

LETTER  
FROM GOD

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Inspiring Stories and Practical Wisdom  
for Christian Living

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# Preface

We live in an age where distractions abound, often leaving us feeling disconnected from our spiritual core. Many of us wrestle with financial stress, relationship conflicts, and personal insecurities that can seem insurmountable.

My own journey through these struggles has been the catalyst for this book. Years ago, I found myself at a crossroads, grappling with fear and uncertainty. My faith was tested in profound ways. Through prayer, study, and the unwavering support of my trusted friends, I discovered principles rooted in biblical teachings that transformed my life. These insights helped me overcome personal and professional challenges, and they continue to guide me every day.

Sharing these insights is not just a professional endeavor for me; it's a deeply personal mission. I have witnessed firsthand how applying these lessons can lead to profound personal growth and a meaningful relationship with God. With "Letter From God," I aim to share my personal experiences while passing on the wisdom and tools that have been instrumental in my own spiritual journey, hoping they will inspire and empower you as well.



# Faith

## Chapter 1

*2 Corinthians 5:7*

*For we live by faith, not by sight.*

Imagine standing with your back turned, eyes shut tight, as your trusted friend stands behind you, urging you to fall backward with the promise that they will catch you. This "trust fall" moment is a blend of tension and excitement - your heart races as the ground beneath you seems to disappear. Every fiber within you screams to stay upright, yet it's in this very act of letting go where faith finds its voice. Trust isn't about ignoring fear; it's about embracing it and believing in the unseen hands ready to support you. Much like the apostle Peter, who stepped out onto the water when called by Jesus, faith requires that leap into the unknown with the confidence of divine backing. As I walk you through my own journey of faith experiences, I hope you'll not only grasp what faith means to me but also discover parts that reflect your own journey. Let's explore this path together and see where our stories might intersect.

## Personal Testimony: Early Encounters

Faith, often envisioned as a steadfast, unmovable rock upon which lives are built, can actually be as delicate and fleeting as a dandelion seed whisked away by the slightest breeze. In this investigation, we'll uncover how faith isn't just about church on Sundays or the silent prayers before bed. It's about the messy moments, the challenging moments, and the extraordinary moments that shape our spiritual journey.

Imagine a nine-year-old boy racing home through the streets of a small town, his heart pounding with excitement. He's just been told about Jesus for the first time and, without fully understanding what it means, he's decided he wants to be saved. He bursts through his front door to share his newfound faith with his parents, only to be met with indifferent shrugs. This boy, full of spontaneous faith yet surrounded by familial indifference, was me.

At that time, I didn't know it, but I was just about to begin a candid journey into the heart of what it means to believe, to doubt, and ultimately to stand firm in faith. Through my story, from a spontaneous declaration of faith as a child to the complex spirituality of an adult, we'll delve into the dynamic nature of faith in shaping a life of meaning and purpose. Join me as we discover the resilience of faith through the eyes of someone who almost walked away from it all, only to find it again in the most unexpected places.

### *Childhood Discovery*

In the heart of a lively childhood filled with outdoor games and cartoon heroes, my first real encounter with Jesus felt like something straight out of a summer blockbuster - unexpected and thrilling.

The sun was beating down on a particularly hot day in Ontario, and my friends and I were embroiled in a serious game of pretend "Hercules." We were the masters of our pretend universe, running around and shouting lines we barely understood, our voices echoing down the quiet rural streets. It was during one of these high-energy scenes that Sarah, the teenage girl babysitting one of my friends, decided to join our mythical adventures.

As we paused for a break, sitting on the warm curb, Sarah shifted the conversation from Greek myths to something she claimed was much more real.

With a gentle smile, she asked if we had ever heard about Jesus. We shook our heads; our eyes wide with curiosity. I remember her enthusiasm as she spoke about miracles and teachings, about a man who loved children and welcomed everyone with open arms. It was a lot for my nine-year-old mind to take in, but one thing was crystal clear: I definitely did not want to end up in hell, a place she described with just enough detail to sound truly terrifying.

Eager to secure my ticket to heaven, I nodded vigorously when she asked if I wanted to be saved. The idea seemed simple enough: say yes to Jesus and avoid the fiery pits - an easy choice for a child. Moments later, I found myself sprinting home, bursting through the door to announce to my parents that I had been saved. Their reactions were underwhelming, with just a nod and a "That's nice, dear," before they turned back to their chores. No fanfare, no hugs, just the silence of an ordinary day continuing as if nothing significant had happened.

