliver powerful speeches and to impress people with it. He had decent reputation among his friends, colleagues and in the society till of late.

As back as my memory goes, I remember that Papa started drinking with couple of beers with his friends. The need of intoxication kept on growing and finally when beer could not suffice the need, he started using hard drinks more and more till he became an alcoholic. At the same time he tried to live a good life but failed miserably. This gave me a strong reason to believe that trying to be a good person by our own efforts leads us nowhere.

Papa was never a religious man, at least I perceived him so. He rather believed in nature and a supernatural power which governs all events in the nature. Having roots in the downtrodden class of the society, he was more inclined towards social reformation. He used to conduct rallies and other events at personal and social levels to unite and educate the socially backward classes about their rights and would make continuous efforts in this regard.

Apart from this, he had set high aims for himself and achieved many of them. My high education and broad upbringing with no rust and blemish of socio-religious culture was one of the results. Directly or indirectly, he has been an inspiration to me. He always motivated me to aim higher in life and strive to achieve them. He

forced me to read Dr. Ambedkar's literature and if it was not for him, I probably would not have read it ever.

Mummy and my siblings

My mother is a simple woman. She has always been a housewife and is perfect in running the household in bare minimum expenses. We always saw her sacrificing her own desires and wishes for the family needs. She loved us so much that she bore all physical and emotional atrocities for the sake of our career and good life.

She had a religious inclination since beginning. She would devote herself to the Radhaswami meditation religiously every evening, until she came to know Jesus as her personal Savior and God. She was seeking some supernatural power who could solve her problems and give peace in her life and family. She did not get her peace until Jesus saved her.

I have younger siblings too; one brother named Pankaj and a sister named Hema. I am the eldest. I must admit that we have a lot uncommon in us but still, all of us had at least one thing in common—till we came to know Jesus Christ—we all were volatile in nature. We may not have overcome it completely though, but we have come a long way by the grace of God. I know that I have a lot to learn but I must also confess that even if we all have had varied behaviors and many differences, we all are one in our salvation in Jesus Christ.

I know today that all of them have been a tremendous blessing to me, in one way or the other. At least they taught me patience and love.

Family life devastated

Papa used to love us very much. He would delight in feeding and dressing us well up-to-date as per latest trends. He would even stitch our clothes by his own hands. I am unable to understand how such

a person, so full of love, in later years, went so far away from us that he could not understand our need for his love.

He would never heed to any suggestions given to him to abstain from alcohol. He became alcoholic in the later days of his life. We all loved him but still he kept ruining his own name and his relationships with his friends, colleagues and relatives. Usually he would come back drunk. We would feel ashamed of his behavior but there was no way to explain it to him, he would not understand.

In year 1990 and onwards, it became a very frequent incident for us to leave our home to take shelter in our neighboring houses in the nights. I remember chilled nights of December and January when we had to spend sleepless nights standing on our feet in front of our father, trying to understand his un-understandable mumbling.

Every evening our hearts would sink and become heavy, waiting for papa to come home back from his office, anticipating that probably he might not come drunk. To our utter disappointment, almost daily he used to return home from his office completely drunk and still worst with a pack of whiskey or rum in his hands. Any day when he came clear, we would become at ease, but this peace was always short-lived, because after fresh up he would set out on his scooter to buy some liquor. Every night passed was an achievement. We were tormented physically and emotionally; specially mummy who was the primary victim of his wrath.

He developed this habit to come home fully drunk. He would beat us (including mummy) for no or minor reasons. The worst thing happened was he started beating us all in public. We were not the only victims; he even used to pick fights in the office and in the streets. Everyone in the family and all friends asked him to get rid of this dirty habit, but he paid no attention ever.

We were badly affected by this daily ritual. Papa always wanted to see us studying; so just to show him, we used to open our books when it was time for him to come home, but actually we never studied a word in those evening hours. Our performance in studies

started declining. I got second division in Std. X, a supplementary in Std XI and failed once in Std. XII.

A seemingly permanent conflict was introduced in our family. Every time I asked him to quit drinking, he would say, “I drink because you do not produce good results in the studies. . . .” And I used to respond, “I cannot get good marks because you drink and do not provide a healthy environment for studies. . . .” We were afraid of our own father; we did not have any hope. The rift was growing between papa and rest of us.

Papa later on—after his salvation—testified that probably he wasted hundreds of thousands of rupees in this habit of alcoholism. We were a broken family then—emotionally, spiritually and financially; without any hope until Jesus gave us hope.

Today I realized that Satan was trying to break our family so that we may not be happy; this is his nature and ultimate desire. Jesus has disclosed this by saying that Satan is a liar, a cheat, an accuser, the tempter who comes to kill, steal and destroy. He almost succeeded in pushing our family to the verge of break-up.

Today, alcohol is one of the biggest curses on humanity. It is breaking many families everyday. This is one among the main weapons of Satan to destroy people and families. This is not the story of our family alone, it could be happening possibly in your family or your neighborhood or in some family known to you. I can confidently say today that there is a hope, in Jesus Christ.

As I look back, I see there was an evil force over our family which was yet to be broken. We did not know how. . .

My journey from childhood to youth

In my childhood, whenever I used to get late for the school, I used to remember Radhaswami guruji to save me from punishment. I used to pray very fervently to help papa in leaving his drinking habits. All my prayers went unanswered.

I concluded that there is no one to answer my prayers. As I grew older, I went far away from God. I had no help in trouble; no hope in distress. On top of it, our relatives used to ask me to correct my father; their suggestions rather used to offend me. I was already doing my part and was unsuccessful. No one understood our agony.

Talking about my personal life, though I loved my family and my siblings, I was not very soft hearted or kind person since my childhood and through my teens. I used to give hard time to Pankaj and sister Hema. I was self-centered and could put them in trouble for my sake.

I remember one incident in which I asked Pankaj to buy kites from the money I picked up from the kitchen where mummy used to keep change for some spontaneous needs. When she saw the kites, she asked him from where he got the money and why he bought the kites. On getting no answer, she got angry and started beating him. As she was beating him fiercely for the charges of stealing money and buying things without permission, I kept quiet and did not tell the truth. I did not save him; though the mistake was mine.

Another incident, when I was in grade VIII, and probably Pankaj was in grade III or grade IV, we were living in a rented house approximately 8–10 kilometers from our school in Malviya Nagar. Due to unavailability of direct buses and other means of transport, Papa would drop us in the morning to a distant bus stand or directly to the school. However, in the afternoons either we used to take a long route bus or would walk down. Usually I was forced to walk down; primarily due to unavailability of direct transport, but also for saving the fare so that I could use it for my pocket money.

It was a busy road for interstate trucks which used to carry goods from one corner of India to another. While walking, I would tell Pankaj long imaginary film stories so that he would not realize how long we walked.

When I felt tired, I would walk fast for some distance leaving Pankaj behind and would sit to take rest till he would catch up with me. As he would reach me and wanted to sit, I would not let him sit but force him to walk continuously, in fear of reaching home late. I feel sorry about how I used to harass him in those days.

Now when I remember such incidents, I wonder why I would do such nasty things. It never profited me anyway. I used to fight with my siblings; rather I used to bully them. I would take undue advantage of myself being older and used to command them to do many things for me. If they refused to do so, they received beatings from me. Especially Hema would be the target for such beatings, because she would not yield to my orders and shouting.

Pankaj and Hema did not like me much in my teenage due to my ordering around and several other bad habits. I used to wonder why they disliked me because from my inner being, I knew that I loved them very much, but neither I expressed it nor showed it in my actions. For a long time, I could not realize that my habits used to keep them away from me.

In my days of teenage and youth, I was oppressed; so I wanted to lash it out somewhere. I used to indulge myself in road fights. I do not have many good memories of my early life worth cherishing. I was a failure in studies, spoiled brat for the neighbors, worthless sibling, notorious in society and useless but involved in college politics. I was surrounded all around with defeat, failure, disappointments and sorrow.

The last thing I would ever like to write about is my character. Probably many would not know what all I did because most of it was in fantasies, yet I know now, that God knows every thought that passes by through our minds. Entertaining sexual thoughts, watching c-grade movies, passing comments on girls, reading cheap literature and fantasizing was part of my life after teenage. It is

so agonizing that sex becomes a bondage, a stronghold on young people so easily. After reading the Bible, I came to know that God counts every thought also because he is the One who can search our thoughts too. This used to be my excuse—everyone else is doing it, what is the harm. When we want to do anything which is of darkness, Satan supplies all the opportunities and ammunitions for the same. I made many friends who were doing the same things and I did not want to be odd one out.

I did several mistakes in my life to find momentary happiness, some of them are known to my family, some to friends and yet some, only to me and my God. I know one thing, it did not work. Happiness and peace were miles away from me.

Perhaps many of us are under this bondage but only those who are convicted by the Holy Spirit can confess it. I thank God that now I am dead to sin and alive in Lord Jesus Christ and Bible teaches me everyday to offer my body as living sacrifice to God as a holy and pleasing worship. In the days of my youth, I was desperate to find peace but it was far from me. I wanted to make my presence known and would do anything for it. For this reason, I used to fight for friends, stood in college elections, even started going to temples with faith, nothing of them worked.

4. God's Intervention

God's preparation in my life

After my schools, I went to college in 1995. I got 55 percent marks in the first year. I nominated myself in college election for the post of Joint Secretary in second year. I lost it. I got 45 percent marks in the second year. My career graph was going steeply down.

During our college times, I saw that hostel students did not pay bus fare. Though I was not staying in a hostel, still I started using name of hostel to travel free. I would not pay the bus fares. Sometimes I would fight with bus conductors who asked for it.

We once broke vehicles, stopped the buses, beat the drivers and even I wanted to set a bus on fire. This resulted in a major bus strike in Jaipur. Many local bus staff started searching for me with weapons in hand. I was afraid. I had to hide myself for sometime. I would not travel alone for many weeks. I stopped using buses for local travel and would use papa's scooter. I used to keep weapon in the scooter for my safety in case of any mishap.

Apart from some incidents like these, usually I did not get into fights for reasons of self, but I used to fight for others. This habit of mine sometimes embarrassed me thoroughly.

When I came in final year of graduation (BSc), some unknown power started compelling me to retrospect my life and find the purpose of my existence. I did, and I realized that I had been running into failures and therefore could not see any hope of a bright future. I had 50 percent as the aggregate of last two years of graduation.

Though, I never worried about GOD and neither did I fear him. Yet, “What is the purpose of my life?” was the biggest question which started bugging me. This was the first time I was going through such a state of confusion. I wanted to live a good life to be able to keep my mother and siblings happy. I wanted to bring smile on their faces which was now lost for many years. I did not know how I could ever achieve all that with such a pathetic lifestyle. I felt disgusted over myself.

With the inspiration of the unknown power, I decided to get a first division in graduation, for which I calculated that I must get 84 percent in third year. You might think one who was struggling to just pass the exam, how he could even dream of getting distinctions. I also wondered. This was something I could not achieve by all my efforts. However, I started studying by the compelling of the same “unknown” power. I almost completed my syllabus by the middle of the session. I started solving problems for couple of those who were less genius in our class. Many of my classmates stopped going for tuitions and asked my assistance.

I was able to help; I did not know who made me so. He was changing me every day, making me different. Now I know that God was preparing the ground.

Gospel was shared with me

During the third year of graduation, I had problems with Numerical Physics, so I joined a tuition group. After few days, we heard that a girl was joining in our group. Her name was Rashmi. I wanted to befriend her but I must admit that little did I know that through her,

God wanted me to know him. Girl, my biggest weakness became God's instrument to bless me with something extraordinary.

One Sunday, when our tutor wanted to give an extra class, she refused to come. On much coercing, she agreed to come after 1:00 p.m. I asked her the reason for being so rigid while for any sincere student, studies would be the first priority when exams were at hand. And apparently, she looked pretty much sincere. She told me very upfront, "I go to church and I cannot miss the Sunday service for any reason."

I asked her, "You are a Hindu. Why do you go to church?" She replied that she found a "living God" in the church, who loved her and who had already paid price for her sins to bring salvation in her life. None of her statements entered my mind and I thought who at this age was bothered about all these. I was clueless about things like "salvation" and "living God."

Later she explained me that God created human beings to have fellowship with him and though today man is away from God due to sin yet man keeps trying to find him through various ways. She also explained how people try to find the living God in manmade things while he does not live in the religious places or objects made by human hands.

She said, "How can we make our God, who has created us?" No one has seen God, so how could we make an image of the unseen. Her logic was powerful and even I used to think the same. She also told how God loved this whole world irrespective of our caste, religion and cultures that he gave his only begotten Son and how Jesus (though being sinless) paid the price of our sins by dying on the cross as a sinner.

Sometimes this question may arise in one's mind that how someone can pay the price of our sins even before our birth by dying for our sins, that too God himself. I can briefly say that we all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God and price of sin is

death. No one can enter heaven with sins. Everyone must die (that means spiritually separated from God forever) to pay this price. But God knew that we are not capable of paying this heavy price and that is why he gave his begotten Son (Jesus Christ) as ransom for us.

—○○——○○—

As insurance is a futuristic bond, so is the sacrifice of God. It has been done in the past for our future sins and it applies to the present.

—○○——○○—

It can be understood by example of insurance which is made at any given moment but is executed only when we meet with accidents in future. As insurance is a futuristic bond, so is the sacrifice of God. It has been done in the past for our future sins and it applies to the present.

Next day Rashmi brought a GIDEONS Bible for me as a gift. I was not an atheist and used to respect everyone’s religious feelings. I took it and just kept it in the house. I did not read it for many months. Meanwhile, our friendship grew and we started studying together for our upcoming exams. She invited me to the church one day. I did not know how to worship God in the first place and that too in a church; so I tried my best to avoid this visit. However, finally she succeeded in persuading me to come to the church for some time.

Going to church was a unique experience for me in its kind. This was the first time when I saw a church, which was different in all the ways from what I knew about “churches” and “Christians” from the Indian movies. The picture that I had in mind was of a big colonial building; with a Church Father in white robe talking in a majestic way to the church. I would picture the church as that of people sitting on wooden benches, reading bibles and praying with candles.

Here I saw all the chappals and shoes outside a hall in a normal house like building. Few elderly people were sitting on the plastic chairs and rest of the congregation was sitting on the ground on

dari. All the women and girls were in traditional dresses and most of the women had their heads covered by saree or *chunni*.

Contrary to my pre-conceived idea of a big church-choir leading the worship, few young lads were playing music instruments and 3–4 boys and girls were singing songs in Hindi and English. It seemed that everyone was lost in the worship. Contrary to the picture I had in mind, I saw the pastor in pant-shirt without any significantly different look from rest of the men in congregation. He was encouraging everyone to worship God explaining that God delights in the worship offered by his people.

It was all amazing to me. As I was gazing on these things and lost in the series of thoughts, gradually worship ceased and the pastor declared a prayer time in which people were supposed to move around and pray for any person for whom the “Spirit of the Lord” gives burden. I could not understand a word and just closed my eyes. I was surprised by the voice of a man who just came to me and asked me my name. Why would this gentleman get a burden to pray for me who came for the first time? How does God know me and how this so-called Spirit of the Lord told him to pray for me?

This elderly gentleman was Uncle Xavier. I told him my name. He further probed if I needed prayer for any specific cause. I never knew prayer in this form. I knew people go to places of worship for their own needs, but here he was asking me for my need. I asked him to pray for my father’s deliverance from the habit of drinking and for peace in our family. He prayed with such a compassion for me and my family as if he was part of my family and was suffering in my problem. It seemed as if he was most concerned about it. His prayer was very authoritative as a son asking his father. I saw the brotherly love of Christians first time in my life.

As we were going out of the church, Rashmi introduced me to Pastor Peter. One thing that Pastor told, came to me strongly. He said, “Brijesh, we do not believe in any religion but we believe in a

living relationship with God.” He further explained to me that God is the Father who has created each one of us and is interested in us as individuals. He calls us to make a personal relationship with him and be united with him so that we may live with him forever.

Rashmi was a resident of Delhi. Just few days after my visit to the church, she went to Delhi for some time. She came back after few months. She did not have a safe place in Jaipur to stay. One day, she asked me if she could stay in my house for some time during exams. I asked my mother if it was okay. She allowed her to stay with my sister in our house.

As we started spending more time together, I closely watched her life and was totally amazed to see the hope, joy and purity of her life. I started asking questions about life and God. She clearly answered my questions and started telling me about God, prayer, salvation (moksha), eternal life and the Bible. She taught me many praise and worship songs and prayed with me. I started reading Bible but could not understand it. She taught me how to read it. I found it interesting and started reading the New Testament as per her suggestion.

