

John Rodgers' testimony:

I grew up in a Christian household, attended church regularly with my parents, and even witnessed to friends and strangers as a young child. I accepted salvation at a very young age. I was an avid student for the Bible and everything!

This lasted until I turned 10 years old. At that time, I began making excuses on why I was unable to attend church, and after a short time began refusing to attend. I began questioning all my previous beliefs about Christianity and about the character of God.

By 13 years old, I had fallen almost entirely away from the beliefs of Christianity. I no longer believed that the stories in the Bible were historical accounts, but rather "fairy tales". I had fallen so far away from my beliefs and, in turn, fell very far from God. Even worse, the pressures of being a young teen with no sense of purpose hit me HARD. I experienced bullying in school, and at the time I didn't have the greatest relationship with my parents. I had lost most of my friends due to my own actions. I had one friend left who lived down the street from me.

I was suicidal but I hadn't told a single person. I had a full plan, including a certain song I was going to listen to while I took my own life. The day came that I felt like I was out of time. I decided I was going to do it. As I went to prep, I heard a voice say, "wait a week". I thought "what good could one week do?" I reluctantly obeyed though and put it off for the moment.

Unfortunately, a couple days later, my last friend and I got into a fight, and I knew our friendship was over. I was now alone. This pushed me over the edge, and I decided I would end my life that night. I had a niece who attended the same school as me, and she had heard about the fight. She thought my parents might pull me out of the school, so she said she was throwing me a "going away party", and that I needed to come over. I figured I might as well since this would be the last time she would see me. So, I decided to go over to her house for this "party".

When I got to her house, I was surprised that she had managed to talk a few of her own friends into coming over for this "party". I wasn't friends with any of them at the time and it felt like they came just to get details on the fight.

Except one. Her name was Racheal.

She was sweet and caring. She seemed genuinely upset that the fight ever happened. She showed a true compassion for me that I had never seen before. I fell in love.

We became friends, and I found out she was a Christian with strong beliefs. I (unfortunately) lied and told her everything I thought she would want to hear. I even began going to church again just to impress her. Eventually, we began dating a few months later.

About a year later, I attended a revival service with my father, (we almost never did anything together alone) and the sermon hit me right in my heart. The message was: God doesn't care who you are, what you have been through, what you felt you were capable of, etc. He wants you, He loves you, and He can use you according to His purpose.

I re-dedicated my life to the Lord that night. I came to realize Racheal's reactions and compassion towards me came from a place that only Someone who knows and loves the Lord can know.

We got married at 19 years old and now have 5 kids.

In 2020, I received my calling to ministry. I never once would have imagined that path for myself, but God has called me to it despite me initially wanting to run away and give excuses.

God has shown me amazing things, including miracles, but also grace, mercy, and love beyond what I could ever deserve.

Racheal Rodgers' testimony:

I was born to my parents in 1996. They would eventually divorce early into my childhood. This would lead me to living in a non-Christian home during the week and a Christian home on the weekends. I was raised in Baptist churches. I accepted Christ as my Savior when I was 7 years old and was baptized at Good News Baptist Church.

I grew up in a nice neighborhood. I always trusted in God and knew He was my rock. But My faith would be tested the most and strengthened at 15 years old when my father, my best friend was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic and liver cancer. He was given 4 months maximum to live and lived at home in hospice as he progressed. After his passing I left all that I knew and moved an hour away to live in Wilmington. I was homeschooled from 10th -12th grade. During those years I really spent a lot of time in my Bible and really leaned on God during my mourning and loneliness. I had kept in touch with my Jr high boyfriend and got to visit him often. We would end up being engaged at 18 and married at 19.

We weren't on the same page spiritually for a while but fervent prayer to a faithful God bears fruit. John would have an official calling of ministry on his life. He became ordained as a preacher in 2022. Our ministry journey started there with youth Ministry, assistant pastor to multiple church's and being a deacon.

We have been so very blessed with our first church to be the pastor and pastor's wife of, McKelvey Road Baptist Church. We are so excited to see where the Lord leads with that. To God be the glory, great things He has done.