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SHARE YOUR STORY

BAPTISM

2025

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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.
JOHN 3:16

—

Just like our birthdays, graduations, weddings, and the joy of welcoming new life, baptism is a significant milestone for us as believers. Today, in the presence of the church body and other witnesses, we celebrate this moment with those who publicly proclaim their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour (Acts 2:38-39).

The stories in this booklet, written by the baptism candidates, reveal how different people from diverse backgrounds experience God in unique ways. They all, however, point to the fact that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. They confirm that Jesus is the answer to our quest for meaning in life. I hope some of these stories resonate with you.

If you are not a Christian, I encourage you to read these testimonies. I pray they spark your curiosity and move you forward in your search for God. The Bible promises that we can find Him when we seek with all our hearts (Jeremiah 29:13).

We are grateful for all the baptism candidates today and for their willingness to share testimonies of God's loving pursuit and transformative grace in their lives. May this day mark the beginning of a wonderful, magnificent, adventurous and enduring faith journey with our Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself." Acts 2:38-39



Alan Leung
Director of Connections
Island ECC

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COLETTE LIM

I lived in a Christian household and grew up going to church every Sunday. While I felt like Jesus was part of our family, I never understood the role He was meant to play in my life personally. I lived those days feeling indifferent about searching for my life's purpose, being tone-deaf to sermons on Sundays, and finding enjoyment only through materialistic things. I placed a heavy emphasis on pleasing others such as attending worship services I didn't understand simply because "my mom and dad do it". I didn't realise how being a Christian would require much more dedication and commitment.

As I grew up, I faced challenges, whether in academics or friendships. I slowly started feeling like my life was out of my control, and often felt frustrated that things never seemed to work in my favour. However, those were also the times when sermons spoke directly to me about how God has a plan for each and every one of us. I felt a strong connection to His words of comfort and assurance, and wanted to prioritise the favour of God over myself.

So I began by attending North Point Alliance Church with my best friend, where I met really nice friends and began attending Friday night fellowship. I've also been able to start a friendship with my neighbour, who happened to attend fellowship as well, showing how God was enriching my life by building these friendships for me. Being able to participate in church summer camps made me feel included, encouraging me to go beyond my comfort zone of being quiet and reserved around other people. I started to notice how God was looking out for me not only through prayer, but in my everyday life without me knowing. Eventually, I found Island ECC after a long time of exploration, where I understood Scripture clearer through the powerful sharing of Pastor Brett, Pastor Albert, and others. I engaged more in prayer and shared devotions every Friday night at fellowship, and felt the Holy Spirit growing and working more powerfully.



I developed a newfound hope for the future, and looked forward to each day until I hit the lowest point of my academic life in June 2024. My grades on the final report card in Year 11 fell way below everyone's expectations, and I was disappointed in myself as I would be facing bigger challenges

with university applications. I wondered if I could even apply to the school I aspired to attend after this setback. My parents urged me to drop the IB programme, and a teacher suggested that I repeat Year 11. However, it was with the courage given by God that I made a choice to fight through Year 12 instead.

I spent my summer volunteering in community service through Hope of The City in hopes to improve my IB portfolio. We fed the homeless, listened to their stories, and taught English to small children from underprivileged families. I organised a barbecue party with two friends for a school project, inviting members of the Marvel Kids ministry, which gave me the opportunity to understand more about communicating with SEN children, like my younger brother. I also met a friend at a summer camp volunteering event who told me that prayer was her ultimate strategy for academic success.

THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY I FELT THROUGH MY TIME WITH HOPE OF THE CITY WAS A REFLECTION OF GOD'S KINDNESS AND GRACIOUSNESS FOR THOSE IN NEED. IT SERVED AS A POWERFUL REMINDER THAT NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD...

Through volunteering, I've witnessed God sending provision to those in need. It made me believe that the strength He had given me to continue with the IB programme was for this purpose. It was by His grace that I have been offered a place at the school of my aspiration as my interviewer was very impressed with my commitment to service.

The sense of community I felt through my time with Hope of The City was a reflection of God's kindness and graciousness for those in need. It served as a powerful reminder that nothing is impossible with God, as said in Luke 1:37. I have successfully graduated high school in 2025, and am ready to accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour once and for all.