Rashmi further explained me that if I trust in God and pray, he would definitely answer. She also told me that Bible is the Word of God through which he talks to us. She said that Word of God is the food of our spirit. She re-emphasized that God came in the form of a simple man called Jesus, he never sinned in his life and yet gave his life on the cross to pay the price for my sins and if I simply trust this fact, I would be saved and can enter into heaven. She said it is only a matter of faith which might not make any sense in my human wisdom.

From that day on, I started reading Bible like a hungry man to understand this truth and God started talking to me in mysterious ways. He led me and taught me the secrets of a successful, happy and

peaceful life. He talked to me through Titus 3:5, 1John 1:10, Mark 16:16 and John 3:16, 17, which are still my favorite verses about salvation. In due time, this book changed the course of my life.

Rashmi, my sister in the Lord, came into my life as God's messenger. Her actions and her way of living life impressed me. Her tender feelings and passion for the Lord infused in me a compelling urge to know more about the source of her cool, unselfish disposition. She gave me her time and satisfied all my appetite of knowing the "unknown."

The unknown was now known to me. I knew God personally as my Savior and Lord.



God started talking to me in mysterious ways.

He led me and taught me the secrets of a successful, happy and peaceful life.



5. Transformation

There is a prayer of transformation which I learned in my days of schooling. We would chant it every morning in assembly—

Aasto ma sadagamaya

Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya

Mrityorma amritam gamaya !

I read the meaning of this prayer in our school diary which says that this is a prayer to God Almighty to lead us from falsehood to truth, darkness to light and death to life.

I knew this meaning for long time but I got the answer to this prayer only when I came to know Jesus Christ. I learned that every petition prayed in his name is heard by God and answered promptly. It could be “Yes” in God’s mercy or “No” in his infinite wisdom. Every prayer made to the true and living God cannot go in vain.

—○○○○○○—

“I would like to emphasize that the salvation (moksha) is personal. Neither our prejudices nor any relationships should prevent us from receiving God’s blessings meant for each one of us. God loves us and wants to save us from the consequences of our rebellion and ignorance. Look at God with altogether fresh perspective and child-like pure faith and he will speak to you. He came searching for us so that we do not have to look for him anymore.”

—○○○○○○—

If the above prayer was prayed to the true God, then we must receive its answer too. God loves human race and his answer to this prayer I found in the Bible: *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”* (John 14:6).

“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life” (John 5:24).

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

I learned one more prayer called *Gayatrimantra* from my friends. For centuries, man has been searching for truth, peace, salvation and guidance of God. This desire is mouthed through this prayer. We need to understand that this prayer is directed to “the Creator God” and hence the answer of this prayer could come only from the One who is the Creator of the universe, who loves us and is willing to enlighten us with his light and purge our sins. After studying this *Gayatrimantra* prayer I observed that the Bible expounds this prayer also. The prayer is directed to the Creator God. Bible teaches us about the Creator God—Jesus Christ (John 1:1, 1:3, 1:14).

This prayer is for wisdom, truth, forgiveness of sin and way of God. Jesus said that he himself is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6), he is the Light of the world (John 8:12) who came on earth to enlighten us and give us peace and salvation by forgiving our sins (John 3:16, 17).

As I said earlier that prior to my begin relying on the Bible, I researched the TRUTH regarding God and examined it on all the standards I knew. I had read various religious books like Geeta, Ramayana and Mahabharata as school textbooks and understood the theme in general. I read Radhaswami Satsang books for my ill dadiji, sitting besides her bed. I read about Osho Rajneesh also.

I had a close interaction with one of my grandmothers (sister of my grandpa) who was in *Om Shanti* sect. I also read about Dr. Ambedkar and his beliefs about caste system, religion and specifically his viewpoints about Buddhism and Christianity. In all my research of the religion, philosophy and God, I realized few major thoughts:

All religions/philosophies talk about God and teach a noble way to lead the life in order to find God.

All talk about good works and abstinence from selfish desires of food, money, relationships etc in order to earn salvation (moksha).

All religions talk about God in a way that it seems as if God is a very distinct being, who cannot be reached easily. Also, as if it is very difficult to please him and almost impossible to gain salvation.

After realizing the above, when I started reading the Bible, I found a lot of information which challenged my pre conceived notion about God and different ways to find him. Bible contrasted with my earlier ideas about God, what I had learned since my childhood.

I was explained and made to understand that in every age of human race, God incarnates himself in some or the other form on earth to destroy the sinners and save the righteous. This intrigued me more to know who is a sinner and who is righteous. Does God really come to destroy the sinners? If so, then who can be saved? I was actually not worried about others but myself because I knew that I had sinned, in thoughts and in deeds too. Who could possibly save me from the consequences of my sins? This personal dilemma was right, because salvation (moksha) is a personal experience.

I was taught since childhood about *paap* (bad works) and *punya* (good works) which are counted throughout the person's life and are considered while deciding our next birth. I was also taught that we need to do a lot of good works which must outweigh our bad deeds in order to get a good form in the next birth. It was generally taught that without a teacher (guru), salvation cannot be achieved.

I had learned that I not only must differentiate between good and bad works but should strive to do good. I saw everyone miserably failing in this and I failed too. From my own religious scriptures, I was tempted (or forced) to believe that moksha (salvation) was almost an impossible thing to achieve.

According to the Bible, no one is righteous enough in his/her own strength that God should save him/her. Not even one. Yes, no one can do enough good works to please God to impart salvation on accord of his/her righteousness earned by good works, attitude or behavior. God's standards are so very high that it is impossible for us to reach up to them. As a person short by half an inch is disqualified for admission in the armed forces as much as the one who is six inches short; same way, we all equally fall short in reaching God's high standards. Therefore, we all need God's grace and mercy.

When I read the Bible, I found that Bible speaks of a solution to the "sin problem" altogether opposite to my former philosophy. It looks easy to do but difficult to grasp. It says that though we all are sinners and are subject to the wrath of God because of our rebellion. Yet, not because of our good or bad works, but because of his infinite grace, he gives us life by repaying the wages of our sins by the sacrifice of his own Son—Jesus Christ. All we need to do is to believe in this sacrifice and appropriate it for ourselves.

Second, it says that there is no cycle of rebirths, but only one human birth, followed by judgment and then eternal life in hell or heaven depending on the result of the judgment. The strange thing I noticed is that it is in our hands to choose our eternity by believing or rejecting God's grace. If we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, our sins are purged at that very moment, our names are written in the Book of Life and we escape the condemnation.

I was already convinced in my heart that I had sinned and according to my knowledge obtained from various sources (except the Bible); I did not have any hope for pardon. I found something in the Bible which gave me great consolation. John 3:16, 17 says,

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”

Further I realized that we had learned about earning the salvation by good works, whether it is done by meditation, idol worship or pilgrimage etc. In every religion, there is an open-ended way of keep doing these things without any assurance or guarantee of salvation.

When I read Bible regarding this, I found a very much different way to receive salvation. Titus 3:5 says: *He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.* Also Ephesians 2:8, 9, says: *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.*

God taught me through Bible that I needed a savior who could save me from the consequences of my sins—that is eternal separation from God and an infinitely long life in hell, full of pain and suffering. Though hell was not made for humans but for rebellious spirits, yet, when we reject the grace of God, then our spirit is thrown into the lake of fire in hell along with other arrogant and ignorant spirits who rebel against God.

I needed God’s grace to be pardoned of my sins; but how do I obtain it? Bible suggests a very simple but powerful way to do it. In 1John 1:9, it says, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”* Bible also speaks of the same subject in John 1:1–18. I was struck at verse 12 which caught my mind. “. . . Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. . .” And in Romans 10:10: *For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

With the above Scriptures, I understood that I needed to repent from my sins, believe in Jesus as Son of God, give him rightful place

in my life and acknowledge him my Lord in order to become his child. I understood what Pastor Peter was talking when he spoke of relationship with God. I was eager to repent from my sins and receive forgiveness. I was excited to start a personal relationship with God as his son and friend. In the last book of the Bible God says, *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me* (Revelation 3:20).

According to the above Scripture, I opened my heart and invited God to live in me. After I realized that I was a sinner and God was holy, I repented of all my sins which I committed deliberately or unknowingly and took a decision to live a holy life and requested God to take control of my life and lead me in a fresh way.

In March 1998, I sat down with Rashmi and prayed the sinner's prayer somewhat like this:

Lord, I confess that I am a sinner and have committed so many sins in my life knowingly and unknowingly. I also acknowledge that you are a holy God and there is no God except you who promised to forgive my sins. Lord Jesus, you paid the price for my sin on the cross and died for me 2,000 years ago. You rose again from the dead and have been raised to heaven and seated in the right side of God. Please forgive me my sins. Give me a place in your heavenly kingdom. Please come in my heart and be my Lord and God. I thank you for you are true to your promise and you have forgiven my sins and have written my name in the Book of Life. Thank you for the salvation, Lord. In Jesus name I pray, Amen!

God heard my prayer and answered it immediately. The peace of God descended on me and according to his another Scripture (1 Corinthians 3:16) I became the temple of the living God. I need not to go to any religious place of worship (including church) to search God, God came in me. Since then, I live with constant presence of God, with me and in me.

The day I prayed the “sinner’s prayer,” all my sins were forgiven because around 2,000 years ago, Jesus paid the price for all my sins. He gave me new life and I became a new person according to his promise in 2 Corinthians 5:17: *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Dear reader, If this is the prayer of your heart and you feel that you are ready to receive Jesus as your personal Savior and God, then I encourage you to sit quietly and pray this prayer and God who does not lie will surely forgive your sins and give you his light so that you will not walk in darkness any more but will have abundantly blessed life with God.

I would like to emphasize that the salvation (moksha) is personal. Neither our prejudices nor any relationships should prevent us to receive God’s blessings meant for each one of us. God loves us and wants to save all souls from the consequences of rebellion and ignorance. Look at God with altogether fresh perspective and childlike pure faith and he will speak to you. He came searching for us so that we do not have to look for him anymore.

If you have prayed the same prayer, then rest assured that God has blessed you with forgiveness of sins, newness of life and has opened the doors of heavens to pour out blessings on you. Whether you are able to feel anything physical or not, the spirit in you has been cleansed of all its unrighteousness and has been justified before God. All you need to do is to read the Word of God and attend a fellowship of believers to learn more about the character of God, his blessings and his will concerning you.

I witnessed a great change in my life after I put my faith in Lord Jesus Christ. I was then a new person with renewed thinking, regenerated character, and divine philosophy. Above all, I became free of all my sins and got an assurance that God is available to me any time as a friend and father. I have a secured place in heaven not by the virtue of what I did but by what Jesus did for me.

Later in July 1998, I obeyed his command of water baptism as confession of my faith and submission of my life for complete salvation according to Mark 16:16: *“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”*

I praise Jesus that he chose a sinner like me and made me his disciple. He bestowed me with abundant blessings materially and spiritually. He turned my failure into success. He brought me into life from death and into light from the darkness. He gave me new abundant, victorious and Spirit-filled life.

As I learned to depend on God, he paved my path in all walks of my life with his anointed presence and hence success and joy followed me throughout. He blessed me with answers to my prayers, salvation of my immediate family, good job(s), gave a perfect life partner according to his will and everything that a man aspires in his life. I shall testify in coming chapters of various things which God did in my life by which you would see how faithful he is towards them who revere him and follow sincerely.

My life has been transformed completely by the divine grace of my Savior God. Though I struggle every day to be able to live a holy life, fighting against my flesh, yet God gives grace and strength against all temptations and his faithful hand remains with me. He protects me from all harms and dangers and provides all my needs. I do not need to worry for anything because he cares for me. He makes my burdens very light and rather carries them for me. When I do not know how to pray, he prays for me. He fills me with a sense of gratitude for what he did for me. I am blessed now because he has blessed me. Amen!

6. Salvation

I am astounded by the simplicity of salvation as proposed in the Bible—it's a gift of God offered in his grace. It can be obtained by anyone by putting his or her faith in Jesus Christ.

As we do not pay for gifts but simply receive it gladly; similarly we do not have to pay for our “salvation” too. I hope we will agree that paying for the gift might offend the giver.

Forgiveness of sin and assurance of eternal life are offered by Lord Jesus Christ as free gift. It is called salvation by grace which we simply need to receive by faith. Trust me; it is so simple that many of us miss to understand it.

At the same time, I am overwhelmed by the magnitude of rituals and traditions warranted in various religions to attain salvation, especially the one in which I was born. In religion, traditions and rituals are taught, which must be followed to accumulate positive points in order to earn salvation. I refer to it as salvation by works. Normally, our traditions and rituals taught to us during our childhood



*“All of us need God,
we need his salvation
irrespective of who we
are, where we are born,
where we live, what is
our social status, what
we have done, what we
are doing, or what we
can do.”*



become a part of our lives and it makes really difficult to think of God in any other way apart from it.

Being born and having practiced our respective religions, sometimes we might become rigid and hence prevent ourselves from knowing and understanding the “truth,” especially if it seems to be coming from other sources or faith which we never knew, believed or practiced.

A “religious person” has a particular concept of life, a particular personality, own perception of God and personal preferences for following him. If we are prejudiced, it would be very difficult for us to understand Christian faith. Probably this is the only faith, which claims that we are saved by grace through faith and not by our good works.

I have watched several documentary programs in television, in which they show about religious places. In one of those programs, I saw that some people think that through non-stop smoking (apparently considering it *hath yog*), or constantly walking they can receive salvation.

With our preconceived ideas about religion and God, some of us discard Jesus by calling him a foreign God. I do not understand how does it happen that the God, who created the whole universe which is millions of light years in its dimensions, becomes foreigner to us only because he incarnated in a different country than ours?

Whatever religion or faith you belong to, I am sure you have already heard about “salvation by works,” if not with this title then at least by the ways taught to you to follow and worship God. I encourage you to open your mind and heart today to welcome this new idea of “salvation by grace.”

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by his own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. In my opinion, it is sowed once but

nurtured throughout. There is no salvation (moksha) apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

God welcomes us to taste and see that he is a good God. After tasting him in the way I propose, if you do not find it fulfilling, you are always free to further examine it or reject it. I only want to encourage you not to reject it before analyzing it thoroughly. Being an intellectual creature, start thinking about it and ask the true God, who has created everything including you and me, to take control and bring the absolute truth (the truth which will not change by circumstances, religion or culture) to you.

At this juncture, I must emphasize on what sets Bible and Christian faith apart from rest of the faith systems. It is the message of forgiveness offered by God for all human beings irrespective of their caste, creed, culture and religion, as a free gift. Nonetheless, God paid a very hefty price for this all alone.

I believe that our salvation (moksha) is not dependant on our works because whatever amount and quality of good works we do, it cannot be holy enough to persuade God to ignore our sins and save us from his wrath. Second, a verse of the Bible mentioned earlier (Ephesians 2:8–10) propounds that we are made to do good, so it's anyway of no additional virtue and therefore cannot be utilized to earn salvation. Rather our continual sins in thoughts, attitude and deeds make us more obligated towards God to know him and seek forgiveness from him before he brings the judgment.



Rather our continual sins in thoughts, attitude and deeds make us more obligated towards God to know him and seek forgiveness from him before he brings the judgment.



All of us need God irrespective of who we are, where we are born, where we live, what is our social status, what we have done, what we are doing, or what we can do.

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

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).

Bible says that all of us commit sins either by thoughts, or deeds, or speaking or by attitude. We all have transgressed against the holy laws of God in our lives and we shall all be judged for it. Many religions and faith systems including Christianity know it as judgment day. It is believed that we all shall stand before God to give account of our lives and he will judge us.

According to the Bible, those who die without knowing the good news of salvation through Jesus, would be judged based on the justice of God, but those who heard about Jesus and rejected it would be condemned to spiritual death. Only those who believed in the grace of God through his Son Jesus Christ would be found justified by faith and thus not fall in any condemnation. This is an absolute truth and should not be distorted, falsified, ignored or neglected whatsoever.

We cannot pay the price of our personal or each other's sins because we all are equally guilty. So, then who can pay? It can be paid only by the one who has never sinned and who is willing to credit his or her righteousness to us without asking anything from us in return, because we do not have anything worth giving. Who could be such merciful, generous and loving person except God himself?

I would illustrate it with an example of a father, who, with his adolescent son, goes to an expensive antiques shop to buy one show piece. By mistake, the son breaks one of the expensive art pieces.

Would shopkeeper let them go without paying for it? No!

Can the kid pay? No, he does not earn.

But someone has to pay.

So should father leave his son and go because his son did a mistake and is now unable to pay? No.

Father pays for the expensive showpiece broken in the shop

by his son, whether it happened in negligence, ignorance or by deliberate fault. He does it because of his love towards his son and no other reason.

Does father continue to condemn his son for his mistake? No, father takes the responsibility of his son's mistake and pays for it for his love's sake and then life goes on. He does not remind his son of his mistakes all the time, rather he teaches and encourages him not to commit the same mistake in future.