This moment, though brief and somewhat comical in its reception, planted a seed in my mind. It was my first real brush with faith, not through a grand church service or a solemn prayer, but in a casual chat on a dusty roadside. That day, the concept of God shifted from something vague and distant to a tangible presence, discussed and invited into my life by a friendly face.

As summer continued, the memory of that conversation with Sarah lingered in the back of my mind. It didn't immediately propel me into religious fervor, but it opened a door I hadn't realized was there. Little did I know, this was just the beginning of a long and winding road toward understanding what faith in Jesus really meant. It would take many more years, filled with questions, doubts, and discoveries, to truly grasp the impact of that sunny afternoon chat on the curb. But every journey starts somewhere, and mine began with a simple invitation from a teenager who cared enough to share her story with a group of kids playing superheroes.

### ***Family Background and Early Indifference***

My family's approach to religion was much like our approach to cleaning the garage: a couple of times a year, motivated by either a special occasion or a sudden burst of guilt, we'd tackle the task. But just like the clutter that gradually crept back into the garage, our spiritual lives tended to drift back into inactivity not long after each effort.

Church visits were sporadic and unpredictable. The decision to go seemed to hang on a mysterious whim. About four or five times a year - often less frequently - my mom would wake up with a sudden surge of religious enthusiasm. "Let's go to church today," she'd declare out of the blue, her determination as firm as her decision to only attend the United Church, just a few blocks from our house. The reason behind her specific loyalty to the United Church remained a family mystery and was shrugged off by my dad, who usually opted to stay home and enjoy the quiet of a Sunday morning without us.

I remember sitting in the pews, swinging my legs, not quite able to reach the floor, surrounded by the solemn hymns and the heavy scent of old wood and even older books. It felt more like a visit to a grandparent's house, full of strange artifacts from another time, than a meaningful spiritual experience. The sermons were long and, to my young mind, incredibly tedious. I would count the light fixtures, trace the patterns of the stained-glass windows in my mind, and wait impatiently for the final amen.

As for my personal interest in religious commitment, it was minimal at best. The encounters at church were too infrequent to make a lasting impression, and the services themselves seemed disconnected from the vibrant, messy life I lived outside its walls. My parents didn't discuss faith much at home either. God was like a distant relative we mentioned out of politeness during holidays or special occasions, acknowledged but not really known.

This casual indifference was mirrored in my own lukewarm feelings about church-related topics. While Sarah's roadside evangelism had sparked a brief flicker of curiosity, without regular reinforcement, the flame didn't catch. Religion, in my early years, was another chore on the list - like taking out the trash or raking leaves. Necessary, perhaps, but hardly exciting.

It wasn't that I was opposed to the idea of God; it simply wasn't relevant to my day-to-day life. I was more interested in cartoons, bike rides, and schoolyard games. God, if He was out there, was for adults to worry about. I had more immediate concerns, like whether I could trade my sandwich for a better snack at lunch or how high I could climb the apple tree in our backyard.

This early indifference set the stage for a youth largely unguided by faith, where church was an irregular activity rather than a cornerstone of life. It would take a series of unexpected turns and a profound personal quest in the years to

come for me to truly engage with my spirituality. But in those early days, faith was just another word in the family dictionary, seldom used and even less understood.

## **Crisis of Faith and Rejection**

High school brought with it a whirlwind of new experiences, ideas, and a fierce craving for independence that clashed spectacularly with rules and restrictions. It was during these formative years that my casual indifference to church and spirituality evolved into a deliberate stance of distance and defiance.

As a teenager, freedom was my new mantra, and I equated it with breaking away from old molds. This was the age of loud music, late nights, and testing boundaries. Every weekend promised a new adventure, far more enticing than Sunday mornings spent under the watchful eyes of a congregation. The idea of spending those precious hours sitting on a hard pew, singing hymns, and listening to sermons felt like an unbearable restraint.

In my circle of friends, being cool was synonymous with a certain level of rebelliousness, which certainly didn't include church attendance. We thrived on a diet of skepticism and sarcasm, questioning everything, especially authority figures and established norms. In this environment, my earlier, vague understanding of faith began to seem not just uninteresting but also uncool. It was something for kids, for the naive, or for the elderly - not for those of us on the cusp of adulthood, eager to carve out our own paths and make our own rules.