GRACE KOK

Born into a Christian family, I was surrounded by Christian materials growing up; Christian songs played in the car, Bible stories aired on TV, and I attended weekly Sunday school. At one point, it all felt very routine and predictable; the stories were the same, the songs were the same, and the messages were all the same. Back then, my Christian faith was strongest when my maternal grandparents from Singapore visited, and my younger self made the Sinner's Prayer with my grandmother one evening. However, that was not genuine faith and belief, because it was made when I didn't fully understand the magnitude of my choice. Later, I stopped attending church. On days when I was forced to go, I adopted a persona as a Christian, giving the answers people wanted to hear. All the while, I was unaware that it slowly turned me bitter towards Christianity and God.

Over time, my sense of self shifted and turned darker, becoming more pessimistic and hateful to the world around me. It was a time when I would actively gravitate towards my own doom and look towards it. I looked for methods of death, locations of death, and planned a time for death to come. I saw no future and no light for the longest time. I told myself that I wasn't loved, that even if I disappeared from this world, no one would care

or mind. People would be overjoyed, especially my family. I viewed myself as a nuisance and a waste of space; I didn't value myself, and I also didn't find purpose in my life. This went on for a long time. Looking back, despite all my planning and research to end life, I never went through with it for some reason – the time, place, and people. As much as I believed I hated and didn't care about the people around me, I still loved them enough deep down, scared that they would be sad about my death. I believed that it was God's protection all along to that turning point.

I eventually reached a point where I wanted to change this problematic view, and uniquely, my first sense of direction was towards Jesus, God, and Christianity.

By then, COVID was calming down, and church could be attended physically. I went and listened, but it wasn't enough; something told me so. Coincidentally, my family had a trip to Singapore to visit my maternal grandparents. I was drowning in an overwhelming sense of guilt and shame; the best way to describe it was like I couldn't breathe and my chest felt heavy, and it got stronger. I remembered it was just a little remark from my po po about her outing with her Care Group at night. Turning my attention away from my phone, I listened to her sharing sincerely. Immediately after, I talked with my mother – my rebellious time, my shame, my emotions, everything. For the next few hours, we were uninterrupted and undisturbed at all. My mother said, "This is God's work. There are no coincidences with God. Everything happens for a reason." It was true. God has a plan, and even though I strayed, Jesus led me back, like the Good Shepherd He is.

My faith grew and solidified with my Care Group (that I still interact with today) back in 2023. I joined the Care Group programme at Island ECC and met them.

During a session, when they asked me the simple question, "Is something wrong?", my walls broke. Something told me it was a safe space and I felt safe to share then. They helped me realise that I was loved, that Jesus loves me, and that I was valued. It rekindled something within me. I thought I was unloved and unwanted; I left Him, but He never left me and waited for me. I am truly loved and blessed He's in my life.

God's love, grace, and mercy are unlike any other; none can compare, and none can hold a candle to it. I found comfort in God's presence and I have come to realise that I was never abandoned or given up on. I may not realise all the little moments God tried to pull me back to His side, but I believe that He never left me. Now, although I am still troubled with my purpose in life and what to do in the future, I always pray – pray for His guidance and His presence.

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JACKY PANG

I knew Jesus from a young age, but my faith was often overshadowed by questions and doubts. Growing up, I prided myself on my competence and willpower. I believed I could create my own opportunities and shape my own success. Like many, I climbed the ladder of achievement – attending top schools, building a rewarding career in banking, marrying a wonderful woman, and raising two beautiful children alongside our beloved dog. Even when COVID brought setbacks, I took pride in my ability to bounce back, seeing it as a self-made success.

But this mindset of self-reliance and ingratitude gradually pushed me farther and farther away from Christ. I relied on myself, rarely acknowledging God's hand in my life. I was blind to my need for Him.

Everything changed last year when a dramatic chapter unfolded in my family. I found myself facing challenges that were far beyond my control or understanding. Before depression and darkness could consume me, I fell to my knees and turned to Jesus. I prayed, "Lord, this is out of my depth." That moment marked the beginning of a profound transformation.

For the next 18 months, I devoted myself to His Word, prayer, and His guidance. I began to see the Lord in ways I never had before. He answered my prayers with such meticulous care and precision that it was undeniable – He was my rapid response squad, always present, always faithful.

Through godly counsel from my church, I had the privilege of resetting my priorities: my faith, my family, my career, and everything else. Jesus helped me make decisions I would never have considered before, and I found a deep sense of peace and gratitude that I had never known.

One of the most significant revelations in this journey was understanding that my career in banking could be a platform to glorify God. I realised that my work is

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not just about numbers or profits, but about stewardship, faith-driven investment, and generosity. I feel called to use my skills and experience to advise and inspire others in managing resources wisely, investing with integrity, and giving generously. God has placed me in this field for a purpose, and I am committed to honouring Him through my work.