How much more God loves us?

How can he leave us in all the mess that we are in today with the tons of sins we have collected over our heads in all these years. God saves us, because he loves us. He has created us and he is our heavenly father. He forgives and forgets our sins. He washes us and cleanses us. He does not remind us of all what we did. He just asks us to strive to live a holy life in his grace according to his instructions so that finally we may reach heaven and live with him forever.

We may not understand the above example fully if we are brought up with a different philosophy which talks of salvation by works (and not grace), which demands that our good works must outweigh the bad ones so that in his mercy, God may allow us to go to heaven. This philosophy fails to show a "just" character of God.

Let us see another illustration to understand it better.

Imagine of a murderer charged for murder who is brought before a judge. If he says that throughout his life he did good things, he paid taxes, he obeyed all laws, he paid big donations to social cause and many more such noble things, and finally he protests that he killed only one person to take revenge for a just cause; will the judge release him on account of his good works?

I hope not. What if he was in the habit of committing murder? Can his "one type of crime" be ignored by comparing to his other type of good works he had done throughout his life? If not, how can we say that God will forgive us of our certain sins that we have been

doing throughout our lives, on account of certain good works that we have done?

God is a just judge. He will do justice. We all have sinned, and trust me, when we sin, small or big, we do it against God. Nobody is more saddened than God himself over our sins. God does not look at them as small or big; rather, all sins are equally detestable to God. He has the full right to be angry upon us. How much more he must judge us and not forgive us just on account of several good works that we did in our lives? There are various things that we do in our lives, which destroy LIFE. What you do may be different from what I do, but in essence, the consequences are the same—DEATH.

When we truly retrospect our lives, every thought, word, deed and attitude, none of us can say that we are sinless or blameless. We deserve punishment for our sins; yet Jesus, as the Father in the first illustration, took all our sins on himself and paid for all our sins to set us free from all guilt. He has bought us by his blood and we now belong to him. What he desires from us is that we live a holy and sinless life by his power.

Remember one thing—persistent rejection of the gospel of salvation is SIN. Usually, as long as a person remains in unbelief, he voluntarily excludes himself from realization of sin. If you have been reading this book so far and you feel that God is convicting you to believe in him, please do not harden your heart. Yield to the prompting of the Holy Spirit of God who wants to change your life and bless you with eternal life full of his presence and power.

If you have not made up your mind yet, I would encourage you to continue to read the following chapter where I have mentioned how the true and living God hears our prayer and answers them. All my prayers were answered in God's grace. Here I have not mentioned some of the prayers which we prayed for others because it's not me but them who are the better witnesses of those testimonies.

RECEIVE

7. Answered Prayers

All Prayers Answered

When it comes to the prayer, a general opinion is that God may or may not hear our prayer and that it is God's prerogative to answer or not to answer. This may be partially true but definitely this is not the whole truth.

Remember, he is a just God and will not lie or cheat or break his promise or turn from his own word. He does not back off from his word. God has expressed his attitude and character in the Bible. In the book of Jeremiah 29:12 it says, *"Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you."*

New Testament confirms God's promises of Old Testament. Jesus also said in Matthew 7:7 (and Luke 11:9), *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."*

And continues to say in verse 11, *"If you, then, though you are evil,*

"I learned that God speaks to us in various ways. He may speak through situations, or by providing the object of the prayer, or through his servants or just by his Word confirming his will with regard to our prayer."

know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

Yet again in Matthew 18:19: *"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven."* And then in Matthew 21:22: *"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."*

In Mark 11:24: *"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."*

In John 14:13–14: *"And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."*

In John 16:24, Jesus says, *"Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."*

Our God is Alpha (beginning) and the Omega [end] (Revelation 1:8), who changes not and remains same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8), who is holy (1 Peter 1:16; Leviticus 11:44, 45, 19:2, 20:7) and perfect (Deuteronomy 32:4, 2 Samuel 22:31).

He continues to keep the promises from the Old Testament times to the people under the New Covenant. He maintains the integrity of his nature and identity. However, if we know Jesus and his nature, we know God and we can rest assured that he answers, always. Need of the hour is that we must tune ourselves to be able to hear that answer. Very often we use the tuning process to listen to our favorite channels in radio or watch programs in television; it is as simple as that. We need to tune our mind to listen to his still small voice.

If our prayers are not heard by God or we do not hear answers from him there has to be a reason. The reason is not God's carelessness but our unbelief (or perhaps belief on wrong person or wrong way). I have seen many people blaming God while the mistake is their own.

For us to be able to stand on God's promises and claim them for

ourselves and receive blessings, we need to meet certain conditions and also need several most important ingredients in our prayers.

The condition to be met before we pray so that God may hear and answer our prayer are to abide in the ways of the Lord as instructed in his Word that is fully tuned for hearing the *rhema* (the living and spoken voice in our hearts) Word of God, leading a sinless life and asking according to his will which is manifested broadly in his Word—The Bible. *Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear* (Isaiah 59:1, 2).

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you” (John 15:7).

While praying, we need to pray in specific terms, knowing God to be alive and faithful to his promises towards us, having a burning faith, putting full trust in him and without doubt receiving the answer by faith even as we pray. There are several other factors which needs to be mentioned, however, they are all covered if we simply love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and are obedient to him completely.

I learned these keys step by step in my spiritual life as I continued to grow in faith by the enabling of the Holy Spirit. However, in the beginning I did not have much knowledge but what I had was my life forgiven of sins and justified by God, a burning childlike simple faith, and zeal to adventure with Jesus Christ, hunger for his Word, sincere heart to pray and receive answers without doubt. I believe till today that not knowledge but love is important in living our faith life.

I learned that God speaks to us in various ways. He may speak through situations, or by providing the object of the prayer, or through his servants or just by his Word in a still small voice, confirming his will with regard to our prayer. If we pray specifically, he answers specifically. If we pray vague, it is very likely that we

might miss to see the blessing of God as an answer to our prayer. Moreover, specific prayers need God's faith in us which is the most important key to an answered prayer.

How God's promise is realized in us

I learned this important principle from the Bible and want to share with you. Bible, the Word of God, is full of promises. Promises are the key to treasures, which has been given to us to realize them.

Each time we come across a promise in the Word of God, we ought to pray sincerely till the Holy Spirit fills the faith within us and makes us feel that this promise is meant for us. If it is a promise without any pre-conditions, we should immediately exercise faith and receive it in prayer and trusting that God will do what he has promised we should thank him without any doubt. But if the promise we came across is conditional, we must first fulfill the requirements and then pray for performing it according to his faithfulness.

Pray till faith fills your heart with an assurance that prayer is heard; then cease praying and begin praising him. Before long, we would see God's promise realized in us.

Testimonies

After believing in Jesus Christ, I gradually learned this principle and started receiving answers to my prayers. Since then I have been adventuring in prayers with God and I am awestruck with his prayer answering grace.

By living our lives with God daily, our lives are full of numerous testimonies like many other believers. I am not writing all of them because every day God gives answer to prayers and it is difficult to accommodate all of them here. I am sharing here only few testimonies of God's answer to our prayers which have made mark in my memory.

With every answered prayer, God taught us something valuable

in our faith life and thus is pruning and shaping us everyday to prepare us for his glorious coming.

Failures turned into success

I remember I was not a very brilliant student since beginning but was rather good at sports. I used to participate in games which needed physical activities inclusive of wrestling, football and cricket. When it came to studies, I used to struggle in certain subjects specially mathematics, since I was in primary school. Social studies, science and mathematics were heavy burdens to me. I could manage to secure first division (60 percent) till grade IX but in half yearly exams of Std X, I really fell flat. I got only three marks in mathematics out of hundred.

It happened because I did not get good environment for studies. I started bunking classes and watching the latest movies released during the week. I failed in mathematics with only 33 percent marks in X class board exams. I appeared in improvement exam and secured 47 percent somehow. I could just manage to barely secure a second division in tenth.

I was not very keen to take science in higher secondary but my father challenged me saying that I should not take science stream if I could not handle it. This pinched me and I decided to choose sciences for further studies, whatever it might cost.

I could not get admission in Kendriya Vidyalaya due to low percentage so I decided to go to Poddar School. It was an exclusively boys' school, and for the students, education in this school used to be only fillers between the numerous nonsensical things they did. I made many friends in this school and learned more bad things which I did not know earlier. I started smoking with friends (probably my family do not know about it yet), watching movies every week or more, eating out in restaurants very often, teasing girls, street fighting and many more such things.

I failed in one subject in grade XI and thus had to appear

in supplementary exam to pass to next grade. I managed to pass it; however, next year I failed completely in grade XII (10 + 2). I reappeared in grade XII and barely passed with 47 percent marks.

I was an undeserving candidate yet I got admission in the best science college in Jaipur, University Maharaja's College, thanks to reservation policy of Indian constitution. I opted for Physics, Geology and Mathematics in graduation. I realized that the subjects which used to scare me most since childhood became my destiny. I obtained only 55 percent marks in the first year of graduation in college.

In second year, I nominated myself for college elections. This was not a personal decision altogether; I decided to do it being forced by friends and in the illusion of becoming famous or at least known in the campus. However, I simply lost the election and ruined my second year by securing only 45 percent marks.

I used to think of being independent and doing something for my mother and siblings to make them happy and feel secure. Though I aspired to have a successful life I was not doing anything towards the successful achievement of the same.

I heard about Lord Jesus Christ during the middle of third year of my graduation and as soon I started believing in him, my life pattern changed. I stopped fighting for both right and wrong causes. I started seeing all girls with a different perspective as Bible taught me to consider them (as sister or mother). I quit smoking without any effort. My mind got transformed; I was enlightened. I became sincere towards my career and family responsibilities.

God removed all bitterness and unforgiveness from my heart, and filled my heart with love, as if a candle was kindled in the darkness and there was no hint of darkness anymore but light all around. I prayed sincerely for good marks and got 74 percent marks in final year. It was just a miracle for person like me who used to just manage to pass these subjects. God did this for me.

I appeared for the Rajasthan PGDCA entrance exam in the year

1998 with much prayer. To my amazement, I was informed by one of my friends that I was the topper of the reserved category. This was a miracle too.

Before I knew Jesus Christ, I was an expert in cheating and I used to spend more time in making paper chits for helping me write exams rather than studying to prepare myself for it. After knowing God, not only this habit just vanished but I never had any temptation to do so in any of my exams later.

I secured admission in one of the best education centers in India (IIT, Roorkee). I will share this testimony in detail later. I was able to secure 92 percent marks in the final project of M.Tech and was commended by my professors and guides for the remarkable performance.

My failures totally disappeared and God bestowed me with great success continually. Since then, I found favor of God continually on me during my studies, jobs, family situations and personal life. He gives me wisdom and grace to take right decisions and bless me with success after success. Praise be to the Lord!

Impossible with man is possible by God

During the final year of graduation in 1997–1998, I had two options, either to secure a job or to get admission in some good university for higher studies. Papa was keen to see me either as an IAS (Indian Administrative Services) officer or studying in highly esteemed university in a professional course. Since my childhood, he wanted us to study in the best possible schools and he succeeded in his efforts to much extent. He was very good at collecting information and keeping record of contemporary streams and job scenarios. He used to enjoy in guiding us and even other children who came for advice from him.

After college, I wanted to go for MCA (Master of Computer Applications), so I started my preparations for the same. Papa insisted me to apply for many other universities too. I filled up form

for Delhi University—MCA, BHU-MCA, Baroda (now known as Vadodara) MS University—MSC Tech (Geology) and University of Roorkee—M.Tech (Applied Geology). I was not interested to go for higher studies in Geology, so I was not preparing for it honestly.

More often than not, our preparations were thoroughly disturbed by indifferent attitude of papa. He would not give us proper environment for studies (due to his drinking habits). He could stop drinking or at least reduce it to some extent so as to not create scenes. It specially used to hurt me more because neither I was able to go to friends' place for studying with them because I used to feel insecurity for mummy, Hema and Pankaj and at the same time, I could not invite them to my home as well.

Sometimes, papa embarrassed me blatantly shouting and beating my family in front of my friends, including Rashmi. Yet, with Rashmi, I used to feel a different peace because she did not get offended ever with all these, rather she used to encourage me and pray with me.

One day, papa came home fully drunk and continued drinking during the weekend, I finally asked him to stop it. He became furious. He asked me to first do something worthwhile in my life and prove myself before teaching him anything what to do and what not to do. He made it very clear that otherwise I did not have any right to stop him from doing anything. He further said that a number of bugs and worms take birth and die everyday, therefore I should get out from his house and go anywhere if I could not prove myself. He said he did not care even if I died. He asked me to pass in all three exams, otherwise never to talk to him again.

I was hurt by papa's words and I literally wept before God. The only good thing came out of it was that he promised that if I passed all the three exams, he would stop using liquor. I asked God to take care of the situation.

I did not have hope in my capabilities to get through all these exams in such a short time, but trusting in the ability of God to

perform a miracle in my life, I started preparing for these exams. I did not know how I would pass. I prayed with a sincere heart. My prayer was something like this—

“Jesus, I am sure I cannot pass all the three exams by my own strength. I am preparing only for MCA and I do not have time to prepare for Geology exams. Lord, you have created the heavens and the earth and you know everything about it. Nothing is impossible for you. Please help me pass all these three exams by your grace.”

I used to cry before God every day. Students prepare for year or long to get admission in IITs and BHU, I had only 20–25 days. I had very less time for the amount of books I had to read, I just kept doing what I could. After appearing in BHU and Roorkee exams, I went to Baroda and wrote the exam. I had an assurance from God that he has heard my prayer and he will surely answer. I passed the M.Sc. Tech exam in Baroda and secured admission. I kept praying for the results of rest of the exams.

After few days, I got a call from my mother asking me to book my tickets to reach back home immediately. She informed me that I had passed BHU-MCA exam and was required to submit my original mark sheet. Rajasthan University was on strike and hence our mark-list was not out yet. I was required to go personally and request the same from university authorities. Next day she called up again and confirmed whether I booked the tickets or not. She said that I must reach home soon because even before BHU, I was needed to go to University of Roorkee for counselling session. I passed M.Tech entrance exam too.

My eyes were filled with tears and throat choked. I could not speak any further over phone but only cry thanking for God’s faithfulness and grace. By God’s grace, impossible became possible for me. In Jeremiah 29:11, he says, “*For I know the plans I have for you,*” declares the LORD, “*plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*”

In another version, Bible says that God knows the plans that

he has for us, plans not for our harm but to give us our “expected end.” I trusted in his plans for me and he blessed me abundantly. I thank God for not letting me fall in disgrace. God kept his promise that he makes his people head and not the tail. He made the impossible possible.

Answer for a mathematics question

Present help in time of need

I was sitting to write the complex Algebra paper for final exams of third year of my graduation. As per my newly acquired habit, I started praying for the questions to be easy for me and God’s wisdom to be able to write the answers correctly. I got the question paper in hand. We used to have three sections in the paper having three questions each. We were to write answer of five questions taking at least one question for each section. Failing to follow this pattern would prevent our answer sheet from being evaluated.

I knew all the six answers of second and third sections but to my surprise and horror, I did not know any answer from the first section including the first one which was compulsory. I did not have any hope in my intelligence anymore. Filled with fear of failure, I totally surrendered myself to God. I put down my pen and paper and just started praying to Jesus to give me wisdom and help me pass this exam. After praying, I just started getting something in my mind and I wrote it down as answer to the first question and finished rest of the paper quickly.

I rushed home to find if what I wrote was correct. I was awestruck to see my text book that the answer of the first question was given exactly as I wrote in the paper. “Halleluyah! God is good” I said. James 1:5 says, *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*

He kept his promise. I praised God for his continued presence with me and the immediate answer to my prayer.

Found a church in Roorkee—

Finding answers in unexpected places

After college when I got admission in M.Tech program of Applied Geology in University of Roorkee, papa went with me to drop me for joining. It was sort of a dream come true for him to see me studying in one of the most prestigious institutions of India.

I did not find any church or pastor in Roorkee. I could not attend any fellowship for many months. My only companion was my GIDEON Bible. It encouraged me and kept me growing in faith. I would feed on it daily and keep praying for a prayerful Spirit-filled church. I used to enquire from Pastor Peter if he knew any pastor in Roorkee. I requested him to pray about it.

Holy Spirit of God taught me the importance and ways of witnessing. I started sharing with my classmates and friends my testimonies of what God had done in my life. I made a good friend in class during first year. His name is Lekhraj, an inmate in the same hostel, Ganga Bhawan. Sometimes we used to pray together in his room.

Once, while he was cleaning his room, I was sitting there chatting casually with him. All of a sudden, something compelled me to pick up the crumpled paper from the garbage he was sweeping away. I picked it up without any hesitation or question in my mind and unfolded this paper. It was a Christian tract. It had the address of the Pentecostal Church; service timings were also clearly mentioned. I went and saw the church and became a regular member till my stay in Roorkee.