I remember vividly the feeling of liberation when I decided that church was optional. It wasn't a grand declaration; it was a quiet realization that I simply didn't need to go. I could make my own choices, and attending church would not be one of them. This decision was less about disbelief in God and more about a teenage declaration of independence. God was relegated to the periphery of my life, an old story from a book that no longer demanded my attention.

However, this newfound freedom came with its own set of complications. While I enjoyed the absence of Sunday morning rituals, it also meant the absence of any moral compass that the church might have offered. I was left to navigate the tricky waters of adolescence with little more than peer pressure and my own limited experience as guides.



It was a time of discovery, of pushing limits, and occasionally finding myself in situations where I quietly wished for guidance. But the stubbornness of youth kept me from seeking it in the church. I was determined to prove that I could manage on my own, that I was the master of my fate, without needing to adhere to the teachings of my sporadic childhood church visits.

In retrospect, this period of rejection was an essential chapter in my story, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of faith later on. At the time, however, it felt like absolute freedom - the kind that only a teenager can truly appreciate, untethered and exhilarating.

### *The Evangelical Church Experience*

The summer after high school graduation marked a pivotal twist in my spiritual narrative, prompted by an unexpected invitation to a local modern church from a girl, with whom I was beginning to date again. This wasn't just any invitation - it was a challenge, a test of whether I could fit into her world, and perhaps a test of my own boundaries.

Walking into this church was like stepping into a different dimension. The air was charged with energy, the music pulsed through the crowd, and people sang with a passion that I hadn't seen in the sedate services of my childhood. Here, faith was alive, vibrant, and expressed with every raised hand and shouted hallelujah. It was intriguing and initially I was swept up in the sheer intensity of it all.

The first service was a revelation. It wasn't just the dynamic preaching or the lively music - it was the feeling of being part of something greater, something powerful. People around me shared their testimonies of miraculous interventions and life changes, and I found myself drawn to the possibility of such transformation. For a moment, it seemed like I had stumbled upon the missing piece in my life's puzzle.

However, the initial charm soon gave way to a creeping discomfort. The same intensity that had once drawn me in began to feel overwhelming. The church's approach to faith involved speaking in tongues and prophetic pronouncements, practices that were foreign and, frankly, unsettling to me. I was expected to participate, to show signs of spiritual gifts, and to conform to a level of spiritual expression that felt unnatural to me.

As weeks turned into months, the expectations grew. There were calls for financial contributions that my family could hardly afford, and there were pressures to engage in evangelistic activities that didn't sit well with my nature. I was instructed to hand out pamphlets on busy streets, an activity that spiked my anxiety and made me question the methods being used to spread this particular version of faith.

My relationship with the church - and with the girl - began to strain under the weight of these demands. The breaking point came quietly. One evening, after another service filled with fervor I could no longer share, I decided it was enough. I could not force my heart to align with a faith expression that felt so alien.

Walking away from my first genuine church experience was both a relief and a defeat. It felt like giving up on a path that could have led somewhere profound, but at the same time, it was an act of reclaiming my personal integrity and my right to choose my own spiritual journey. This experience left me wary of organized religion but more aware of my inner landscape and the types of spiritual expressions that resonated - or clashed - with my own spirit.

## **Rejection and Isolation**

After leaving this church, a chapter of my life closed, and another began - one characterized (like as in my teen years) by a staunch resolve to live by my own rules. In the aftermath, I constructed walls, not just around my heart but around my spirit, crafting a fortress where doubt overshadowed faith.

This period was marked by a conscious distancing from anything that resembled organized religion. The walls I built were thick, fortified by skepticism and a sense of betrayal. If faith was a market, I had tried its wares and found them lacking. If there was a God, he could keep to his realm while I kept to mine.

As a young adult, living by my own rules felt liberating at first. It felt like throwing open the windows of a stuffy room. I embraced secular philosophies, examined existential writings, and celebrated human achievements - all without a single glance backward at the spiritual teachings of my youth. Social gatherings, late nights, and personal freedom became the bricks and mortar of my new life.