I am also deeply thankful to my church community for their unwavering support and enlightenment. The Men's Fraternity, the ITC, and other special workgroups have been instrumental in my spiritual and physical growth. Their fellowship, encouragement, and shared wisdom have helped me see God's hand in every aspect of my life. UKWUR has become a guiding principle for me. "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain" (Psalm 127:1) reminds me of who I am and who God is, and that I am to rely on God in all things.

Today, I am still a work in progress. I am actively working on my marriage, my faith, my career, and my walk with Christ. But I am no longer relying on my own strength. I have learned that true success and peace come from surrendering to Jesus and trusting in His plan.

I am excited to publicly declare my faith through baptism and to embark on this new journey with Christ as my guide. I am no longer the self-reliant man I once was, but a child of God, humbled and grateful for His grace and love.

Thank you all for being here to witness this step in my journey. I look forward to walking this path with Jesus, my family, and my church community. To God be the glory!



JOATHAM KOK

I was a second-generation believer. From the beginning of my life, I heard about God from my parents, and we would go to church together. In church, I listened to different stories from the Bible and learned about God's various attributes. This convinced me that there is a God in this world. However, my feelings towards God were somewhat comparable to a character from a textbook: besides accepting that God created this world and created me, I couldn't feel any connection with Him.

In search of my own worth, I tried to construct an image that would make people happy and be accepted by everyone. I would agree to everything, let others manipulate me, and time and again allow myself to be used. In the end, I wore a mask that catered to the people around me, becoming an object for their amusement. Slowly, I accepted this as the norm in my life, hoping that I only need to bear with this just a little while longer until I go to university, where I would not have to interact with those who trampled on me anymore, to have a new beginning. Getting into university became the only goal I had that kept me alive.

My turning point is after the DSE when I made the grave mistake of missing the application period for interviews. Given the deadline had passed and it had explicitly stated that no applications submitted would be acknowledged, I felt so helpless and lost, like there was no more hope in my world. I felt I had failed my family, failed to meet their expectations, and failed myself. The new life I had wished for vanished, replaced by the nightmare of a never-ending cycle: landing on a job I wouldn't enjoy, and going to work each day feeling meaningless and dull. At that point, death felt incredibly alluring.

Before I gave up, a voice in my head reminded me that God is always watching over me. In my darkest moment, I sought the Lord for solace. I prayed day and night, asking Him to show me a miracle, to show that He was there with me, to lead the way, and to give me a reason to have

hope in life. Through God's grace, miraculously, an interview was granted to me, and I was accepted into the university of my choice. With this new revelation of God being with me all along, I knew He was always looking after me and would always answer my prayers whether I sought Him out or not.

Another point of significance occurred during my time in university when I once more found myself pursuing acceptance, friends, and grades. In this state of emptiness and great confusion, I asked God to guide me once more, to help me find my meaning and value in life. And, of course, He answered. While waiting in a long line to go home, a Christian outreach worker from school approached me, expressing care and inquiring about my well-being. He offered support, and eventually asked if I wanted to join their Christian group. Later, I learned that he was partnered with another outreach worker, and when they were about to take a break, he felt compelled to find one more person and ended up finding me. Reflecting on this, it was clearly not just a coincidence; God was at work. It solidified my belief that God is always with me and answers my prayers.

After joining this community, I felt accepted, truly cared for, and genuinely loved, knowing that Jesus is at the heart of it all. I decided to follow Jesus, to develop a close and priceless relationship with Him, to seek Him constantly, and to experience His love and essence in full. I slowly broke free from my feelings of inferiority and took off my mask of indifference towards Christianity and God. I understood that my value in God's eyes is irreplaceable; I am God's masterpiece, a unique existence. Experiencing the love of Christ is truly so beautiful and captivating. Now, I have found my value in God and learned that the most precious thing in the world is my relationship with Him. The care that comes from God allows me to live a fulfilling life, achievable only through the pursuit of Him. He became the sole reason and motivation I live for.

NOW, I HAVE FOUND MY VALUE IN GOD AND LEARNED THAT THE MOST PRECIOUS THING IN THE WORLD IS MY RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.



KATE SHIEH

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.
Ecclesiastes 3:1

I like to think of my journey in terms of seasons. If I were to describe this chapter of my life, I'd call it a season of returning. Returning to what grounds me, to what anchors me, and to the One who has always been faithful through every transition.

My life has often felt like a constant state of movement. Growing up and into adulthood, I moved mostly between Singapore and Hong Kong, with a formative season in London. With each change, I've found it easy to get swept up in the busyness of life, sometimes losing sight of what truly matters.