Pastor Lance's church in Roorkee has a special place in our hearts. It was a place where I and my wife Perna (who was just a classmate and friend then, with whom I shared the good news later and invited her to this church) grew in faith together.

As an answer to my prayers, I got address of a Spirit-filled church on a piece of paper being swept away in my non-Christian friend's room in the hostel. It was God's lesson to me that if I pray, I must

expect him in all places because he is an omnipotent and omnipresent God and can answer our prayers in unexpected places too.

Waiting on God's assurance

God has assured us of answers to every prayer made in his will through childlike faith in Jesus Christ.

In year 1999, during my stay at University of Roorkee (now known as IIT Roorkee), in one of the winter breaks, I heard of a three days' Christian convention coming up in Dehradun, a nearby city in the foothills of Himalayas. I decided to attend it prior to heading home.

The experience was awesome. We had continued sessions starting from early morning till late night. We started the day with prayer and worship, preaching twice a day, discussions over several subjects, again worship and prayers. By the time, convention came to the close we were filled with lot of faith to live by.

I boarded a bus from Dehradun bus stand for Delhi. The bus had to pass by Roorkee. As the bus stopped in Roorkee bus stand, I got down to refresh myself and buy a bottle of water. Due to the crowd, it took a while for me to reach back. I could not find my bus. I ran around and finally realized that I had missed the bus.

I felt a difference in myself. I chose not to panic but simply thank God that he was in control. I sang worship songs and waited for the next bus. I had faith that God would help me to catch the bus on the midway called Cheetal Grand where the bus would stop for half an hour. After waiting for some time, I managed to get a local bus. It was going too slow to be able to catch the express bus; however, my faith didn't allow me to doubt on God's ability. I kept singing worship songs in the bus also.

The person sitting next to me thought that I was very happy. He asked me the reason and I told him about the love of God which kept me rejoicing. He further probed about where I was heading to. I explained to him how I missed my bus and how I was going

to catch it on the Cheetal Grand. He exclaimed that by no means I could do that because this local bus was traveling too slow to make it up to the midway in another one hour. However, I insisted that God can keep my previous bus on the midway (Cheetal Grand) for next one hour too if needed. Probably it was too difficult for him to understand it without the same faith that I had.

I got down on the Cheetal Grand after approximately one hour and saw my bus there. I climbed the bus and looked for my stuff and found everything in place. I noticed that all passengers were already seated and were rather angry because the bus was not moving for last half an hour. I knew the reason.

Soon the driver came and we were on our way.

By this incident, God taught me a lesson that he is in control and favors his loved ones when we trust in him even in unfavorable circumstances. It boosted my faith manifold and I started trusting him for every detail of my life, big or small.

Our first job

God taught us to see the unseen

I and Prerna were friends, classmates and fellow believers. We both were growing together. Our dependence on God was increasing as we trusted in him for everything; God remained faithful to us in answering our every prayer. We both were in need of good jobs immediately after the completion of our course so that we may support our respective families. We put this petition before God, everyday in prayer, with thanksgiving and believing in his ability to give us what we asked for.

God gave us this assurance and faith that our job is granted from heaven. According to the principle I learned from Dr. Paul Yongi Cho's book, *The Fourth Dimension*, we started thanking God for giving us the job. We looked up to God based on the scripture in the Bible, Hebrews 11:1: *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what do not see.*

We used to pray together. Soon we also started claiming that God has already given us the job. Few of our classmates could not understand how and who had given us the job in the beginning of the third year (fifth semester) even before companies came for the campus interview.

I had a tremendous feeling that our job would be in NIIT. We used to proclaim it by faith. One of them asked whether we bribed the company, another one asked if we had influence in the company or knew someone. We had only one answer to all those questions—No. We spoke it only by faith.

Some of them had a belief that NIIT would not come for campus interviews; but even if it came, it would not be open for Earth Sciences students to attend it. And even if it allowed, they would rather choose the toppers, not the rest. We were not the toppers.

Finally the day arrived when NIIT came. It was on the second last day when campus interviews were about to finish. NIIT in the pre-placement talk made it clear that company was open for Earth Sciences students since they were looking for people to work in GIS (Geographical Information Systems). They said that they would be conducting three tests out of which one was GIS. We did not know GIS since we had only one or two classes by then and we knew only the definition of GIS.

We started praying that company should not conduct GIS test. Immediately after our first test, we ran to the church and asked Pastor Lance to pray for us regarding the above request. Pastor was surprised to hear our request and he suggested praying for God's wisdom to pass the exam but we were sure we did not know anything. However, pastor commended our faith and prayed with us.

We got the results of the first two exams; we both had passed by the grace of God. It was already six in the evening; so HR manager came and announced that they were running short of time and

hence would not be conducting GIS test. Halleluyah! “Praise the Lord” was our response. We knew God was with us.

Interviews started at 7:30 p.m. in the department of management studies. Girls were being interviewed first. We both were walking around and praying constantly for God’s grace and wisdom to pass the interview. Many friends came and asked if we had read certain things and we simply responded that we did not and neither we could do it at the last moment. We just kept praying.

Perna was afraid to see that most of the girls were being interviewed for 35–40 minutes. She said that she would not be able to stand it. She requested to pray that her interview should not be more than 15 minutes and no technical questions should be asked. We prayed together and as she went inside the interview room, I prayed for her. She came out in less than 15 minutes and joyfully testified that she was not asked any technical question. She left for the hostel and I asked her to continue to pray for me.

I was interviewed at 1:30 a.m. in the night. I came out rather early, I think in 10–11 minutes and the next person even quicker, probably in 5 minutes. I was not asked any technical question too.

Boys were really upset and were abusing the NIIT team for being partial. They were angry because they thought that the company did a formality in the end and had already selected the ones they wanted, much earlier. Seeing me so calm and patient, one of them asked me why I was not angry. I plainly said that I would be selected so there is no need for me to get angry. This answer really puzzled them and probably they thought that I was crazy.

Some of them knew our faith and yet they were unable to connect it with the practical life situation. This is what happens when we know the religion, we follow its traditions but do not understand and know the true God. We ought to live life in the same way as taught by the Spirit of God. We also realized it that our faith must be seen in our lives all the time, and this is what we were trying to practice. God was helping us in doing so.

Next day morning we heard the results. Both, me and Perna were selected along with other six people. We were called for a second round of interview. We prayed that none of the Earth Sciences candidates should be filtered out. Finally only six were selected, all from Earth Sciences.

God works contrary to the ways of the world. People said, NIIT would not come, it came. They said it would not open up for Earth Sciences, and they selected only Earth Sciences students. They said not Brijesh and Perna, and we both got our job offer letter in our hands one year earlier than completion of our course.

Many companies later sent the refusal letter due to big slow down in IT industry in 2001. Our friends who were selected in NIIT were also frightened but we comforted them by saying that our job was from God and no one can send us refusal on the blessing given to us by God. We did not receive any refusal letter. We joined NIIT GIS Ltd in September 2001.

God taught us to see the unseen by faith as he taught Abraham by calling him out in the night to see the sky and count the stars. He was teaching—to count the uncountable.

Hope for us in hopeless situations

Papa had selected a bright, good looking, young gentleman named Sanjeev for Hema's marriage. Hema shared her faith with him and told him about Jesus Christ. Over a period of time, he tasted the goodness of God. Sanjeev seemed to be the perfect match for Hema, a nice and humble man. Over the years, I am convinced that truly this was the will of God to unite them together.

Later on due to certain misunderstandings with Sanjeev's family, papa wanted to break Hema's engagement. I was away from home, doing my final project in Dehradun and things were equally rough at home, as much as I had left when I went to Roorkee. I heard several news of papa's ill behavior with mummy, Hema and Pankaj.

I desperately wept over my helplessness. As much I felt helpless, Prerna, as a friend and fellow believer supported me and prayed with me.

God gave me wisdom to finish my project with perfection in very short time even without full attention from my external guide, who was tied up with certain other important things. I was able to finish my project in five months time successfully while many others took more than six months to finish theirs.

We were praying desperately for this marriage. God answered the prayer in a wonderful way—one of papa's old friends intervened into the matter. He is a respected member of the society, an IRS officer and known to Sanjeev's family too. He became the connecting link and forced papa to maintain the engagement. God gave us hope in hopeless situation.

Though papa was not much interested in this marriage anymore; however, he yielded to family, friends and society pressure. God prepared his heart. There were problems in every step, but, God was with us. He was eliminating every problem and was giving us wisdom to finish this Herculean task successfully. She is married now and has a son, Hardik. Sanjeev and Hema both are believers and baptized in Jesus' name. God is faithful to keep them in his fold and blessing them.

Standing on the promises of God

God's favor was upon us in the first job given to us. We saw successful completion of many projects with divine wisdom for many problems that we faced in the projects. It might seem funny to a normal IT professional to seek guidance of God in the day-to-day projects; however, if we think so, we probably have doubts on the ability of God to know everything. We would pray for our company and colleagues. Many of our colleagues did well too but God gave favor for us in the eyes of our supervisors. I was selected to go to USA for

starting up a project, and later start US factory after successful pilot projects.

Just a few days before I was supposed to go for visa interview, I realized that I was unable to find my passport. It could result in missing this opportunity. I was despaired. I searched frantically for many hours in every corner but I did not find it. Normally we used to keep it in the locker in a cupboard, but even after searching for it many times we did not find it. In my desperation, I even forgot to pray about it. Prerna realized this fact and she prayed faithfully and brought out the passport from the same locker where earlier we had searched for it number of times. Just before fulfilling my dream, God taught me to not forget him in the hassles of life.

God gave special favor to me in his grace. I am not sure if I was the most suitable candidate for it but I was chosen for the “Award of Excellence” in 2004 for my good performance and valuable contribution in overseas projects of the company. My expectations with the company became high; however, the next appraisal was not so good, as much as I expected. I realized that this was the time to move on.

Since our marriage in 2003, Prerna was praying for our loans to be finished. We started praying for a new job. Immediately as we started praying, I got calls from several companies. Finally I received the call from the company where I am currently employed as I am writing this book in which I had sent my CV having given this lead by one of my friends. I was interviewed over phone for more than half an hour by the technical director of the company. He said that I would be informed within a week about the results of the interview. I received an email from this prospective employer on third day with an offer letter. God provided me this new job.

I started to think of going to UAE and settle myself and then call Prerna. However, Prerna was not very comfortable with this idea. We had always lived together and all of sudden this decision was very difficult. She was convinced of what one of my friends and

Christian Brother Rajkumar said—it cannot be the will of God to keep husband and wife separate. I agreed with them too. *“But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate”* (Mark 10:6–9).

We started praying that God would open a way that we both may have jobs and we may travel together to UAE. Bible says that when two or three pray in one accord on earth, it is done by God in heaven. We prayed sincerely; at least Prerna did.

As a step of faith, I wrote an email to the company saying that my wife was equally qualified so whether they could offer a position for her as well. The reply of the company was very polite but negative. They said that they had a company policy not to employ husband and wife together. We did not bother to write them again but kept on praying claiming the above verse given by God. The Lord did something unusual for the current employer sent an email after ten–twelve days saying that they wanted to offer a job to Prerna as well.

God changed the company policy for us.

We traveled together and joined the company in July 2005. We are working together in the same company till date. We have seen many favors of God in and through this company on us. We are still the only couple in the company, which proves the faithfulness of God towards his Word. In order to keep his promise, he did an extra favors to us by changing the hearts of authorities in our company to deviate the policy only for us. Praise to be God!

On the way to UAE

Trusting and obeying

We did not know anyone in UAE when we decided to shift and

didn't have any knowledge about the country. The only overseas experience I had was of USA and Thailand.

While we were packing for our travel to UAE, we did not know what we might possibly get there; so we packed every thing what we thought was important for us to sustain ourselves at least for a few days till we became used to and knew the place. Our total baggage was 94 kgs, which was way above the permitted limit of 50 kgs. It could be extended only up to 60 kgs on discretion of airport authorities. We made up our minds to pay the extra baggage charges if needed. Yet, we prayed like little children, something like this:

“Lord, we do not know about this country where you are taking us. We do not have anyone known to us in this country either. We just depend on you to lead us. We have packed so much; and Lord, we pray that you take care of the airport authorities and let our baggage pass without any difficulties. Amen!”

At the airport, when we reached the counter to take our boarding pass, the counter officer weighed our luggage and informed us that its weight was above the permissible limits. He informed us that we might need to pay around 10,000 Indian rupees as extra baggage charge. Though it was a big amount, still, we were ready to pay. We continued to pray while standing in the queue for God to speak to this person.

He asked us to wait one side. After 10 minutes, while many other passengers got their boarding passes and left and we were still waiting, he asked us if we could pay Rs 5,000/-. I said that we would need a receipt for whatever amount he charged. He did not seem willing to give us a receipt, which meant, he was asking bribe. We kept waiting. He again asked after 5 minutes if we could pay Rs 2,000/-. We insisted on a receipt. He took our passport and tickets and handed back to us with the boarding passes. I asked, “How much?” He said, “Nothing” and asked us to go inside.

We did not know how it happened, but we knew one thing, that we made a godly choice by not paying the bribe. As we proceeded

further, custom staff asked us to recognize our bags. After seeing our bag, he probed us about the amount we paid at the counter. We informed him that we did not pay anything. One of his colleagues came and asked us to pay something to him otherwise he might stop the baggage, since it was overweight and we did not pay for it.

We told him that we were ready to pay the fine if it was our mistake. He insisted and tried to scare us of large amount of fine and even stopping the baggage from being loaded on the aircraft. I did not know what to say but God filled my mind with words to speak to him. I had my Bible in my hand. I told him that I was a servant and child of God and I believed in a living God who was with us even in that moment. I asked him how I could do something illegal in front of God. I further showed him few verses in the Bible and explained him that bribery was a sin and explained him about sin and forgiveness.

He was a contract employee. He asked us to pray for a new job so that he would not need to indulge himself in such illegal activities. We prayed for him there, boarded the plane and reached safely with our entire luggage, without paying a single penny for the extra baggage. God's favor remained with us. It may seem abnormal, but God does it for his children.

We learned this aspect of trusting and obeying him to the extent of being heavily aspect and then saw how he works wonders. We understood how much we needed God in our daily situations where we make choices and decisions in the will of God or against his will.

Life brings choices for us to make every moment. What to think and what not to think, what to say and what not to say, what to do and what not to do, what to see and what not to see, where to go and where not to go, how to dress and how not to dress, how to react and how not to react. We make number of decisions every day. We must decide to obey God because we know that Bible is true and our every choice is known to God.

Based on my experience, I can assure you that if you take

courage in him, and take decisions, God will honor you with his special favor.

When I look into my life, I find that on my own strength, thoughts and deeds, am yet the pathetic person and if it was not for his grace, I would have perished. I cannot say at all that I am a good and holy person in my own strength; yet God loves me and gives me grace to live one day at a time. In his patience, he endures with me and encourages me to live a holy life.

I spend time with God everyday and always am overwhelmed by his loving kindness towards me, by which I find new mercies every day. He forgives my sin and teaches me to walk in his ways daily. In his faithfulness, he answers my prayers. I am still learning and am an imbalanced man without Jesus. I cannot do anything good without him.

8. God's Faithfulness

God is just and faithful. He would neither do any injustice nor will he turn back from his words. He says that the whole universe may crumble and pass away but his words will never fall on ground or pass away until everything is accomplished.

He is faithful towards his promises which he has given in his Word. He says that if we ask him, he shall answer, if we seek him, we shall find him, if we knock his door, he shall open it for us. He gives

us courage to face our uncertain future by affirming that he is with us till the ends of the ages.

All the testimonies mentioned in the previous chapter are example of the unparalleled faithfulness of God. I would like to mention a few more here to show that time is not a factor for God. It is not our timing but his own timing in which he works; and trust me, his timing is perfect. He may answer our prayers instantly or he may take years. Believe me everything that he does is perfect. He

—○○○○○○—
“He is faithful towards his promises which he has given in his Word. He promises to give us blessings which this world cannot offer and he keeps his word. He is faithful.”
—○○○○○○—

can see the end from the beginning and hence we can trust in him in every situation of our lives. He is a trustworthy God.

Salvation of My Household

God spoke to me from Acts 16:31 and gave me a promise after I believed in him. “. . . *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.*”

I believed in God and saw many miracles already in answer to my prayers. There was no reason to doubt him. I clung to this promise that if I believed in him then me and my family shall be saved.

Since that day, God’s Spirit is at work. I believed in Jesus in 1998 and gave my life to him. I started praying daily for the salvation of my whole family. God saved the members of my immediate family one by one. My sister gave her life to Lord Jesus Christ in 1998 within two months of my salvation.