However, what started as liberation gradually morphed into isolation. As I traversed life's complexities - relationships, career paths, and personal challenges

- I found that my fortress was also a cage. There were moments, subtle and fleeting, when I felt a pang of longing for something that my self-imposed exile from spirituality did not satisfy.

Despite these moments, I persisted in my isolation, convinced that any vulnerability or reliance on spiritual crutches was a step backward. My rules dictated strict self-reliance, a philosophy that left little room for spiritual considerations. This resolve was tested time and again, through personal failures and moments of existential crisis, where the allure of spiritual solace gnawed at the edges of my independence.

This period of building walls taught me much about the nature of personal freedom and the hidden costs of isolation. It highlighted the delicate balance between independence and interdependence, between spiritual skepticism and spiritual cynicism. As I reflect on this time, I see a young man determined to forge his path, yet unwittingly bracing against the winds of mysterious truths that continued to whisper, however faintly, from beyond the barriers he had erected.

### ***Damned Beliefs***

Despite my firm resolve to live independently of organized religion, a persistent belief in God lingered at the back of my mind. This internal conflict created a strange paradox: I believed in God, but consciously chose to keep Him at arm's length. It was like knowing you have a safety net yet refusing to acknowledge its existence.

I often found myself in quiet moments of contemplation, grappling with the notion of a higher power that I simultaneously rejected and accepted. On the one hand, I saw God as a distant figure who had little to do with the day-to-day realities of my life. On the other, there was an undeniable sense that something larger than myself was at work, even if I couldn't or wouldn't name it outright.

This conflict was most evident in moments of personal crisis or profound joy. When I was faced with challenges, there was a subtle inclination to whisper a prayer or seek some form of divine intervention, yet my rational mind quickly dismissed these urges as remnants of childhood indoctrination. During times of celebration, there was an instinct to express gratitude to something beyond the tangible, but again, this was swiftly curbed by my commitment to self-reliance.

Living with this duality was like walking a tightrope. I found myself constantly balancing my intellectual skepticism against an undercurrent of faith that refused to be entirely silenced. This created a sense of unease - a feeling of living a divided life, with one part of me grounded in the here and now and another yearning for a connection I was too stubborn to seek.

The sense of being "damned" arose not from a fear of eternal punishment, but from the realization that I was deliberately shutting myself away from a profound source of comfort and guidance. It felt as if I were punishing myself for reasons I couldn't fully articulate, caught between the desire for autonomy and my innate human need for spiritual belonging. I truly believed that there was nothing worse than choosing to turn my back on a deep-seated belief that God existed.

I often wondered if this internal conflict was unique to me or if others also walked this tightrope of belief and rejection. It was a solitary struggle, one that I kept hidden from friends and family. I presented a façade of unwavering independence while quietly wrestling with the spiritual questions that refused to be ignored. This paradox of damned beliefs shaped my outlook, coloring my perceptions and interactions in ways I didn't fully understand at the time.

## **Renewal and Rediscovery**

After almost ten years of living behind the walls I had built, something began to shift. The persistent nudges from the universe, which I often ignored, started to become harder to dismiss. The catalyst for this change was my wife, whose quiet longing for a spiritual home reignited the spark of curiosity and possibility that resided within me.

### ***Reluctant Return***

Early in our marriage, when my wife first expressed her desire to find a church, I greeted the idea with a mixture of skepticism and reluctance. She had always been more spiritually inclined, whereas I had firmly planted my feet in the secular world. But love has a way of nudging us toward places you never thought you'd go. I agreed to accompany her, partly out of support and partly out of curiosity to see if there was indeed something more.

Our church-hopping adventures began in Ottawa and we bounced from one congregation to another. Each visit was a new experience yet my emotions fluctuated from indifference to outright resistance. The churches varied in styles and doctrines, but none felt like a place where I truly belonged. I sat through sermons, often distracted, checking my watch every few minutes as my mind wandered to what else I could be doing on a Sunday morning.

The real turning point came when we moved to Waterloo, where we discovered a small church called 'Trinity.' The building wasn't extravagant, and the congregation wasn't massive; it wasn't the church's reputation that drew us in, but simply its proximity to our home. From the moment we walked in, it felt distinct. The music was familiar, reminiscent of my previous charismatic church experience, but without the overwhelming intensity. The people were friendly and genuinely interested in us as new visitors. My wife was instantly captivated, and her enthusiasm proved infectious.