In 2015, a friend invited me to Alpha at Island ECC. That season stirred in me a quiet longing for something more grounded. As I began learning about the Christian faith, I found myself drawn to its depth, its invitation to ask honest questions, and the quiet strength that comes from trusting in something beyond myself. It was the beginning of a shift – one that moved me from curiosity to conviction.

Since then, I've tried to stay the course, but I've also learned that walking with God is not a straight line. The distractions of daily life, work, and transitions can slowly pull us away, not all at once, but subtly. I've come to see that faith is not just belief, but a relationship. One that requires nourishment, attention, and care.

I then had a long summer season, with years of personal growth, strong friendships, and professional momentum. Over time, I began to sense a deeper calling: a desire to take on work that served a larger purpose, especially in public policy and social impact. In 2023, I made the decision to return to Singapore for a more mission-driven role. I left a large management consulting firm where I had been blessed with the right type of partners, colleagues, and clients. I stepped into a leadership role at a younger

I WANT TO BE LED BY HIM – TO GROW INTO A SERVANT LEADER GUIDED NOT JUST BY PURPOSE, BUT BY COMPASSION AND WISDOM.

organisation striving to grow. It was a leap of faith, but the timing felt right, and there were quiet signs along the way that encouraged me to go.

The role turned out to be transformative. It became a space where I began learning what reflective leadership could look like and how to remain true to myself in the midst of change. As the organisation navigated its own growing pains, I too found myself evolving: relearning what it means to lead with integrity, humility, and care. It felt like autumn: a season of thoughtful shedding, of clarifying what to hold onto and what to release in order to grow.

It was challenging, and I leaned on my faith more than ever. "Suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Romans 5:3–4) became a quiet refrain during tough moments. I also began to resonate with the figure of Solomon – not because of his wealth or status, but because when given the chance to ask God for anything, he asked for discernment. A heart of wisdom to govern well and to distinguish between right and wrong. That posture of seeking wisdom not for self, but for the sake of serving others stayed with me.

Now, in 2025, I've stepped down from that role and entered a new season – one of rest, reflection, and realignment. It feels like winter: a quieter stretch marked not by activity, but by clarity. A time to be still. A time to prepare.

Today, I choose to be baptised as a step of obedience and commitment. It is a declaration not just of faith, but of desire to become more whole as a person, not defined by work or achievement, but shaped by grace, humility, and the love of God. I want to grow in how I treat the people in my life, with greater patience, care, and intention. I want to be led by Him – to grow into a servant leader guided not just by purpose, but by compassion and wisdom.

I'm deeply grateful for the people God has placed along my path, for the Word that continues to steady me, and for the seasons, each with their purpose, each guided by His hand.



MARK ANGELO NOGUERA

Before I met Jesus, I didn't believe in God. I grew up in a home with different religious influences, but I never really followed any spiritual practices. I remember going to religious services as a kid, but it felt more like a chore than something meaningful. I didn't understand who God was and I doubted His existence.

When I went to college in the Philippines for a year, I had a subject that involved studying the Bible. I quickly dropped it because I didn't think it was relevant to my academics. At the time, I was more focused on hanging out with friends and partying. I thought I had everything figured out. Eventually, I dropped out of college and moved back to Hong Kong to continue my studies. That was over 13 years ago. Since then, I graduated, started working, and continued to live life on my own terms. I still didn't care about God – until November of last year.

My girlfriend, now my wife, invited me to attend a church service with her. I was hesitant due to my social anxiety, but I decided to give it a try. The first time I went, I was still skeptical, but something the pastor said sparked my curiosity. I started going every Sunday, and my wife lent me her Bible in case I wanted to read it. It took me a few weeks, but I eventually opened it and started reading. I began with the book of John, and it gave me a powerful insight into who Jesus is – loving, sacrificial, and full of grace.

After that, I started reading the Bible regularly and began praying. Over time, I had my own personal encounters with God – moments of peace, clarity, and guidance that I couldn't explain any other way. These experiences helped me realise that God is real and that He was gently drawing me closer to Him.

God has blessed me and my wife in many ways, especially as we prepared for our wedding. He brought people into my life who helped me grow and become the kind of husband and leader I want to be.

Looking back, I realise that I was alive, but spiritually dead. Now, He guides me every day – at work, at home, in every part of my life. I've been able to make better decisions under pressure, and I see people differently because of who Jesus is. He led with love and grace, and I try to live that out daily.