Pankaj, my younger brother ran away from home in 2000 and he came to me in Roorkee and stayed with me in the hostel. I told him about the love of God. Prerna and I explained him the gospel of Jesus Christ. We used to pray together in the hostel. He experienced the power of prayer and believed. I taught him what was written about forgiveness in the Bible and by reading that, he agreed to go back to home. At home, he slacked in his faith for quite some time due to papa’s continuous ill behavior; however, his faith was rejuvenated in 2001 by Prerna’s and my efforts, when he came to live with me in Delhi after I joined my first job in NIIT.

My mother started partially believing in Jesus in 2001. Her faith was divided, half in Radhaswami and half in Jesus. Many times she used to get discouraged by looking at the situations. She had really tried her best to pacify the situations through various means. For a long time, she kept struggling with this dilemma of two faiths. She was confused about how to renounce her old faith and just go forward in Christian faith. I warned her not to travel in two boats at

the same time. I explained her that even if she thought that I did not know which one was the correct boat, still if she put her one foot in each boat, she would not be able to travel in either of them, rather she would be down in the water because both the boats would take different paths altogether.

I also explained that only one of them could be the right one, because God would never give his revelations in two totally contradicting ways. God is not a God of confusion but the Lord of peace, grace, wisdom and perfect order. I praise God for she chose the right boat for her life. She believed in Jesus Christ.

Only my father was left to be saved. Earlier, I was alone pray for my family, but gradually, we became many. Now, we all were praying for him.

In 2003, I got married to Prerna who is a very strong believer since her salvation in 2000. She is my encourager, prayer partner and friend. We are still praying for the salvation of the families of her mother, brother and sister. One cousin of Prerna gave his life and later the younger brother of this cousin also believed in Jesus. In year 2004, God took us to Prerna's maternal grandfather's house and gave us wisdom to share the gospel. Many people in her maternal family believed in Jesus and are saved, including many of her cousins and her 72 years-old maternal grandfather. Few of them just believe but are yet to put their trust in Jesus.

In my extended family by 2004, few of my cousins gave their lives to Jesus. Same year Dadaji (grandpa) came to stay with us in Delhi for some time. When he saw our love for God, he started asking many questions that confused him; after getting the answers, he abandoned his lifelong association with Radhaswami faith; embraced the truth and started believing in Lord Jesus Christ.

We are hopeful in his faithfulness that one day we will see our extended family saved by his grace so that all of us may enter into heaven with confidence.

Salvation of my father

God enabled us to love papa despite his unacceptable behavior. We had learned that it was not him but the powers of darkness which were working behind him to destroy him. I was sure God would redeem him and save him in his own time, because he has already crushed the devil on the cross 2,000 years ago.

I am not trying to disgrace my father, but I am stating only the facts. This habit was bad though, but it was the key which led us to search for hope and peace and we found Jesus. In fact, God brought glory to himself later by redeeming papa from this habit.

We were continuously praying for papa. Though Satan used to discourage us in various situations, nonetheless, every disappointing situation rooted us more in our faith. When we felt more helpless, we trusted more in his grace. All our elder relatives, papa's friends, mummy and we children tried to convince papa to stop drinking. He did not pay any attention. It seemed as if he was helpless and something was drawing him towards drinking and though he loved us, he could not take a decision to leave this filthy habit.

We, after getting saved, tried our best to show the living testimony through our lives and loved our father without any bitterness or unforgiveness in our hearts, and yet he kept on growing in pride and desolation. He kept on invalidating our feelings and under very critical circumstances mummy left home and came to me in Delhi to live with us. She could not take it anymore.

Papa was diagnosed diabetes and alcohol was functioning as



What would your children or spouse or family members or friends write about you if sometime they wrote their life testimony? Would it be your love, care, concern and your nobility or would it be some of your habits which bruised them physically, emotionally or spiritually?



sweet poison for him. He did not bother and kept on drinking. After mummy left home, he did not have food for almost a month. He was hospitalized once and doctors recommended him to give up drinking if he wanted to live. Yet, soon after coming back from the hospital he started drinking. It seemed he would never give it up. Satan, who comes to kill, steal and destroy, was working in his life to kill him and destroy all his prestige.

I got news in March 2005 that papa was very seriously ill and needed immediate help. I knew that he would not accept me until mummy went back to home. I did not want to send mummy back to him since she would be unable to handle the situation. I was in a terrible dilemma and was pretty discouraged by the situation. I neither went to the prayer meeting in the church that night nor did I turn up for the Bible study. I was just upset. I started praying and God talked to me from James 2:26: *As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.*

I knew God wanted me to GO. I said, "Yes, Lord, if you wish, I will go." I tried to ask what would I do, but I got no answer. Without any further thought on this subject, I left for Jaipur by the enabling of the Holy Spirit of God. Throughout the way, I was getting absurd thoughts. I rebuked Satan and kept on praying. On the way I shared the gospel with one lady who was sitting besides me and who was working as an IAS officer, posted in Delhi. He can use us anywhere and however he wants if we are ready to do his will.

I reached home at 10:00 p.m. in the night. All the doors were wide open and the entire house was in darkness except the inner room, where the lights were on. Papa was sleeping there. I entered the room and saw papa in a very bad shape. As I saw him sleeping alone in such a big house looking so weak and frail I felt like weeping over his situation and could not stop myself from crying.

Soon he got up and started asking me why I was crying. Instead of answering his questions, I started weeping loudly. Suddenly

God's spirit came upon me and gave me words to speak. He touched my father through my very simple words of request to believe in Jesus and leave alcohol. God touched him and instantly he took the decision to give up liquor from the very same moment.

I could not believe this; because we had requested him hundreds of times explaining him all aspects and had failed. I knew it was the Holy Spirit who brought me here was working in him.

His health was really critical and he was even unable to hold a glass of water by himself. His hands were shaking vigorously. He had tremendous pain in his body. He seemed to despair and in his distress he remembered his long forgotten Radhaswami faith. On his request, I put on a Radhaswami sermon CD. I was also hearing it carefully and was writing down the points to discuss with him later. He asked me what I was writing but I asked him to pay attention to the message so that we may discuss about it later on.

After the discourse was finished, he asked me again about what I was writing. I gave him my observations—in the preaching, guru or satguru word was mentioned more than ninety times, *bhajan* (meditation) was mentioned more than fifty times, *sachkhand* (equivalent word for heavenly abode) was mentioned about eight times and *malik* (Lord) was mentioned only 3–4 times. He was not amazed at the statistics but at my careful observation. He himself was a very keen observer and was probably happily surprised to see the same traits in me.

I explained him that the focus of this faith was more on the guru (teacher), as it teaches us to lean on him for our salvation (moksha); while, in our faith we totally trust and depend on God.

Papa was thinking that he was going to die and therefore he was desperate to meet mummy. I called up my friend, Rajkumar *bhai* in Delhi. He came to Jaipur and we took my father to Delhi in his car. On the way, when papa was desperately saying again and again that he would not survive, Rajkumar *bhai* told papa that if he

would believe in Jesus, he would be alright in next ten days. Papa was more amazed on the kind of love and friendship that we had, for which, Rajkumar bhai came all the way from Delhi driving for five hours; while his own friends in Jaipur did not come to help him in his worst times.

After reaching Delhi, his treatment was started. He could not sleep for couple of days due to abstinence from alcohol. He desperately asked for sleeping pills but it was not available without prescription of a doctor. Though he did not believe in prayers, we just prayed with him that night and he slept very well.

Next day he confessed first time that "prayers do work." He became inquisitive of Christian faith now. He asked many questions and debated over hundreds of issues in Christianity. By the enabling of the Holy Spirit, I was able to satisfy his intellectual mind with faithful words of the Bible.

He expressed his desire to go to church. We went to DBF for Sunday service where Pastor Devender was leading. He is a soft spoken and polite preacher and his preaching impressed papa. Satan tried his last trump by causing some confusion in papa's mind when he saw many people drinking from the same vessel during Lord's Supper, towards the conclusion of the service. With prayers, I entered in one more discussion and explained him that we were one family in Christ and there was no discrimination, hence we use the same vessel for drinking.

God started talking to him and he began to come closer to our faith. Pastor Devender along with Sangeeta *Didi* (his wife) visited our house and prayed with papa and all of us.

After ten days, as per our specific prayers, he was free from the effects of alcohol and smoking habits and was perfectly well in health. His blood sugar came down to 200 from 469 in few days without insulin but prayers. His eye sight became almost normal with glasses. He had put his trust in Jesus and was saved. Seeing him taking part

in the prayer was one of the most beautiful scenes of my life, which I will never forget. Papa started trusting in the Bible. He began sharing his new found faith with friends and relatives openly.

Our God changes lives. This was one of the most joyous times in my life. Many times my eyes were full of tears when I saw him singing Hindi hymns, reading Bible, praying and sharing his testimony in prayer meetings. He found a new enthusiasm in his life and he started experiencing abundant life promised by Jesus.

Papa who once hated Christianity was totally transformed to a person who loved Jesus Christ and who testified the goodness of God among congregations, friends, relatives and his office colleagues. He who had threatened mummy of divorce if she continued to go to the church, started attending Sunday fellowships after Jesus touched his life. He would take mummy to church with him. They received full salvation by praying sinner's prayer and taking water baptism with mummy in September 2005.

His life was changed after knowing Christ as his personal Savior. In his own testimonies, he mentioned of a divine peace many times which he had never experienced before. His attitude towards life was changed. He stopped drinking. He became a totally different person than what he was before. Many people who know him and saw him after his transformation can give a testimony of that great change even today.

Papa's death

God knows our failures. He alone is able to forgive them. He not only forgives but also forgets about our past once we come to him in faith and repentance. He makes us justified by washing in his pure blood as if we never sinned in our lives.

Papa lived life in his own way for approximately forty-nine years. He did



*He makes us justified
by washing in his pure
blood as if we never
sinned in our lives.*



everything for which God might punish anyone of us; yet, when he was at the verge of death in March 2005, God gave him the opportunity to know him and he accepted Jesus as his personal Savior and God. His life was changed altogether immediately.

In his last days, he committed many mistakes and became disobedient towards God. It proved to be fatal. He is no more in this world but I know that I will see him one day in heaven. I am sure that he is with the Lord according to God's promise, which Lord gave me after his untimely death on May 24, 2006.

Just before his death, when I reached home from Sharjah, he was already admitted in SDMH hospital. In the ICU, all over his body were different equipments to keep him alive. He was totally unconscious. Doctor reported that his situation was critical and they were not hopeful of anything better. Yet I chose to spend as much money needed if there was even a single ray of hope. I thought that his restoration and testimony was very important for me, but God's plan was something else.

I spent some time with him alone in the ICU; praying with him, for him. I was not sure whether he heard me at all. I sang a song for him which he liked most when he just came to faith. I told him that if he could hear me, he should confess his sins to God and forgive those of whom he felt offended for any reason.

When I went back home, I was puzzled. I was to take a major decision next day; whether to keep him in ICU for further treatment or to remove all equipments, which meant putting him to death, not knowing whether he was actually dead or was there any hope of his life. We prayed that night:

"Lord, we trust that you are able to do a miracle even at this stage. If this is your will that papa should go home with you, then let doctors give me no hope tomorrow, but if you want to heal him, please give doctors the right words and your wisdom to treat papa so that he would live for your glory. Amen!"

Next day when I saw the doctor, the first thing that he said

was that papa was clinically dead and there was no hope, however, he could keep him in ICU as long as we wanted. He said that papa would look alive since machine would be pumping oxygen in his heart and he would appear as if he is breathing. On doctor's advice, I took the most difficult decision of my life that day to remove the equipments. My father was gone.

After cremation, I once again sat down and asked God why did this happen. God in his faithfulness comforted me and my family much more than anyone else in that large crowd of family and friends, gathered to console us. God spoke from Isaiah 57:1, 2: *The righteous perish, and no one ponders it in his heart; devout men are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil. Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death.* I was truly pondering in my heart, why my father, on whom the righteousness of Jesus was imputed, had to go from this world so soon with such a bad testimony. God spoke to us that he was on the verge of rejecting God and his salvation, and was about to fall in evil and that is why God took him away and has kept him in peace in his own rest.

I praise God for his steadfast love and unfailing faithfulness. Amen!

Pranjal's birth

Jesus Christ is the Lord of death and life. Jesus proved it by commending his Spirit in the hands of God (Good Friday) and taking it back on the third day (Easter). He is a living God, seated in heaven advocating those who trust in him. I knew it theoretically by reading the Bible; but this fact was fulfilled in my life by papa's death and Pranjal's birth.

Prerna had lost two pregnancies. We did not know the reason—why. We trusted that God does not commit mistakes and if he has allowed so in our lives, it had a purpose. We never questioned

God or doubted in his unfailing love and faithfulness towards his children. Pastor Earnest every time encouraged us by saying that God takes certain things away so that he may bring better and bigger things for his glory.

Pastor Prabhu visited us once with his wife and prayed with us for a fruitful pregnancy. He re-emphasized the principle of spoken words in which we believed completely. He asked us to confess and repent of any idle or negative words spoken regarding pregnancy or children for whatever reasons. We did it. Later, during a prayer meeting in our house, one sister from our church prophesized upon us that we do not have to ask for a child, it is already given.

By God's grace, Perna conceived again in answer of all our prayers in late 2006. We asked God to bless this pregnancy and to show us his will. In answer to our prayer, that night God spoke to us from Psalms 127:4: *Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth.*

Although we would rejoice in either case—boy or girl but God showed us that this was a boy. Even before the first ultrasound, we knew it from God. Perna suggested naming him “Pranjal” which means “simple.” I was rather excited about the extrapolated meaning of this word which is generated by breaking the name in two—*pran* means life and *jal* means water. We believe God will raise our son, Pranjal to bless many with the water of life.

From the day, Pranjal was conceived, we were praying daily for a fruitful, normal and painless delivery. The baby kept growing in the womb normally. He was being fearfully and wonderfully made by God (Psalm 139:14). I was really awestruck by the creation power of our God who was creating a full human body.

When the time of delivery came, Perna's body was not responding for a normal delivery. She was put on artificial pain for two days, it did not work. Finally doctor decided to do a c-section and deliver the baby by operation. I was dismayed. What about our

prayers of normal delivery? I took the declaration documents from the doctor and came in the room. I asked God what was his will. Why would he allow cesarean? My faith was not shaken but I was questioning the ways of God.

It was July 22, 2007. God spoke to me to read from Psalm 22. I opened my Bible and started reading. *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent.* This was the deep cry of my heart. I was praying day and night for Prerna since last two days when she was suffering in the hospital.

God asked me to continue reading. In verse 9 says, *Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast. From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother's womb you have been my God. Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.*

I prayed in the same way as David prays in this psalm. I committed Pranjal in God's powerful hands. God in his faithfulness spoke again from verse 30 and gave me a calm assurance. He said, "A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." I read the Hindi translation which says, "*ek vansh uski sewa karega; doosri peedhi se Prabhu ka varnan kiya jayega.*" It means—one generation shall serve him, second generation will exhort the Lord. I knew God spoke to me. I signed the papers and gave my consent to the doctor for operation. Pranjal was born at 9:06 a.m. He was a perfect and healthy child.

Later, the doctor, who performed the surgery, came and gave us this news. She said, "This was a miracle and perfect will of God that this baby was born by cesarean, because the umbilical cord was turned twice around the neck of the baby, which sometimes may cause death by strangulation. Even if not so, it brings many complications. Do not worry the baby is perfectly alright."

It increased our faith in God more than ever. We learned another chapter of faith. At times, we need to pray to God for specific needs; but sometimes, we just need to trust him because he is the God who is in control and brings goodness to us in everything as per his promise in Romans 8:28, *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

God is good, all the time; all the time, God is good. There are innumerable incidents of his faithfulness in our lives but I cannot share them all. I can just say that simply depend on him without thinking of any consequences; HE is ABLE. We saw his faithfulness in all the walks of our lives. I will share some of his blessings in the next chapter.

9. Blessings

During one of my meditation times on the Word of God, I was revealed this elementary but powerful fact that it is the unseen organs in our body which are crucial to our life compared to the ones which are externally visible. We may live without a hand, or an eye, or our legs, or hair but it is highly unlikely to survive without having a heart, or liver, or our kidneys.

We are usually more passionate as well as thankful about the material blessings, which are seen; than for the spiritual ones, which are unseen. I am not saying that material blessings are not to be thanked for, but how much more our spiritual blessings are worth thanking and praising God which would bless us in far much longer time than our material ones.

At times, it is seen that people believe in Jesus after seeing miracles or blessings. Our faith in God should not be based on the miracles or blessings, rather we must believe in God because he has created us and is able to save us from our sins and raise



“God promises life in abundance through Jesus in the Bible. Jesus offers peace, joy, success, love and salvation as those blessings which are part of abundant life, which we do not have and cannot obtain unless we welcome him in our lives.”



us up to heaven in his day. I believe in him because he is Creator, sustainer and everlasting God.

