

Testimony of Chris Crocker

I was born and raised in a nominal Christian family. Such nominalism, however, did not prevent the Holy Spirit preparing my heart and from hearing and responding to the Gospel. From as young as I remember I cannot recall not knowing that God existed (c.f. Ps 22:10b). Likewise, I knew that we should do what was right in His eyes. For example, around 5 years of age, my parents stopped going to church one summer. I knew this was morally wrong and so we began going to church again in the fall because I insisted. Going to church and Sunday School established many of the basics of the Faith in my life. I even stopped going to Sunday School at a very young age so that I could stay up and listen to the sermon. But belief in God, worship and good morals is not the same as believing in the Gospel; that's a lesson that a paper clip taught me. Yes, a paperclip! One day I accompanied my father to Sketchley's Dry Cleaners to pick up his uniform. At the counter there was small container of paper clips. When no one was looking I stole one. I broke the 9th commandment. As we walked back to the truck I felt so miserable for what I had done that I tossed that paper clip into the grass along the sidewalk. Yet, my conscience continued to convict me that I had not only sinned but was a sinner. Then Pastor Fehr, who was converted wonderfully during WWII, invited anyone from the church who might be interested in Baptism to attend a series of classes on what it meant to become a Christian and how Baptism was the ordinance to express this. You didn't have to be a Christian to attend but could attend to explore these matters. Very simply in those classes Pastor Fehr shared from the Bible of how Jesus was sent to die for sinners and that if we repent and trust in Him Jesus would forgive our sins and grant us new life. That was enough, I did not need much convincing. I believed. Upon profession of faith I was baptized at an evening service on the Lord's Day, December 11, 1994. I was 9 years old. Since that time God's persevering grace kept me from straying too far from following Jesus, even during my teenage years. I wasn't perfect but was spared many youthful sins. I continued to grow in the Faith, in a knowledge of the Scriptures, in a reliance on the Holy Spirit, all while humbly proclaiming, "I am a great sinner, but Christ is a great Saviour."

My testimony is that simple and all of this took place when I was very young. Many Christians consider it a great privilege to be led to Christ through some type of "Damascus road experience" after having blatantly pursued a life of sin. Certainly there is great grace in these conversions, but God's grace also works in other ways, including my experience. In the parable about of the vineyard workers from Matthew 20 these 'Damascus road' conversions would be those perhaps hired at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Responding to God's providential care and grace at a young age you might say that I was a worker called "early in the morning." Though the attitude of the early workers is portrayed negatively, in practicality it is a blessing to be called early and it is a privilege to know Jesus from a young age and have longer to get to know Him. I count it as God's wonderful grace that I was positioned in a place where I could respond to the Gospel early to know and follow Jesus.