JESUS SAID A SHEPHERD WOULD LEAVE THE 99 TO FIND THE ONE THAT WAS LOST. I WAS THAT ONE.

My journey reminds me of the parable of the lost sheep. Jesus said a shepherd would leave the 99 to find the one that was lost. I was that one. He loved me even when I didn't know Him. He had good plans for me even when I wasn't looking for Him. I was lost, but now I'm found.

That's why I want to get baptised. It's my way of telling the world that I've decided to follow Jesus. It's deeply meaningful to me because it symbolises my new life. Because of Him, I am saved, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, I will seek to honour Him all the days of my life.



NATALIE LAI

Growing up in an atheist family with intergenerational trauma, I internalised dysfunctionality in my relationships. This understanding led me to fall into the same patterns time and again – seeking validation and security from people, places, and habits that gave me a sense of control. I was in a relentless pursuit of something real and safe, but I couldn't find it anywhere.

During this time, I was enrolled in a Christian school. God, faithful even when I was faithless, displayed His power in my weakness. Throughout my high school years, He revealed Himself through my Christian teachers and friends. When they spoke truth over me, I was consumed by a peace that surpassed all understanding. He says: "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). As I surrendered my all to Him, the overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit became undeniable. I experienced a love that is neither conditional nor self-seeking, but boundless and sacrificial.

Love, in its fullness, is found only through Christ, who Himself is love (1 John 4:8,16). There is no greater love than His atoning death on the cross, where He laid down His life for us while we were still sinners (John 15:13, Romans 5:8). He died for the unworthy, yet made us worthy in Him. All we have to do is receive and believe (John 1:12). In Christ, I found true rest for my soul; I am now made whole by His perfect love.



The Lord has transformed my life in the past few years. I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me (Galatians 2:20). He has turned the bitterness and resentment I once held in my heart into forgiveness and an overflow of joy that transcends circumstances.

However, following Jesus hasn't made me perfect. In fact, stepping into the light of God has exposed the ways in which I am deeply flawed. The enemy tries to convince me that I'm not qualified to be a follower of Christ, that the baggage of my sins defines who I am, and that some things will just never change. Instead of hiding in fear, I choose to seek wisdom through

Scripture to rebuke those lies. Although the voices of the enemy are loud, God's voice is louder. I serve a God who redeems (Colossians 1:13-14) – by His grace and revelation of the Word, I am able to overcome.

God has truly blessed me beyond measure. He has welcomed me not only as His daughter but also into a family of brothers and sisters in Christ. The relationships I formed in Hong Kong that led me to Him are now deeply rooted in His foundational love. I'm also immensely grateful for the community I have found in the U.S. through the ministry of The Navigators in Connecticut. They have empowered me with a newfound boldness and passion to share the gospel. Looking forward, I commit to giving myself fully to His work, wherever He leads me. Though the future is still uncertain, I rest assured knowing that I am His, and He is my home.

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As I reflect on God's goodness, I rejoice in Him – for Christ's first coming into my life, and in anticipation of His second coming. Baptism is my wholehearted "yes" in response to His sovereignty; it is my full devotion to live in obedience to my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has purposed me to serve Him for His glory. I hold steadfast to His promise to work all things for my good (Romans 8:28). Jesus is worthy of it all, and He is more than enough for me. I live with the assurance that one day I will be united with Him and His people for all of eternity.

OMAR ABA

I was born in Mexico and grew up Catholic, so I was baptised as a baby. Growing up, I always believed in God but never had a personal relationship with God. He always felt like a generalised and distant figure. It wasn't until I met my wife in Hong Kong, and she took me to Island ECC, that I was introduced to the concept of a relational God – a God that knows me and seeks to have an intimate relationship with me.

Fast forward to the end of 2023: I asked God to bring me closer to Him, making it my one single objective for the coming year, no matter what happens. Therefore, I started joining ministries like Men's Fraternity, Care Groups, reading the Bible every day, doing devotionals, and praying day and night. I thought I was at the highest point of my spiritual life.

I was seeking to get closer to God on my own understanding of how it should look. I was testing the waters, but God was asking me to fully immerse into the water and go much deeper. He was inviting me not just to read and observe the gospel but to live it. However, to live the gospel, you need to go to uncomfortable and most likely painful areas – places that can be so painful physically, emotionally, and spiritually that they will test your own faith and understanding of who God is.



In 2024, my health began to decline. After a rollercoaster of doctors, MRIs, and blood tests, I was diagnosed with a rare nerve disorder. The condition makes it hard to walk, sit or stand for long periods of time. It also comes with chronic nerve pain in multiple areas of my body, and like many neurological disorders, there is no clear treatment. Doctors told me I need nature and time to heal.