Believe in him to love him and follow him. Bible teaches this fact very frequently in various passages. I had read them all several times but I learned this important lesson much later in my spiritual life.

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:18).

Blessings Mentioned in the Bible

Before learning this important fact, sometimes, I used to find myself very limited in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with many of my friends who were abundantly favored by the riches of this world. Material blessings are good but they are not important. They are just a means in this life to live by. God is much more than a supplier of material blessings. This is just a part of the whole gamut of things he does for us. *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well”* (Matthew 6:33).

God promises life in abundance through Jesus in the Bible. Jesus offers several blessings as part of abundant life which we do not have and cannot obtain unless we welcome him in our lives. All we need to do is seek him and according to his promise, we will find him and not only him but all that we need in our lives; physical, material and spiritual.

A list of God's blessings would include forgiveness of sin, our reconciliation with God and removal of our enmity with him, eternal life in heaven, true happiness and joy independent of our circumstances. This also consists of *agape* love so pure and holy, grace all sufficient for us to live by, peace of God, faith to trust in God's ability for anything which comes our way, answer to all prayers made in Jesus' name, regeneration of our heart. Also the physical blessings of good health by healing of all kind of sicknesses,

success, favor of God in the middle of unfavorable circumstances, victory over sin, way out in temptation, his own righteousness as free gift, courage in fearsome situations, wisdom and knowledge and much more.

Old Testament of the Bible, talks about so many explicit blessings of God for them who abide in his law and follow him carefully. It talks of all the material blessings, success, prosperity, respect, abundance, victory and favor of God. In addition to this, there are many other portions in Psalms and Proverbs which define the premise of biblical blessings.

New Testament furthers these blessings in spiritual context and promises to—make us children inheritors of God, regeneration of our hearts through the Holy Spirit, make us new creation in him, make us seated in heavenly realms, royal priesthood, comforted by God, freely justified, peace and joy of God, abundance of life, eternal life in heaven, giver and not taker, head and not the tail; and much more.

I would not go in the theological details of what all God can do for his people. I would like to share only in short about what God did in my life.

Peace of God

I do not want to give you any false hope that if you believe in Jesus Christ, all your problems will vanish and you will walk on bed of roses; but I can assure you that if you give control of your life to him, he will give you peace which this world cannot offer. *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid”* (John 14:27).

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7).

Our problems did not disappear even after we believed in Jesus,

however, a peace came upon us which overshadowed every problem and comforted us even in the times of deep trouble.

During the period of mid 2005 till mid 2006, we received God's blessings; late 2005 to mid 2006 was a very tough period too, for us. In bad and in good times, we kept on trusting God and he remained with us to deliver us and give his peace in troublesome situations.

In 2005, while I was serving in my first job, I had lots of loans to clear and every month my outflow of money was larger than the inflow. We were also struggling with papa's drinking habit continually. In his best time, God intervened in a marvelous way. He brought papa to faith and delivered him from alcoholism in March. I got a job in Sharjah in July and financial problems started easing.

I reached Sharjah (UAE) with my wife Prerna. I was on employment visa, but Prerna came on visit visa which was to be converted into employment later. In October she went to Qishim in Iran for the change in visa. God used her wonderfully to touch many souls. She shared gospel with non-Christians, and encouraged Catholics by sharing her testimonies to indulge in a deeper relationship with God. On return, she felt some problem in her stomach and after tests we realized that it was in medical terms—a threatened abortion, that is accidentally or due to weakness she lost this pregnancy. We were sad but not disappointed because our God gives us hope in every situation. We knew he was in control.

November onwards I started hearing that papa was not interested any more in prayers because of tiring days. From December onwards, he completely stopped going to church, again started drinking heavily and troubling mummy. Mummy had to leave our house. She went to Chandigarh to live with Pankaj.

One Sunday morning of January 2006, mummy and Pankaj were going to church when they met with a serious accident. Mummy's sari got stuck in the rear wheel of the motorcycle and they both fell down. The motorcycle fell on mummy injuring her

leg. She suffered many serious injuries on face, arms and torso. It was a major accident, she had multiple fractures but God saved them both. Pankaj did not get hurt much. Pankaj and his friends hospitalized her and took good care of her. Papa went there to see her and insisted to bring her back to Jaipur. This was a disaster. She was unable to move and he wanted her to travel more than ten hours.

Everybody persuaded him to leave her there for some time, but he did not listen to anyone. He finally took her back to Jaipur. This resulted in certain complications that were treated later in Jaipur but had lasting effects. She stayed at *Nanaji's* (maternal Grandpa) house during her treatment. Papa used to give long calls and abuse her and disturb her in the nights. She was unable to recover. I was really upset and felt helpless. I was praying.

Papa was at his worst behaviors those days. Due to his such attitude, dadaji lost his mind. He did not see any hope anywhere. No one was with him to strengthen his new found faith in Jesus. Towards end of February, we got the shocking news that he passed away. Papa did not stop his drinking even with this. Eventually he contracted a terminal sickness of the liver. It proved to be fatal and next few months he spent in the hospital. In spite of all possible care in the hospital, he expired in May 2006.

Before he died, I reached Jaipur. On his death, I had to call Prerna from UAE. After all the necessary formalities and ceremonies, we flew back to Sharjah. Only after coming back, we realized that all the time of her travel, Prerna was pregnant. In July, we lost her second pregnancy too.

If you see the series of events from November 2005 to July 2006, you would be surprised to see what we went through. This was the time when God was teaching us new dimensions of faith. He was pruning us. He does it at times with his loved ones to make them truly blossom in him and spread his fragrance as a gardener cuts down some part of the plant (especially some branches for pruning

purposes) so as to allow proper nourishment to reach to certain part of the plant in order to cultivate best quality flowers for his heavenly garden. This pruning exercise brought steadfastness in our faith.

Problems did not vanish all of a sudden but peace of God prevailed in us all through. *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33). Jesus gives a great comfort through his above statement and strengthens us in our spirit to keep trusting in him and he would fill our hearts with his peace.

Love for All

God loved me and showed his love in such a way that when I was yet sinner and his enemy, Jesus Christ died for me. He showed the degree of his love for me on the cross, blessed me with victorious life and then commanded me to love everyone as he loved me. He asked me to forgive others as he had forgiven me. In fact, in the prayer taught by Jesus in Matthew 9:13 onwards, there is a strange order, different than the one commonly understood. It says, forgive our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us; which implies that if we do not forgive, God should also not forgive.

I had less people to forgive than to be forgiven of. I settled my scores with God and then with the individuals whom I had offended ever. After this, God filled me with his love and compassion for those who are lost. He poured his agape love in me by his Holy Spirit who lives in me. His love now compels me to talk about “freedom from slavery of sin and death” to all whom I can reach.

After knowing Lord Jesus Christ personally, I became a changed person. I started loving my family much more and I have become more responsible towards them. My siblings saw a remarkable change in me. Love of God helped me to throw out all the unwanted feelings out of me against anyone with whom I was at odds earlier. I cannot brag that I love them all, but it is Jesus who lives in me and who loves them through me. When I yield myself to him, he uses

me to reach out to those, whom he wants to save. Bible teaches in 1 Corinthians 13:4–8:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. . .

And other places both in Old and New Testaments:

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:18).

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...” (Matthew 5:43, 44).

He answered: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself” (Luke 10:27).

Practically speaking, it seems to be easy spoken than done, but God gives grace to fulfill this command. Jesus is transforming me day by day to make me like him one day. He expects from us that our attitude be as of Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:5), so that we may be restored in the same image and likeness (Genesis 1:27) as we were created initially as sinless Adam and Eve.

I am continually learning this. I am sure that the good work that he has started in me, he will finish it to perfection one day.

Change in Thinking

My thinking changed. God taught me from his Word that every thought that does not belong to him, must be captivated and brought under subjection of Lord Jesus Christ, because every thought which does not come from God belongs to Satan.

Before knowing Jesus Christ as Lord, my first thought about every young man I saw, used to be—if I fight with him, can I defeat him or will he bash me down. I used to imagine—if I fought with

this man, I would use this tactics or that. I did not have control over my thoughts—they were thoughts of quarrel not of love.

When I came to know Jesus Christ, I learned that he wants us to turn our second cheek towards our enemy when he slaps on one. He said love your enemies. He teaches to pray for them who persecute you. He also said that it is his job to avenge not ours. In his love, his passion remains to love and save the souls. He has infused his passion into me now. Today when I see someone, I see a lost soul in him/her which might go to hell; I feel myself responsible and sense a different love towards him/her to share the goodness of God. My thoughts are altogether different than the earlier ones.

Once I did not have hope and I could see only negativity in my life situations. I was driving my boat by myself and believe me, I was struggling a lot. It may be your experience too. Many times it happens that we are faced with situations which we do not know how to handle and fear what would be the outcome. We do not see any hope. Such times bring depression and negativity in us.

Since I have made Jesus Christ, the driver of my boat, I am at ease in every situation now because he knows it all and knows it well. He does everything for our good. Same situations in which I used to feel defeated earlier, today I am victorious by the strength of God which works in me.

I can handle many of those life situations with trust in Jesus Christ. Bible says that he has given us key to his kingdom; whatever we loose on earth is loosened in heaven and whatever we bind on earth is bound in heaven. This is the key to our thoughts and words; I confessed and repented for every idle and negative word I ever spoke and the negative thought I entertained in my life. Since then, I sow positive and I reap positive. I try to see Jesus in every situation and therefore I find something positive in every situation. This is how I can thank God and rejoice in him for everything as he expects us to do (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18).

He gives me a constant hope, and that is why I can speak

positive in all situations. This change has been brought in my life by Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to God!

Fear of Death Disappears

There is no fear of death in me. It is gone since the day I believed in Jesus Christ as my Lord. As Paul says in Philippians 1:21 that for him, living is Christ and death is a gain; in both the cases, he talks of the continual presence of God in him and with him, whether in this world or the other.

Most people in this world are frightened of death. The reason behind this fear is that they do not know what lies behind death; what happens to the soul once a person dies. The uncertainty causes fear. I know what would happen to me after death; so I am not scared of death. According to John 14:3, I have a promise from Jesus: *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”*

Another factor which scares people about death is—what will happen of my family, my wife, my kids, my parents (if they are dependant) etc. But in Jesus Christ, I have hope. I know that my God who takes care of me and provides my every need is able to take care of my family even if I am not there. This assurance in God gives me confidence which I cannot explain in words. Jesus taught this in Matthew 6:26, 27: *“Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?”*

And in Matthew 6:31, 32: *“So do not worry saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.”*

I am glad to live this life and thank him always, but will not be afraid to see death any day because then I will live with Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, forever.

Hope of Eternal Life with God

Bible says that those who have believed in the name of Jesus have been adopted as children of God. Their names have been written in the Book of Life. They have bypassed condemnation and hence, though there is judgment but no punishment whatsoever.

I have reason to believe in what Bible says. There were approximately 332 prophesies done about Jesus Christ out of which 99 percent are already fulfilled. The only ones left are about his Second Coming. I know that because all the prophesies about first coming of Lord Jesus Christ were true and the transformation that has taken place in my life is true, so there is no reason why rest of the prophesies concerning his Second Coming will not be fulfilled.

Jesus Christ is coming for the second time. He will come to take his church into heaven where he has mansions prepared already for every person who belongs to him. In heaven, we will worship God with all his angels and people of all nations who had believed in him during their earthly lives and were obedient to him till death.

I have the hope that I would see God and will live with him forever in his kingdom. The picture of heaven is given in the last book of the Bible in New Testament called “Revelation.” It talks about the Book of Life and seal of the Holy Spirit, which has already been marked on everyone who believes in Jesus. This is a spiritual blessing, which we cannot see by our eyes though, but it has been given to us and will be revealed only in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

What can stop me from having a hope of glory to live eternally with God—my king in his kingdom, where there is no pain, no sickness but a divine joy.

Success and Prosperity

Psalms 1 gives us the key to become a successful and prosperous man. It says (as quoted from KJV): *Blessed is the man that walketh*

not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

I would paraphrase another translation, which says that the man who does not walk, sit and delight with ungodly people in their wicked talks and ways, but meditates on the Word of God day and night, will be successful in whatever he does. This in common English would mean that one who does not involve himself in anything which is evil (at whatever scale), but trusts in God, walks in his ways, reads from the Bible, takes all his decisions in God's will and makes daily choices to obey him wilfully, is the man who shall be successful in all his endeavors.

God blessed me when I followed these Scriptures. I am neither implying that I became a saintly person and did not commit any sin after I came to know Jesus nor I am contesting that I am the most successful man. I am simply stating that as I strived to do what was written in the Bible and tried to change my behavior as God demanded of me to be obedient towards him, through prayers practically disciplining myself and seeking the help of the Holy Spirit, God made my failures disappear and brought success to me in every endeavor I undertook.

God prospered my ways and Jesus brought me into victory. As mentioned in various testimonies in this book earlier, I received the wisdom of God at the right time in every situation to handle it with grace to successful end. Holy Spirit has been guiding me in my studies, my job, my day-to-day life, my social engagements and my witnessing. I received good success in my studies; recognition in my jobs and respect in the extended family and society at large.

I am not the richest man on the earth but I have all the material

comforts that I need to live this life and am really contented with what God has given me. These are not important for me but they are useful. I do not take pride in them but I use them as if they are not mine but a gift of God to me; and they really are.

I will keep loving my Lord with all my heart, mind, strength and soul whether these material possessions remain with me or not.

Constant Friendship and Favor of God

I have seen a constant favor of God upon me and my family. This is a spiritual blessing which provides all my material, physical and spiritual needs. God has become my friend. He is really the best friend, who bears with me all the time, never complains, forgives my trespasses and helps me when I need him. He talks to me everyday and longs to meet me more than I do.

Being friend of God is not a difficult thing. Only we need to know him, accept his offer of friendship, keep a daily communion with his Holy Spirit and enjoy his loving, continual presence with us.



Being friend of God is not a difficult thing. Only we need to know him, accept his offer of friendship, keep a daily communion with his Holy Spirit and enjoy his loving, continual presence with us.



I know he lives with us and in us. He wants us to involve him in every choice that we make and all decisions that we take. He wants us to consult him in prayer about any step that we are going to undertake. He desires of us that we acknowledge his presence when we are working, earning or spending our money, watching any program, reading any book, walking, talking or cooking—in summary, all the activities of our lives.

If we allow him to be part of our lives, we can see his friendship and favor, wherever and whenever we need it, even without being prayed for.

Testimony of God's Friendship

After coming to UAE, we did not have a computer to keep us connected with our loved ones in India, so we wanted to buy one. We had enough money to buy a computer, but we wanted to wait upon the Lord to direct us. I want to emphasize here that money was not a factor for our prayers; we just wanted to tell him what we wanted and to know what he thought—an advice of a friend. Finally Lord guided us to buy a laptop and we were blessed with a nice computer.

It may seem a little funny to those who do not recognize Jesus as true and real living friend, but trust me, he is living and he is a true friend. You will see it—how.

Soon after buying the laptop, we wanted to use it for browsing internet and chatting with family back in India. We had to buy a headphone, a mouse, an internet cable and a web cam. This would not cost more than 100 AED (UAE currency); so one fine evening we went to buy them. We selected all the items in the hypermarket of City-Centre and came to the cash counter to pay. We realized that the headphone which we had selected thinking to be 36 AED in cost was actually for 52 AED. Probably somebody had kept it in the wrong shelf. However, we just paid and came back home. We paid more than our estimated budget.

After reaching home, I opened the mouse packet and to my disappointment, it was a PS2 mouse, not USB. My laptop did not have a PS2 port. I saw the packet and it showed USB mark yet the mouse was PS2. After this, I opened the web cam packing but the driver software CD did not work. I realized that it was broken. Finally, I thought at least the internet cable would work. I put it in the sockets and tried connecting to internet. To my amazement, this also did not work and I found out that it was a telephone cable and not internet cable.

We could not use a single thing out of what we bought recently. We started pondering why these all happened and reached to one

conclusion that we did not talk to Jesus regarding these things. We had prayed sincerely for the laptop which was going to cost us around 5,000 dirham; but we did not bother to talk to our intimate friend for the seemingly petty things. It did not seem to be a big deal in the beginning, but Lord showed us—it was.

At last, we said, “Sorry Lord.” We confessed before God that it was our mistake that though we valued him as our friend, yet we forgot to consult him. We then asked something unusual—like Gideon. We asked Jesus that he must get us our money back from the shop if he had truly forgiven our mistake.