Despite this, my heart was still guarded. Each service felt like a test of endurance. I went because I loved my wife and wanted to support her, but inwardly, I struggled. The sermons were engaging, the community welcoming, yet a part of me remained detached. I was there in body, but my spirit lagged behind, hesitant to re-enter the realm of faith I had decisively left years ago.

As weeks passed into months, something began to change. The resistance I felt started to soften, replaced by a growing sense of curiosity. The pastor's messages began to resonate with me in unexpected ways, often touching on themes of doubt and renewal that mirrored my internal conflict. The people's warmth chipped away at my skepticism, slowly but surely.

One memorable Sunday, the pastor spoke about the prodigal son - a poignant story of return and acceptance. For the first time, I felt a genuine connection - a sense that perhaps this was a place where my questions and doubts could coexist with faith. The emotional walls I had built began to reveal cracks, and through these fissures, light slowly seeped in.

It wasn't a dramatic conversion; rather, there was a gradual, almost imperceptible shift. I began to look forward to Sundays, not merely for the routine but for the sense of peace and belonging they provided. I started to experience moments of quiet revelation and the rediscovery of a part of myself I had thought lost forever.

## *A New Home at Trinity*

Finding Trinity Church was like stumbling upon an unexpected oasis in the midst of a spiritual desert - a desert I hadn't even realized I was in. I vividly recall one Sunday morning when the pastor spoke about the story of David and Goliath - a tale I had heard countless times before. Yet his interpretation was refreshingly different. He spoke about the Goliaths in our lives - those personal battles we all face - and the courage it takes to confront them. It resonated deeply with me, touching on the internal struggles I had grappled with for years. It was a moment of connection, a feeling that maybe, just maybe, church had something to offer me beyond the routine.

Going to church was no longer just about supporting my wife; it was about finding something for myself. The people at Trinity were diverse, a mix of ages and backgrounds, but united in their commitment to openness and warmth. At my wife's persistent nudging, we joined a small group which provided a more personal setting for discussions and support. Again, I was reluctant to open myself in this intimate setting, but these gatherings were filled with laughter, honest conversations, and a shared sense of seeking. It was in these moments that I began to see the value of community in faith.

My perception of faith started to shift. Instead of being about rigid doctrines or fear of judgment; it was about finding a place where I could explore my beliefs openly, without pressure. Trinity Church offered me that space. The sermons continued to challenge and inspire me, often addressing real-life issues in a way that was both relatable and insightful. The pastor's ability to blend personal stories with biblical teachings made each message feel relevant and accessible.

One unassuming summer day, I had an epiphany. As I was going through the regular routine of buying diapers for our newborn son, I realized that my heart was no longer as guarded. The walls I had built were beginning to crumble, replaced by a growing acceptance of faith. It wasn't a dramatic transformation; it was a gentle unfolding, like the opening of a flower. I began to see faith not as a set of rules to follow, but as a relationship to nurture, both with God and with the community around me.

The change in my perception was gradual but profound. I started to pray again; tentatively (even reluctantly) at first, then with more confidence. I found comfort in the rituals I had once dismissed and joy in the communal worship

that now felt like a shared celebration instead of an obligation. Trinity Church had become a new home for my faith, a place where I could grow and rediscover a spiritual connection I thought I had lost forever.

Looking back, I see that my reluctant return was the first giant step toward a richer understanding of faith. Trinity Church was the fertile ground where my faith could take root and flourish. It was here that I learned to embrace the complexities of belief, to accept the doubts and questions as part of the process of faith, and to find strength in a network of people that supported and uplifted each other. This new home at Trinity was more than a physical place; it was a sanctuary for my soul, a place where my spiritual journey could continue to unfold in its own time.

## **Transformation and Commitment**

Finding a church home was the beginning of something bigger. It was a prelude to a moment that would forever change my understanding of faith. All of the pieces of the puzzle were on the table; I had completed the outside edges and was starting to see the picture that God had placed in front of me. However, I still wasn't ready for Him, at least not yet.

### ***Moment of Realization***

It was an ordinary drive home from work, one of those days when the mundane routines of life seemed to weigh a little heavier. The traffic was slow, giving me plenty of time to contemplate the latest sermon I had heard. The pastor had spoken about the importance of letting go of guilt and seeking forgiveness. As I cruised along the highway, a sense of unease settled over me. It was as if the words from the sermon were echoing in my mind, refusing to be ignored.