I went from being at the peak of my physical health and career to barely being able to walk outside; even taking a shower became challenging. The worst part

was the amount of nerve pain, which felt like I was being whipped repeatedly. There were many nights I fell asleep in pain, crying and hugging the Bible, remembering that His words are more real than the pain I felt. I prayed and prayed for healing, and asked God if it needed to be this hard, long, and painful. He answered, “Yes, it must be.”

God doesn't need my physical strength; He wants my obedience, submission, and faithfulness. God will provide the strength because “His power is perfected in our weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). While truth can sometimes be painful and uncomfortable, it is essential for healing and growth. So I said, “Okay, God. Now I see clearly and understand what You are trying to teach me, so I yield.” My prayers changed from mainly focusing on asking for healing to, “God, please use me. Use my pain, my tears, my frustrations, and my suffering and give them purpose for Your kingdom. This is my offering to You, God. This is my fish and loaves of bread; now I let You multiply.”

MY PRAYERS CHANGED FROM MAINLY FOCUSING ON ASKING FOR HEALING TO, “GOD, PLEASE USE ME. USE MY PAIN... AND GIVE THEM PURPOSE FOR YOUR KINGDOM...”

After that, many things started to change in me and around me. He didn't physically heal me, but He started healing my heart and soul, and the pain also decreased. I started obsessing about God. I just wanted to talk about the gospel all the time – not just sometimes, but all the time. I started looking for opportunities to share the gospel with my colleagues at work, with my non-Christian friends, family members, doctors, and even the taxi/Uber drivers. Let me tell you, one of the gifts of suffering and physical weakness is that it softens people's hearts to hear you out, since they recognise you don't have an agenda. You are just a man talking about your experience and life journey.

My testimony is not from a place of victory, bravery, or miraculous healing. It is from a place in the middle, the “soon but not yet”, the messy, painful area that many of us find ourselves in, yet God is in it with us. My God is the God of the Mountain and the God of the Valley, and today I proclaim He is especially the God and King of my heart.

SEAN SNELDER

I have always been a church-goer, going to Kids Club since I was five. I loved hearing Jesus' stories and specifically the snacks after class. God was always in the background; I always prayed before bed and meals. However, as I entered university, God became a lower priority. I was busy with work, distractions, and career pursuits. Apart from occasionally listening to sermons online, I didn't feel a sense of belonging to a community.

In early 2024, I put more stress on my body than it could handle with job applications, schoolwork, and football. By mid-April, I woke up one day and felt a debilitating sense of fatigue radiating throughout my body that couldn't be cured by a good night's sleep. I managed to complete my finals and flew to London for my dream summer internship. However, by early July, I had to quit early and fly back to Hong Kong. Initially, I thought I could just rest and go back to college, but I simply wasn't getting better. I was finally diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) which had no conventional cure. I had aches all over my body, and I was unable to walk more than five minutes a day. I felt defeated, broken, and hopeless. The physical pain started to take its toll, transpiring into negative thoughts.

I thought God had abandoned me. I accepted that these were the cards that I was dealt and I was going to be like this for the rest of my life. I couldn't help thinking why bad things could happen to good people. What is truly important in life? I cut off contact with all my friends because I didn't want to be a burden to any of them or explain my situation, as no one could really grasp how serious it was.

One day, my mum suggested that I look into the Lightning Process (LP). I thought it was just another alternative treatment that preyed on people who are desperate to get well. But I still decided to give it a go. Right before, my mum invited Rev. Peter Ho to pray for me. I felt a sense of calmness when I met him, who then invited me to a special worship night three weeks later. Though I said yes, I didn't believe I would be able to leave home and make it.

I KNOW GOD HAS HEALED ME; IT'S A MIRACLE THAT HE DELIVERED ME. HE GAVE ME BACK MY LIFE SO I CAN NOW LIVE FOR HIM.

I started the LP sessions with my coach from New Zealand. I sat through the two-hour call, and after the session, she encouraged me to start practising right away and to dine out with my parents. Thank God I did! I felt more alive than I had been in a year. I continued to improve and by the end of the third session, I could walk for 30 minutes, go out for a drive, and feel normal for the first time. I was able to attend worship three weeks later and am now on the road to full recovery. God works in mysterious ways. God has a time for everything, and He sent people to care for and love me, and that's exactly what I needed. The dark times are the best times to find God; when things are going well, we often overlook the One who gives us meaning.