Normally, this shop’s after-sales would either try to repair the things or would give a voucher which could be used for buying other things in the same shop only. We went to the “after-sales” counter and surrendered the stuff to them. They said that they would give us a voucher which we could use for shopping in the shopping area. After waiting for 15–20 minutes, when the main clerk did not come back, the lady offered us our money back. We knew that our friend had forgiven us, one more time. His favor was upon us.

We learned that how much Jesus values our relationship and communion with him. We also learned that when we confess our sins—that is agreeing with God, he forgives us every time and shows us his favor.

Favor of God

Favor of God could be understood by an illustration of an exclusive traffic free super speed lane, meant only for the believers, whilst others are forced to use the normal speed congested lanes stuck in the traffic of overwhelming crowd. It may seem unjust but this is how it is—all are invited to accept God’s grace and use this lane but many of us reject this grace and take the other path. It’s our fault not God’s; he is not partial.

Using the above example, I do not want to contradict or misrepresent what Jesus taught about narrow and wide paths. The

context behind that passage is a little different where Jesus asks us to walk in the narrow lane which leads to the kingdom of God. It's narrow and difficult to walk, but good thing is that it is not congested, you find very few people on the way. Rest all are taking the wider road which leads to hell and destruction.

If we want to understand how to receive the favor of God, I would explain it using the following illustration.

Assume that you bought an expensive home theater system which has complicated interface to connect all the wires. Every good electronic system comes with an instruction manual which guides us through the steps to connect and configure the system. If we follow the steps, though it might take some time and effort, yet it will finally reward us with the most pleasant sound our system is expected to render. However, if we simply ignore the instruction manual and try to connect the wires just by our gut feeling, there is a high possibility that we might blow our expensive appliance.

We can see “life” in parallel to the illustration of the electronic system given above. Our manufacturer, God has created us perfectly with a definite purpose and has given us an instruction manual to follow—the Bible. If we start operating our lives as per the guidelines given in the instruction manual of our manufacturer, we could be just sure that we will remain full functional (blessed) and would be able to receive maintenance (favor of God) from the manufacturer even if we fall apart.

He does it for me everyday. Even though, I fall, he lifts me up and his favor remains on me to bless me with peace, joy, answer of my prayers, hope in hopeless situation, all material needs and success in my life.



Our manufacturer, God has created us perfectly with a definite purpose and has given us an instruction manual to follow—the Bible.



I became unfaithful and undeserving many times in my life but he kept loving me faithfully till this age from the times when I did not know him. He has shown his favor to me in difficult moments and has brought me out of distress every time. He has blessed me with “abundant life” full of blessings on the earth with a hope of spiritual eternal life with God in heaven.

He is ready to do it for you too. Just trust in him and ask for it and your joy would be full. If you have not known Jesus as your personal Savior, just talk to God, he is alive and will hear your prayer. Repent for your ignorance, confess all your sins (known or unknown), renounce all your prejudices, tell him that you believe in him, that he is Son of God who came on earth to pay the price for your sins, acknowledge that he died—rose again and was raised to heaven—alive, welcome him to live in your heart and lead your life. Once you have done so, believe that your sins are forgiven and you have a new life in him.

Whether you are a born-again believer for long time or just gave your life to Jesus, though you may have missed the abundant life so far, you can obtain it today. If you want to make a fresh commitment with God, please do it now by praying.

“Dear Lord Jesus, O Son of God, I really thank you that you love me. Lord, you have promised so many blessings in your Word and I want to inherit them as your child. Forgive me for my ignorance and negligence and hold me close to you. Fill me up with your Holy Spirit and bless me so that I may enjoy abundant life. Thank you for blessing me. Amen!”

Go

10. How to Live Godly Life?

We are almost nearing the last destination of this journey and this is the time when we should prepare ourselves to appropriate the blessings of God in our lives, by faith.

Let me give you a summary of our journey covered so far. We covered the first milestone, in which we saw the call of God—COME.

—○○○○○○—
Live by faith—this is what Bible teaches. Without God, we “live by sight” but with God, we “live by faith.” What we have talked so far is all about faith—in faith and by faith.
—○○○○○○—

COME

God has called every single soul to know him and live in peace with him by faith. Bible says that, until we yield to his call, we remain in enmity with God due to our rebellion against his holy standards and his kingship. We remain in the dominion of this world until we gain the nationality of heaven—God’s kingdom where God is King in all dominion.

RECEIVE

Second milestone achieved was to see God’s generous offer of eternal blessings, peace and favor for us to simply RECEIVE.

Since God has already offered his salvation through Jesus Christ, we can receive it by faith. It does not ask for anything else but faith. God accepts us as we are. He does not ask us to first change our lives, become religious or start working good for earning his favor. He is God who knows our inability to do anything good equivalent to his holy and high standards. So instead of allowing us to frustrate ourselves in our futile efforts, he offers his solution for our life problems.

We receive him by faith. Bible says that we cannot please God by any of our earthly endeavor but by trusting in him and by receiving him in fullness of faith.

GO

After this, I will just give you a very brief idea of what kind of life God calls us to GO for, in this world. Whether you took the decision to believe in Jesus before starting this journey or on the way; it is possible that you have not been living the life you are called for.

What are the things that we must do—we must live Christlike life and be transformed in his likeness day by day. After this, we need to spread the light of God in this spiritually dark world. We need to manifest the glory of God through our attitudes and behavior.

In order to live a godly life, there are several things that we must incorporate in our lifestyle. Essentially, we may start to do it with the following:

Talk to God—Pray daily

Feed your spirit—Read Bible daily

Build yourself—Remain in fellowship

Share—Witness your faith

Pray daily

Praying is nothing but communing with God with an expectation; expectancy to hear from him, anticipation of receiving our miracle and hope to be filled by him and feel his abiding presence. Talk to

him in a personal way, considering him our friend. Revering him as father—the living and eternal God.

Jesus showed the importance of prayer by his own example of praying daily in the nights, spending time with Father in solitude before he went among people and performed the miracles. In his human form he did not utilize his divine powers but the miracles that happened, were the demonstration of Father's work through his life. This is why Jesus said that we could do even greater works if we love and trust in him and exercise his power.

Did Jesus need anything from God in prayer?

I guess not. But only because of his love with his father, he talked to him, daily. If we would also spend time with God in prayer, we can achieve greater things. This is what Jesus affirmed to his disciples. Prayers have power to do miracles.

Prayer is not one sided occupation for a believer but it is also the will of God concerning us as stated in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18 of the Holy Bible. . . .*pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

We must see God as our Father and lovingly fear him, see him as our Lord and worship him and see him as our constant companion and trust in him, who is available to us in all times and wants to talk to us daily intimately. We need to “go” solitary times and pray to God for the infilling of his presence and overflowing power of his Holy Spirit every day. I start my each day communing with God and usually we finish it with our family prayers thanking God for his faithfulness and care throughout the day.

—○○○○○○—
We need to “go” solitary times and pray to God for the infilling of his presence and overflowing power of his Holy Spirit every day.
—○○○○○○—

I believe that before indulging ourselves in communicating with this world, we ought to talk to God. Some people start their day by

reading newspaper and some with morning exercises. None of them is wrong; but in my opinion after giving first place to God, all things will bring better results for us. After spending the whole day, we must also thank God for sustaining us and blessing us throughout the day. We also need to seek forgiveness of the sins that we commit in negligence or ignorance.

When we pray, God blesses us, provides our needs and redeems the precious souls from the hands of the devil, in our family as well as this world.

If we work, we work, but if we pray, God works.

Read Bible daily

Jesus said,

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you” (John 15:7).

This is what I learned in the early days of my Christian faith. I was told that Bible is the food of my spirit. Normally we tend to give full food to our body everyday, minimum two times (or more); but we usually ignore or forget that our spirit also needs food without which it becomes weak.

If we feed our flesh more by fulfilling our lustful desires, then it keeps growing stronger and at the same time if we keep our spirit starving, it keeps growing weaker and weaker. Eventually when there is a tug of war between flesh and the spirit, obviously the flesh wins because it has been fed more and we fall in the danger of sinning against God even after knowing him.

Weak spirit falls in temptations. It sins against God.

Sometimes we like to read the commentaries and other reference books of Bible written by famous authors but neglect the Bible itself. It is like reading books about varieties of foods but not actually eating it. Do you think reading such books can satisfy your physical appetite?

I recommend you to make Bible reading an integral part of your life. You will need to discipline yourself in the beginning, but later on, it will become a habit or a second nature—to feed on the Word of God, everyday. We must be rooted in the Word of God in order to grow in faith. Our faith becomes our shield to protect us from the darts of the devil, so that they will not be able to reach us nor harm us.

Build your faith

Romans 10:17 says, *Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.*

As reading the Bible helps us in hearing directly from God, which is very important; likewise, listening from the people who are mature in faith and can teach the fundamentals of the Bible, is also equally important for us to build our faith. For this reason, God asks us to “go” for a Spirit-filled fellowship in a church week by week and even more often if possible.

We do not go to church to find God. He has already found us. God does not live in the church or any other religious places of worship. In the church, we meet people of same faith and are encouraged by their testimonies of how God answered their prayers. We also learn positive ways of conduct from others of the same faith. Perhaps someday, someone will be encouraged by looking at you.

Keep building your faith by exercising it. As our bodily muscles become weak if we do not exercise, so do the spiritual ones. Building spiritual muscles is more crucial than the physical ones, because the physical muscles will go lean as the days pass by and eventually it will go in dust; but our spiritual muscles will keep us with God, eternally. According to the Scriptures, we are called to do so—

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness (Colossians 2:6, 7).

Witness about his love

Bible says that Lord Jesus Christ is coming soon to judge the world. Think—at least you got to hear the good news of God's love and his offer of salvation; probably you have already believed or will believe now, but what about your family? Who will take this good news to them? Where will they spend their eternity?

Our love towards ourselves, our family, our friends, our colleagues must compel us to share this news with them too. Right? Bible calls us to participate in the humbling experience of being a partner of God in reaching the lost souls. This was the purpose for which Lord Jesus Christ came on earth as he stated in the gospel of Luke 19:10: *“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”*

In John 20:21, he emphasizes his command to go into this lost world saying, *Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”*

And then summarizes in the Great Commandment: *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age”* (Matthew 28:19, 20).

He gave us the assurance that he has all the authority on heaven and on earth and then asked us to go and tell the good news of salvation (moksha) to everyone we come across. We should do it by loving them as we love ourselves and showing Christlike life. It is not necessary that we preach from the Bible, rather showing it from our personal life is more important. Someone has said, when you open the Bible, you preach from the Bible, but when you close the Bible, you preach from your life.

Holy Spirit imprinted this on my heart by his seal and I am joyfully involved in this cause. God taught me different principles by his Word and inspired me through his various servants. Today I am willing to “share my faith” with anyone who wants to know.

God does great things through us if we yield ourselves as mere instruments in his hands. I am not a writer, but God made me write this book and I yielded to this cause. Even after writing it in English, I was burdened to translate it in Hindi, but I was delaying it because I did not know Hindi typing. I thought I would have to write it all by hand; however, one night, God asked me to try Hindi typing. I did and to my surprise, I was able to type Hindi. Halleluyah! I thought it was very difficult, but God made it so easy. Within two hours, I was typing fluently.

More often than not, I remind myself that I am simply a vessel and Jesus is the water of life. He can use me or he can use any other vessel to satisfy his people. It's not the vessel which is important but the water which satisfies the thirst. Bible teaches us that we do not do this witnessing in our own strength but with the help of God himself. *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth"* (Acts 1:8).

*Bible teaches us that
we do not do this
witnessing in our own
strength but with the
help of God himself.*

Jesus did not ask us to make "converts" but disciples. He has asked us to share the truth about God revealed to us in his grace and show his true image through our attitude and lives. We just need to remain obedient to him and teach others to follow the things which he has taught us. He would do the rest to satisfy the thirst of seekers and transform their lives to save them.

After knowing God, I saw all around and knew that there were many like me who were lost and cursed by death. I wanted to just tell them what happened to me and how God changed my life. From the very beginning, I started sharing my new found faith with everyone even without having any doctrinal knowledge of

salvation. I could not answer the questions but could win people by showing the love put in me by permanent habitation of the Holy Spirit in my heart.

I want to share with you one example here to show how God can bless us and use us for saving souls and then bless further, even multifold. You will also notice that it takes time and patience mixed with love and faith to share the good news of God's love with anyone.

Witnessing

Trusting and obeying

In 1998–99, I was able to share my faith with one classmate of mine. Her name is Prerna. She belonged to a Buddhist family (Buddhist—who believe in *nirwana* by following the life of abstinence). However, she was also an idol worshiper.

We became close friends after our first Geological field trip to Nahani (Himachal Pradesh, India) in IIT. We started spending time together. I fell short several times to show a Christlike attitude to her but I shared my faith in a clear way with her and explained her about God's love and plan of salvation. She used to hear everything for my friendship's sake but never believed a word of what I spoke. She trusted in me and used to share many of her family issues with me. Mostly I used to lend my ears for just listening but sometimes God used to give me wisdom to advise her. Sometimes I used to pray for her in my room.

Prerna respected my faith but was not convinced to believe in it. She had an understanding that Jesus was God of Christians and it was good for Christians to worship him; however, she felt that she had her own gods and deities for which she had the full right to worship them in her own way. She also thought that Jesus was one of the gods and finally all religions talk about the same God whether we call him Ram, Allah or Jesus. I did not debate on the names but

showed her the difference from my life and God's presence with me as my friend and father, who took care of my every need.

I told her of what the Bible says and I believe that there is only one God and we cannot reach him without believing in Jesus Christ. I told her that there is no one else who paid the price of our sins. I also explained that it was not a matter of religion but only God. Even Jesus was never interested in religion, though he was born a Jew. He rather rebuked the priests and Pharisees for their hypocrisy since they made the law of God, a religion. He scolded them for making their own traditions and following them literally, while they did not heed to the actual message and spirit of the message.

To make it simple, I explained that all those who believe in Jesus Christ and belong to him are called Christians, like all those who belong to India are called Indians.

More than my talks, she was impressed by my burning faith in God and how I received the answer of my prayers just by faith. She experimented with prayers in Jesus name and found that Jesus is the prayer answering God. Several other incidents together gave her the feeling that Jesus is God. She started believing in him and going to prayer meetings and church fellowship. We shared the same Gideon Testament for our Bible studies every evening 8 o' clock in her hostel's guest premises. We started growing together in faith day by day.

She received Lord Jesus as her personal Savior in September 2000 and took water baptism after renouncing her old ways of worshiping God and giving a testimony of her salvation by God's grace and her faith. We used to attend the same Pentecostal Church in Roorkee till our last day in the campus.

God bestowed numerous blessings and answer to our prayers then on and blessed us together with answers to many prayers which boosted our faith and brought us more closer to each other and God Almighty. She became a born again disciple of Lord Jesus Christ and loves God with all heart, mind and strength. Now I have her as

my life partner. It gives me joy and humility to profess that we both have made a wonderful family by the grace of God which inspires many to lead family life in godly ways.

Prerna and I learned it together and practiced it in our lives. God has always been so merciful, trustworthy and faithful to work wonders in and through our lives. He has been using us in various ways for his glory. God enabled us to see the world from biblical point of view and we found that more people were walking on the broad path which takes to destruction and less on the narrow path which takes to the salvation. This fills our hearts with more and more passion to share good news of resurrected Jesus to as many as possible.

We made it an unwritten rule for both of us to share the gospel with every person who entered our house. We shared the good news of God's love with our milkman, water delivery boy, newspaper hawker, policeman who came for passport related enquiry, sweeper, our maids, the autorickshaw drivers with whom we traveled. To our joy, sometimes we found people who had already been witnessed and we simply needed to water the seed which was sown by someone else. We know that one day we would be able to see some of them in heaven because we opened our mouth to share the gospel of salvation with them.

We reached in our extended families and shared the good news of salvation. Many of them have already believed, some of them are yet struggling to believe, some are neutral, and some of them are rigid and resistant to the Christian faith. All we do is we continually pray for them and share our testimonies as often as possible when we meet them. This might happen with you too but don't be dismayed. Once we do our part, God will take over and will bless them with abundant life.

God is waiting for us. We have received freely, lets GO OUT to give it freely. Amen!

Conclusion

Dear reader, Jesus is coming soon. Jesus has already informed about his coming in many of his discussions with his disciples. During one conversation, when he was talking with them about the end days (the time before Second Coming of Jesus), disciples asked him about the signs of those days to be able to identify it. You will be surprised to know that those signs have already started to show up. *“For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains”* (Matthew 24:5–8).

If you have meditated on the above verse and have really equated it with today’s state of affairs in this world, you would know that we do not have much time. Maybe ten years or it could be one month, or one day, or one hour or even next one minute. We don’t know when, but this is true that he is coming soon.