The car became a sanctuary of sorts, a quiet space where I could no longer avoid the internal battle that had been raging for years. The emotional and spiritual walls I had built were almost gone, and in that vulnerable moment, I felt a compelling urge to do something I hadn't done in a very long time – I prayed honestly and openly – more intimately and truer than ever before in my entire life.

"God, I'm sorry," I whispered, my voice barely audible over the hum of the engine. The words came out tentatively at first, but then more forcefully, as if a dam had broken inside. "Please, come back into my life."

The moment those words left my lips, an overwhelming sense of relief washed over me. It was as if a weight I hadn't realized I was carrying had been lifted. There, in the solitude of my car, I felt a connection with God that was immediate and undeniable. It wasn't dramatic; there were no flashes of light or heavenly choirs. Just a quiet, profound sense of peace that settled over my entire being.

I continued to drive, but everything felt different. The world outside the car seemed brighter, more vibrant. It was as if I was seeing it through new eyes. The stress and worries that had filled my mind moments before were replaced by a calm assurance that I was not alone. For the first time in years, I felt truly at peace with myself and my place in the world.

I felt I had just crossed the finish line of a mental marathon. I had finished the race. I was done. Wait, what...? I was done? "What now?" I thought. After all, everything in my faith journey had been building towards this moment of connection – this truthful moment of triumph. "What now?" I spoke those words aloud as they echoed in my mind a second time. I wasn't really expecting an answer. But I got one. "Surround yourself with My people" was the reply. Whether it was truly God's voice or simply my mind making a logical connection to the next step in my faith journey, I can't say. What I can say, however, is that from that moment – that exact moment – my life truly changed.

This was a turning point, the beginning of a change that would shape the rest of my life. It marked the end of my spiritual isolation and the start of a renewed commitment to genuine, meaningful faith. The prayer I had uttered in desperation became a centerpiece of my new relationship with God, a foundation upon which I would build a life of richer understanding and connection.

As I pulled into the driveway that evening, I knew that things would never be the same. I had opened a door that I had kept closed for too long, and on the other side was a sense of belonging and purpose that I had been seeking all along. This moment in the car was more than just a prayer; it was the beginning of a journey toward a more fulfilling and spiritually enriched life.



## *Surrounding myself with His people*

The connection made during my commute marked a significant shift for me, but the true metamorphosis began as I embraced the community at church. This wasn't just about attending services; it was about actively engaging with people who shared similar values and beliefs with me. It was about finding a support system that enriched my life in ways I hadn't anticipated.

As mentioned earlier, one of the most impactful aspects of Trinity Church was the ability to join a small group. This close-knit circle of ten to twelve individuals met weekly, sharing meals, discussing sermons, and supporting each other through life's ups and downs. These gatherings were filled with laughter and genuine, heartfelt conversations that gave me a sense of belonging that I had longed for without even realizing it. It was refreshing to be surrounded by people who genuinely cared about my well-being and spiritual growth.

Another enriching aspect was the exposure to Christian media. From inspiring books to uplifting music and thought-provoking podcasts, I began to immerse myself in content that reinforced my faith and provided new perspectives. One book that particularly resonated with me was C.S. Lewis's "Mere Christianity". Its logical approach to complex spiritual concepts helped solidify my beliefs and gave me the confidence to explore my faith more firmly. I strongly recommend this book to anyone who is looking to try to understand the intellectual and logical reason for faith.

Listening to podcasts from various Christian leaders also became a regular part of my daily routine. These podcasts offered insights and practical advice on living a faith-centered life. They challenged me to think critically and encouraged me to apply biblical principles to my everyday decisions. This continuous learning and engagement with faith-based content helped me grow spiritually and stay connected to my beliefs.

Attending church events and volunteering in outreach programs further grounded my sense of purpose. Whether it was delivering Christmas food hampers or participating in church-organized vacation Bible camp, these activities allowed me to live out my faith in tangible ways. They also provided opportunities to meet more people within the church and strengthen my ties to the community.