In the movie "Conclave", Cardinal Lawrence said our faith is living because it walks hand-in-hand with doubt, and if there was only certainty and no doubt, there would be no need for faith. I am doubtful, and I have decided to take that leap of faith. Philippians 4:6-7 reminded me that I can always bring my worries to God through prayers.

Previously, I believed I could do life all by myself, ignoring that God is the One who is in charge and knows what is best for me. This ordeal made me realise how I can't take things for granted; He gives and He can also take away (Job 1:21), but He does it not to harm us but to draw us to Him and help us get our priorities right.

I really don't want to go about life without God. I want to follow His guidance to the right path to live my life to the fullest, as Jesus has promised to all who trust Him. I know God has healed me; it's a miracle that He delivered me. He gave me back my life so I can now live for Him. I know there will be challenges and suffering, but I know I can count on Him and sail through. Having Him is enough.



SIMON KWAN

Growing up in a big family in England was a blessing. My parents and younger siblings filled my life with joy. We shared many simple moments, like eating together at the dinner table which were full of laughter and stories. This upbringing created a strong sense of belonging in me and shaped who I am today. Love and support were always present, nurturing my connection with family, community, and faith.

Being raised in the Western world, I had a lot of exposure to Christianity and came to understand many of its symbols and stories. Compared to my parents' Buddhist beliefs, which felt very unclear and strange to me, I feel more comfortable with Christianity as it provides clarity about who God and Jesus are. Looking back, I see that God has always had a presence in my life. From singing hymns at school to bringing food for the Harvest Festival, my understanding of the Christian faith grew. I also remember the Christmas plays where we all had to participate and play different characters. One year, I played one of the three wise men holding a basket. Those experiences taught me that Christmas is not just about Santa or presents, but holds significance in the birth of Jesus. Singing "Away in a Manger" and "Silent Night" with the other children has a feel-good factor about it.

As we grow older, life brings challenges. Over the last ten years, I have faced many losses. Each loss was hard, but losing my father was the most difficult. His passing left a deep emptiness in my heart. They say time heals all wounds, but my grief remains. Whenever I think of him, I feel both sadness and a longing to hear his voice again.

Although my relationship with my father was not as close in the last few years of his life, a pastor shared with us about his later years at the funeral, and I held onto the hope that he came to know Jesus during that time. Despite the pain, I find comfort in believing my father is in a better place and that I will reunite with him one day. This hope inspires me to make the most of my life and cherish my mom and my siblings more. Sometimes I still think of my father and feel sad – especially on Father's

Day or when I see kids calling out to their fathers on other occasions. Yet, when I think about where my father is, I know he is with God, and that is when I find peace within myself.

Today, as I choose to be baptised, I recognise that it plays an important role in my spiritual journey. It represents my dedication to deepening my relationship with God. I wish to officially proclaim my faith through baptism to everyone in the room, recognising God's presence in my life.

To prepare for this moment, I reflected on my core values. I want to live in a way that honours my father's memory as well as the family I cherish. I aim to be a source of strength for others, just as my father was for me. By sharing my faith, I hope to help others find comfort and hope in their times of need.

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TIMMY HO

I was raised in a traditional Chinese family in the United Kingdom, and my life closely aligns with typical Chinese family dynamics. Born and raised in Manchester, I pursued my entire academic career there and spent numerous years working alongside my family in a Chinese restaurant. My parents were Buddhist, and I was instilled with a strong understanding of traditional Chinese customs from a young age. While the reasons behind these rituals were never explicitly explained, I unquestioningly followed their instructions.

My childhood was marked by a pleasant environment, nurtured by a Christian primary school education. From a young age, I had an innate aptitude for singing hymns in both primary and middle school, even though I was unable to fully comprehend the lyrics at that time. However, my middle school years were beset by significant challenges, including racism and bullying. Although these past experiences continue to haunt me, manifesting in nightmares to this day, I have since found greater prosperity in Hong Kong.

Throughout my life, I have been an introverted and reserved individual. By the time I entered college, I was introduced to a group of Hong Kong friends who profoundly transformed my character. I am deeply grateful for this introduction, as it ultimately facilitated my transition from the United Kingdom to Hong Kong.

In retrospect, I consider myself blessed. My initial employment, though low-paying, provided me with valuable insights into Hong Kong's work culture, characterised by a fast-paced environment and a strong emphasis on adaptability. After three years, I was unfortunately made redundant, but I view this as a stepping stone to a more significant opportunity. An agent contacted me, inviting me to join a prominent corporate bank, where my banking career commenced. Surprisingly, I find the corporate culture enjoyable, leading me to my current position with another bank, which also enabled me to transition to a different field, from finance to business support.