Jesus will not come as simple helpless man nor is he coming again to share the good news to the lost. Now he will come to judge the world. On his coming, all those who believe in him shall be

lifted up with him to ascend to heaven and rest all who would be left behind shall be condemned to wait for eternal punishment.

If you have not yet believed in Jesus, take this decision now. Human life is very unpredictable much like a bubble of water. We are not certain of what will happen tomorrow, so it is not wise to postpone the decision for tomorrow. Tomorrow may never come or even if it comes, you may not see it. Someone has said, don't wait till eleventh hour, you may die at tenth.

From distance, all faiths may seem to be talking the same things, salvation, God, bad and good works, mercy, love and other factors of religious life. However, we need to find the absolute truth and believe in it. I encourage you to see the life of Jesus and try to follow it; you will not be dismayed ever.

If you are tired of following the rituals and traditions of religion(s); just stop for a moment and look for God. If you are exhausted praying for years and none of your prayers seem to be getting answered, ask Jesus. I can humbly challenge you that when none of other things work, pray to Jesus, He will answer, because he has promised to do so. He loves you. Believe in him and ask him, have faith to receive it and it will be done for you.

—○○○○○○—
By believing and following Jesus Christ, you will experience a peaceful, blessed, abundant life which you will live much deeper and significantly by fulfilling the purpose God has set before you.
—○○○○○○—

By believing and following Jesus Christ, you will experience a peaceful, blessed, abundant life which you will live much deeper and significantly by fulfilling the purpose God has set before you.

If you are a saved and born-again believer, start living a surrendered life to God in obedience and total faith. If possible, pray and engage yourself in the glorious work of salvation to bring the kingdom of God sooner. God says that harvest is plenty and laborers are few.

I see a pattern in the Bible in this context. We should start from ourselves and then go and save others too.

I saw similar principle during my air travels. In the booklets and demonstrations before flying, a strong recommendation is given to protect yourself in case of emergency before helping others. The flight attendants warn that during such emergency conditions when there is lack of oxygen, the oxygen masks would fall down from the overhead cabinet and everyone should fix it to him/herself and then help others. It seems obvious that if we start suffocating, we would not be able to help either ourselves or others.

In biblical faith too, we must first believe in God through Jesus Christ and then tell about it to others after experiencing the love and blessings of God in our personal lives. Once we believe and are saved, we ought to reach out in our family and extended families. None of us want to see our near and dear ones in the fire of hell. After this, we can do what Jesus says; reach out to our city/village (Jerusalem), our country (Samaria and Judea) and corners of the world (all nations) to give a testimony of his great love for all.

Though this is not a strict order, we can make a commitment to the Lord that we will continue to grow with him. Let us pray together:

“Dear Lord Jesus, we bless you for who you are. Lord, forgive our sins and give us the newness of life that comes from you so that we may live our lives abundantly. As we know you, we are dead to sin and alive in you. Please take control of our lives and help us to grow in your faith so that we may glorify you. Lord, we want to see you in heaven worship you with the hosts of angels. Grant us today your grace and faith to live a life full of your favor and blessings. Amen!”

Appendix

Myths and Questions

I want to address few questions (issues) and clarify certain myths here. Many of these questions come in the mind of a person when he or she comes to know about Jesus Christ. Especially to those who are convinced that Jesus is the Savior, yet are unable to make a firm commitment to follow him due to many wrong concepts and beliefs about Christian faith imparted to them by invalid sources. I want to clarify as per my understanding and belief, according to the Scriptures. These are only general guidelines and your view may differ from this. Also note that prayer and guidance of the Holy Spirit is the only right way to handle all such situations. My experiences and explanations are also based on the leading of the Holy Spirit in answer of my prayers for every specific situation. Read from the Word of God, pray about it and let the Holy Spirit take control and lead you through.

I know that Lord Jesus Christ is the living God. I have experienced his prayer answering power too; but I cannot make a commitment to follow him. What will my family say? What about my friends, colleagues and relatives?

Yes. It seems difficult to take this decision when we see it from religious point of view. But if we can see it from personal level, you

will realize that we are simply believing in God and loving him, nothing else (not conversion of religion at all). Moreover, if you start loving God and all ungodly, selfish and evil (to whatever degree) are gone, and you start leading a noble and blessed life, then how and who would object?

I want to tell you two things here. First, that salvation is a personal choice. Our own decision in this regard is ultimate. Trust me, neither anybody is going to die with you nor is anyone going to stand before judgment throne to answer on your behalf. We all will do it individually.

Second, whom did we ask when we did all other ungodly stuffs, for example—boozing/or smoking or fantasizing wrong things? If we chose to do all those by ourselves then why so much of commotion in taking a good decision to follow God considering him omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent God, who will save your life and probably others too, through you.

Nobody wants to go to hell, but all are heading towards it unknowingly. Unless we deviate from the sinful way of living life, change our values, purpose and beliefs, we have no escape. Probably once you are saved, you may tell them and save them by showing from your example.

Withstanding all resistance that came from my near and dear ones, when I continued to love Jesus Christ with all my heart and followed his ways, my life changed, my attitude changed and this was noticed by everyone. Today, most of them respect my views and above all, many have embraced the path of peace, love and joy through Jesus Christ.

God can do it for you too, what we need is a simple act of obedience with all sincerity.

Are we supposed to change our names after believing in Jesus Christ?

We did not change our names. Though Bible has some references

where God changed the names of some people; however, those were in certain specific cases to impart a particular blessing. He did it in several cases like Abram renamed to Abraham, Sarai renamed to Sarah, Simon renamed to Peter and Jacob renamed to Israel. This was essentially to lay foundation of biblical principle about how faith brings a transition between old and new, past and present.

“As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you” (Genesis 17:4–6).

God also said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her” (Genesis 17:15, 16).

In the above Scriptures, by changing their names, God taught this barren couple to change their attitude and be positive in trusting God. He did it to teach us to bring change in our perspective, vocabulary and faith including thought process by turning it positive from negative. This in no way gives us any indication that we have to change our names. Bible says that God knows us by our names, and he has written it in the Book of Life also: “. . .but rejoice that your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20).

He knows our heart, our attitude and our faith in which he is interested. Instead of focusing on unwarranted acts like changing names etc, let us better concentrate on the things which will edify our faith and our walk with Jesus so that our attitude will become like that of Jesus and we would become holy as God is holy.

What about festivals? Can we not celebrate our religious festivals?

I feel this is a subjective question and must be dealt case by case. Instead of proposing a solution here, I would rather tell you the

framework, based on which you can understand how we should deal with such situation.

Primarily I feel, celebrate or not celebrate should not be our question. We must ask ourselves, why do we want to celebrate or why this festival is being celebrated. Once you see the reason behind it, probably you will automatically cease celebrating it without my explaining. However, if you are genuinely looking for a solution, follow this principle: "Refrain from all such activities which do not give glory to the true and living God."

You must enjoy the fellowship with your family and other relatives. Completely alienating ourselves from rest of the family, friends and society at large is not the teaching of the Bible and it does not make us good witness of his love too. The Bible teaches that we are in the world so we cannot walk in this world closing our eyes because sin is all around. So, being in the world (but not of the world), we must take wise decisions so that by our sincere faith and conviction, everyone will be inquisitive to know more about the source of our joy, peace and confidence.

Most of the festivals (be it of any religion) have a purpose behind them. Some of them are general purpose but some solely religious. I am not here to talk about religion so I cannot endorse celebrating the religious festivals, but others should be fine as long as we glorify the true and living God. People forget the fundamental reasons of the celebration and fall in rituals. Religion or festival should not become an obstacle to us in glorifying God himself.

Apart from rituals, most of the festivals have been commercialized these days, which is really sad. Even in Christianity, most of the people who celebrate Christmas, the birthday of Jesus Christ, around the world include everything like parties, decoration, dance and amusement in their celebrations, but forget the birthday boy outside. In fact, many of them have eliminated Christ in "Christmas" and have replaced Christ by a big "X" and greet each other as "Merry X-mas." This should not happen. If you cannot glorify the

true and living God while celebrating your festival, better not to celebrate it.

But if you can, I encourage you to use every opportunity during festival times to meet our loved ones and tell the truth of the love of God to everyone. I do not find any problem in meeting my friends during festival holidays and showing them the love of God. Amusement is not bad if done in confined limits of godly conduct and biblical teachings. Take wise decisions and live a life which will glorify God and will become a model for many.

Remember, the greatest commandments given by God—Love your God and then love your neighbor as yourself. This encompasses everything.

And what about other traditions? Can we not respect our elders by touching their feet?

This is again a subjective question and above principle can explain this. However, to answer it specifically, I would recommend that we must ask wisdom from God to differentiate between culture and religious rituals. In general, you may touch the feet of elders, but we ought to understand that it is ensured that we would not compromise with the glory of God in anyway.

We have to stay away from false religiosity (hypocrisy) and at the same time understand our culture. I advocate breaking certain traditions like dowry system, child-marriages, caste system etc which is hindering the progress of the society (and uplifting of the down trodden class), but I am not against all cultural traditions.

In some customs, husband is considered like a god to his wife. So it is not because of the respect but also because of this factor that wife touches her husband's feet; it becomes a sin against God. Husband is not God but he is a creation of the supreme God who deserves all the glory, unshared.

However, if there is a major age difference between the wife and her husband, which is customary in Indian village context, and if

she wants to touch her husband's feet due to respect and submission, probably this should not be objectionable. Scripture teaches wives to be submissive before husband who is the head of the family as Christ is the head of the Church. Though at the same time, Scriptures also teach husbands to treat their wives with much care and same kind of sacrificial love which Jesus showed for his church.

In my opinion, it is not wrong for children to touch feet of elders and get blessings. Scripture teaches all of us to be lowest of all and treat one another with respect and love. If Jesus could do it to his disciples, what other example are we looking for; and if we do object such tradition, what is our basis. Bible teaches us to respect our parents (and others too) and love them as we love ourselves. So make your decision and go ahead, God will bless you because of what is in your heart.

What about marriage and other ceremonies? Our rest of the families are yet following old religious traditions? So are we supposed to oppose them?

This is another subjective question in this series. I must admit, you have to take your own decision and deal with it based on the leading of the Holy Spirit of God, but I am certain of one thing—we need not to oppose our friends, relatives or family members; rather we need to love and accept them so as to open ways for gospel sharing.

You will find people of both extremes—those who totally revolt and go against their families and relatives and eventually lose the opportunity to share the gospel forever or those who totally surrender themselves to idol worship and other customs and do not give any glory to the true and living God. In both the cases, probably they have not understood the spirit of the Word of God.

My advice in this context is to glorify God in every possible manner and at the same time, not cause any conflict with the family which might put you in defensive mode and diminish (or even eliminate) the opportunities to share the gospel of salvation to your

family forever. We need to balance it appropriately. If possible, make the living God as the center of your ceremony and glory goes to him alone; otherwise, yield only to the extent that you are not involved in any rituals against the will of God.

More than the mode of marriage, I would suggest what Paul suggests in second Corinthians to not to be yoked unequally with unbelievers. Marriage is a lifetime decision and hence must be made to be done with godly man or woman who loves God and would encourage you lifelong. *“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness”* (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Especially for first generation believers from other religious background, I would rather advise to find the match from a family of similar backgrounds who would be able to identify with you and understand your restrictions and values. There is a high possibility that God has different plans for you, so eventually you must rely on your prayers and leading of the Holy Spirit. Also you need to be honest with the person whom you are going to choose for lifetime. You should share the truth of your faith from the beginning and then see how it proceeds. If it is in the will of God, it is quite possible that God will take the lead to bring the salvation in the partner’s life too.

In other ceremonies like birth, naming ceremony and death, I am liberal as long as we do not compromise with basic fundamentals of Christian faith.

Whether to incinerate or bury the dead body is least of my concerns. I fully believe that we shall be given a glorious body which is incorruptible while our earthly bodies are corruptible. God is able to form the glorious body from the remnants as dust or ashes.

However, it is okay to bury with consensus. If it is not possible after reasonable explanation and discussions, it is better to agree with rest of the family and do it accordingly, in order to avoid any socio-religious issue.

My sister was married in Hindu way in 2001; I and Prerna were married in Buddhist way in 2003 because our families were not in same faith yet, but we know that we did not compromise even for once with our faith and duties towards Jesus Christ during all ceremonies. I cremated my father when he died in May 2006.

I love a non-believer and I am sure I will be able to bring him or her to my faith after marriage. Probably God wants to save one soul by this.

Maybe, but to me the probability is very less. We must understand that it could be a deception of devil to take us away from God than our genuine effort to save the soul. God wants to save souls, this is his agenda; but he would not compromise on the way it should be done. When he asks not to be unequally yoked with unbeliever, he means it.

If you are unable to witness the love of Jesus to this person before marriage, there is hardly a chance that you would be able to do it after it. Especially for girls in Indian society, it could be even harder to persuade her spouse to believe in what she believes. This may rather affect her own spiritual growth and draw her away from fellowship and eventually from God himself. Think! Are you not bringing obstacles in your own spiritual growth? Decision is all yours.

I have heard that Christians do religious conversions forcefully or by luring poor people through money or other benefits like education or medical facilities. Is this true?

Bible does not suggest anything like this and if it has happened it is regrettable.

Our God is not religious, he is a spiritual being and he is interested in saving souls from hell and bringing them in his kingdom to have fellowship with them because he loves them. So for him as well his real disciple, religion (even Christianity) is of

least concern. “*God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24).

Change of the inner man is the true transformation. Jesus did not initiate any religion. He rather asked to witness his love and salvation to the ends of the earth so that peoples from all nations may receive salvation of their souls.

Is it true that Christians eat human flesh?

Hah! This statement is not true. The only mention in this context is the statement of Jesus to his disciples regarding his own body and blood.

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him” (John 6:51–56).

Jesus in the above verses was talking of something deeper than mere flesh and blood, he was talking about his suffering, death, life and resurrection through which he was about to pay the price for sins so that putting faith in his sacrifice we could be saved by his grace (and no works attached).

Apart from this, there is no mention of eating human flesh or drinking human blood. Rather, in the Old Testament it is exhorted to abstain from certain kinds of meat and any kind of meat with blood.

Do Christians force to eat meat?

No. This is a myth and is not true. Bible does not endorse anything related to eating any particular food—vegetarian or non-vegetarian. Paul explains in the Bible that eating or not eating anything does not matter because kingdom of God is not about eating or not eating some particular foods. He rather exhorts not to eat a particular food for the sake of a brother or sister of weaker faith who may stumble because of our eating of particular food.

But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak (1 Corinthians 8:8, 9).

The other faiths that ask people to abstain from eating meat talks about living a simple and holy life, which is no harm and rather appreciated; however, living good life by our efforts does not bring salvation because salvation (moksha) comes only by believing in Jesus Christ. In a nutshell, it is not what we eat which accounts for our spiritual life, but our attitude and faith towards God and his people. *“Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man ‘unclean’”* (Matthew 15:17, 18).

On the other hand if we want to scrutinize it technically, we must also realize that we are unable to prevent ourselves from killing other organisms anyway. We inhale millions of micro organisms in every breath and probably hundreds of thousands of them would die in our inside body temperature. We walk on the land and many small organisms die under our feet unknowingly. Even according to some scientific researches, it is concluded that plants have life, so in that case we kill plants which are other kind of living beings.

Standing on this premise how can we survive at all? And if we compromise just based on the level of life and life generating ingredients, probably we are just trying to justify the means.

So summarily, I can say that Bible is very sensitive about the salvation of people for which it encourages us that even if we have to abstain from certain foods, we should.

Real Christian faith does not force anything because in the Holy Spirit there is freedom. God gives us free will to even choose to love him or reject him, then how could he force us for anything. he does not change, he is a good God.

There are many more myths, disbeliefs and confusions—God is the answer to all your questions. Come to him with faith and prayers, he shall bless you. Amen!

Note: The explanations to questions given here are the author's own views and opinion.

Back Cover

Factual experience of God's intervention in daily living. . .

Written in simple narration format *Encounter with Life* is about the author's everyday tryst with the living God. The book tells of how the author's life was changed from an ordinary existence to a blessed living that comes only from God. The presentation of God's intervention in the transformation from a remorseful problem—sin to an abundant life is very appealing.

It is hoped the book will reach the people who are away from the true and living God and struggling to get answers for the questions which the author himself had faced.

Note: Few lines needed from the author about educational background, profession and family.

FACTUAL EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S INTERVENTION IN DAILY LIVING...

Written in simple narration format *Encounter with Life* is about the author's everyday tryst with the living God. The book tells of how the author's life was changed from an ordinary existence to a blessed living that comes only from God. The presentation of God's intervention in the transformation from a remorseful problem—sin to an abundant life is very appealing.

It is hoped the book will reach the people who are away from the true and living God, struggling to get answers for the questions which the author himself had faced.



About the Author



ISBN : 978-81-7362-000-0