This newfound sense of belonging brought a depth to my life that I hadn't experienced before. It was a source of joy, support, and spiritual nourishment. Through these connections, I learned the value of shared experiences and the importance of having a network of people who uplift and encourage each other in faith.

Embracing this community wasn't just about finding a place to belong; it was about discovering a support system that enriched my life and strengthened my faith. The friends I made, the lessons I learned, and the experiences I shared all contributed to a deeper and more meaningful spiritual journey.

## **Living with Faith**

Finding a welcoming church brought me to a place where faith was no longer distant; it became an integral part of my daily life. This shift involved more than attending church on Sundays; it meant weaving faith into the very fabric of everyday experiences. Faith begins the moment I wake up, with each morning starting with a quiet prayer - a simple conversation with God that sets a tone of gratitude and purpose for the day. This practice grounds me, framing my daily tasks and interactions in a positive light. Whether during my commute, listening to uplifting podcasts, or reflecting at work, faith remains a constant companion. I find myself becoming more patient and compassionate, drawing strength from my beliefs in all my interactions. Even regular activities, like engaging with co-workers, provide opportunities to impart lessons of kindness and integrity rooted in faith.

The shift brought about by faith extends beyond my personal life, positively impacting our family dynamics. Our home has become a sanctuary of love and support, underpinned by shared values and mutual respect. We make a point to pray together regularly, celebrating blessings and seeking strength in times of need, creating a bond that is both resilient and nurturing. My marriage has grown stronger, and our children are developing a sense of stability and moral grounding, learning to approach life through compassion and faith. Despite the daily chaos that comes with three very different kids, the atmosphere in our home is one of love and trust, where faith is not just practiced but lived daily, bringing us closer together and enriching our lives in countless ways. I'm not saying that

we're perfect - there are still fights, arguments, and struggles - but our connection to God through faith keeps us grounded and makes the troubled times easier.

## Summarizing Faith

Struggles with faith are something we all encounter at various points in our lives. They are as universal as the air we breathe, affecting everyone. Even the most devout individuals face moments of doubt and uncertainty. It's part of being human. We question, we wrestle with our beliefs, and sometimes we falter. Whether it's a personal crisis, the loss of a loved one, or the everyday pressures of life, these challenges can shake our faith to its core.

But these struggles are not a sign of weakness; they are a testament to our humanity. They show that we are engaging with our beliefs on a deep level, seeking to understand and live by them. The journey of faith is not one of uninterrupted peace and certainty; it's a dynamic, evolving process that involves growth, setbacks, and rediscovery. Just like everyone else, I've had my fair share of doubts and moments when my faith felt like a distant memory. These experiences, though difficult, have shaped my understanding and made my faith stronger and more resilient.

Faith is often compared to a boat navigating through the tumultuous waters of life. Sometimes the waters are calm, and the journey is smooth. Other times, storms arise, and the boat is tossed about by waves of doubt and fear. But it's important to remember that even when we feel lost or adrift, we are not alone. God is like the figure on the shore, throwing stones beyond the boat, creating ripples that gently guide us back to the safety of His love.

We may not always understand the ripples and disturbances in our lives, but with faith, we can trust that they are part of a larger plan to bring us closer to where we need to be. So, when you face your own struggles, remember to have patience and trust in God's guidance.

Faith doesn't require having all the answers; rather, it invites you to be open to the process, to embrace the struggles, and to find peace in the understanding that you are being guided. Keeping your heart open, staying connected with your community, and allowing yourself to grow through challenges will strengthen

your faith. In doing so, you'll discover a more significant and fulfilling connection with God and those around you.

## Discussion Questions on Faith

This chapter begins with the metaphor of standing at the edge of a cliff. Can you recall a time when you had to take a leap of faith?

How do you integrate your faith into your daily decision-making, and what role does it play in overcoming ethical dilemmas you may face?

Can you think of a time when your faith was tested? How did that experience shape your understanding of steadfastness and resilience?

In moments of uncertainty, what practices or habits help you stay grounded in your beliefs? How can you incorporate those into daily life or community interactions?

How do you envision the ripples of your faith affecting your family, friends or community? What specific actions can you take to create those ripples?

*Dear Lord, thank You for the gift of faith.  
Help me to trust in You and take bold steps even  
when I cannot see the path ahead. Strengthen my  
heart and guide me in my journey, that I may  
reflect Your love to others. Amen.*