In 2020, I was introduced to the concept of faith through a friend who introduced me to Island ECC. Since then, it has been an enriching journey. I, like some of you, commenced my journey with Alpha, where I learnt the fundamental principles of Christianity. This sparked my insatiable thirst for knowledge, leading me to discover my cherished Care Group which I eagerly participate on a weekly basis. Today, I am proud to serve in SHIFT Exchange, where I have volunteered as one of the facilitators leading group discussions and various events.

Sincerely, my life has become significantly more fulfilling since joining the Christian community. I now firmly desire to follow Jesus Christ for the remainder of my existence. Although it has been an extended period of time, I have received unwavering support and encouragement from my friends around me. Today, I make my declaration to Christ.

FORGETTING WHAT IS BEHIND AND STRAINING TOWARD
WHAT IS AHEAD, I PRESS ON TOWARD THE GOAL TO
WIN THE PRIZE FOR WHICH GOD HAS CALLED ME
HEAVENWARD IN CHRIST JESUS.

I encourage those of you who have not found a community yet to join a ministry that resonates with you, whether that be a Care Group, Men's Fraternity (or The Village), SHIFT, or any other ministry. I am confident that your life will be greatly enriched by the presence of Jesus, as He is the central focus of all our lives.

As I say farewell to my past life, I am reminded of Philippians 3:13-14, "Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

WILLIS WONG

I was born in Shanghai about 58 years ago, into a family that has followed Christianity for four generations. Most of my family left China early and worked in Hong Kong, but I spent my early years in Shanghai, experiencing the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution before I turned 11. When I was six, I was in a serious car accident at the Canton Fair. I remember feeling an out-of-body experience for the first time, while my mother prayed earnestly to God to save me. That moment left a lasting impression on my heart.

At age 11, I moved to Hong Kong, where my journey of faith truly began. I joined the Samuels Youth Fellowship and the youth choir at Tsim Sha Tsui Baptist Church. At 14, I accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour, though I hesitated to be baptised, feeling I wasn't mature enough. At 16, I immigrated to Toronto, where I embraced Western culture and education, working part-time while studying. I attended a Chinese church in North York but didn't feel spiritually settled. However, I made many Christian friends at school, including Daniel Tse – now a pastor at Island ECC – who became a close brother to me. Sometimes, I attended his father's church to listen to Pastor Tse's sermons, which further shaped my faith.

Throughout my life, I've experienced both the joy of achievement and the pain of loss. My beloved mother, who was my guiding light, passed away, as did my grandmother, my earliest mentor, and the principal leader in our family business. I've also lost my uncle and aunts, each of whom played a significant role in shaping who I am today. Their wisdom, love, and sacrifices have always inspired me to keep moving forward, even in the darkest times. My in-laws have also played an important role in my journey. Their kindness, wisdom, and acceptance made me feel truly part of their family, and I am thankful for their guidance and the values they have shared with me.

Most importantly, my wife – whom I've known since high school – has always stood by me. Her unwavering support and love have been my anchor through every challenge. Together, we have raised a wonderful son, who is a constant source of pride and joy.

In the past two decades, I've lost several dear friends: Dr. Ted Edward Hunter, my best friend in high school; Fred Ling, a Taiwanese friend who taught me about waferfab material science; Chen Wei, a friend from Shanghai; my godfather and business mentor, Mr. Joe Liburdi, who guided me into the aerospace and energy industries; and Uncle Keith Lam, OBE & MBE, who was a key investor in my business restart in 2012. Each of these losses reminded me how precious and unpredictable life is, and I pray that they are blessed and at peace.

I AM WILLING TO FOLLOW AND ACCEPT CHRIST AS MY SAVIOUR FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

Professionally, I've always strived to do well and provide for those I care about, hoping to honour the sacrifices of my family and mentors. My career has led to over 42 technical engineering publications and 35 patent applications, including PCT patents covering 143 countries, as well as patents in the USA and China. I am bilingual in English and Chinese, speak some Japanese, and am fluent in four major Chinese dialects. These achievements have brought me satisfaction, but I've come to realise that true success is not just about accolades or wealth. Despite my efforts, my to-do list only grows longer, and I'm never quite on schedule. Life has taught me humility – the more I learn, the more I see how limited my knowledge truly is.

Today, I have decided to be baptised at Island ECC in Hong Kong, to publicly declare that I am a Christian and that I am willing to follow and accept Christ as my Saviour for the rest of my life.





2025

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