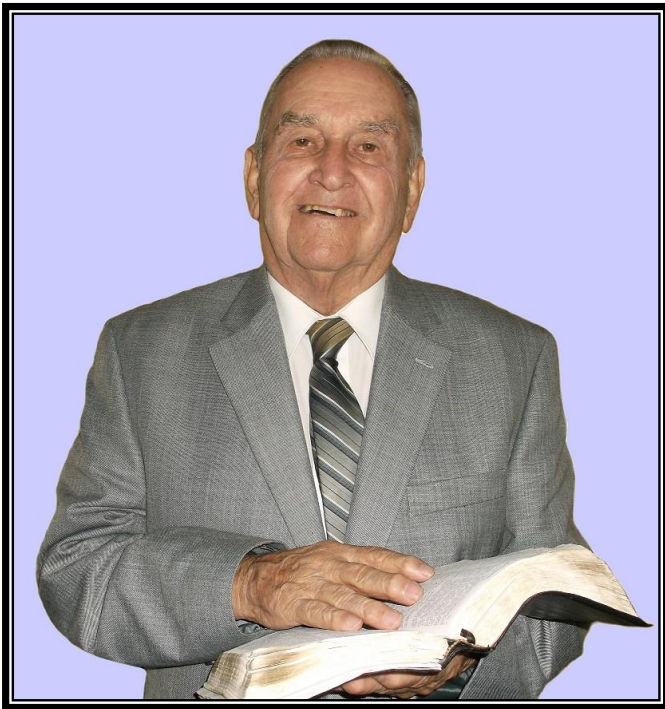


Pastor James Walter's Life Testimony

By Pastor James Walter



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A few weeks ago I was given a form to fill out containing several thought provoking questions, one of which gave me many sleepless hours of meditation before I could honestly answer that question. The following is my testimony of my life. I give it as a result of my struggle with the question on that form. At the end of this testimony I will give the question and my answer. I am entitling my testimony simply with two words.

The Scriptures

"From a child you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:15). Those words are among the last words the Apostle Paul ever wrote. He wrote them to Timothy, the most loyal and faithful fellow servant of Jesus Christ Paul had ever known (Philippians 2:19-22). In the previous verse Paul had said to Timothy "Continue in the things you have learned and been assured of, **knowing of whom you have learned them.**" I am sure he was speaking of himself as Timothy's mentor (II Timothy 2:1). But I am also sure Timothy would think of his mother and grandmother (II Timothy 1:5). His first knowledge of the Holy Scriptures was given to him as a little child from a godly mother and grandmother. Those scriptures

that had produced an unshakeable faith in The God of The Scriptures, they had passed on to little Timothy.

I too, from a child have known The Holy Scriptures. I too, learned them from the godliest woman I have ever known, my mother. My first recollection of my mother is her reading the Bible along with *Hurlbut's Stories of The Bible* to me. I said GODLY WOMAN, not a believing woman, a good woman, a devout woman or faithful woman. She was surely all these things, but over and above all, she was a GODLY woman. She *loved* her Lord Jesus and, like Hannah of old, wanted her son to grow up and do the same. These Scriptures she read to me and had me memorize were not words and teachings out of a religious book. They were the words of the One and Only True and Living God. They were Truth. They were her DAILY BREAD. To her, and to my Father as well, the Bible was not primarily a book on righteousness and righteous living. It was God's verbal revelation of Himself given that we might know Him and go on to love and serve Him. The Scriptures were alive and life transforming.

Both my parents lived transformed lives that revealed a love for Christ first and a love for others as they loved themselves. Many times I saw them go out of their way and sacrifice for the welfare of others (our neighbors and members of our church). They were praying people. They prayed regularly for our

neighbors and for those in the Little Church among whom I grew up. And above all they prayed for their boys (my brother and me). More than once I heard my father praying in the night saying, "Oh, God, get hold of my boys, get hold of my boys before they get out into sin." Note: When God finally got hold of this boy and I immediately started to attend prayer meetings, I saw that my name was at the top of the prayer list of the small group that still attended "prayer meeting", a dying service in most churches. I was an answer to their prayers, as well as to the prayers of my father and mother.

Many, many times my father would ask me when I was going to turn from my sin, trust Christ and be saved. I am so glad my parents trusted God to bring me to repentance and faith as much as they trusted and believed I had the will to make the choice to turn from sin to God. I am sure my father knew nothing of the meaning of the terms Calvinist and Armenian in defining his theology. He simply knew that the Scriptures taught that God, by His Spirit, through His Word, drew sinners to Himself and just as strongly believed that except a sinner repented (turned from) his sinful self and personally believed in The Crucified, Risen Christ he would remain in his lost condition (dead in sin, separated from God). I had to make that choice.

I knew many of the Scriptures that taught I had to be "born again, converted, saved, even become a new creation." I had learned them from my parents, Sunday School teachers and Pastors preaching, but at age 19 I was still not born again, converted, saved and certainly not a new creation in Christ. I loved the world and the things of the world and it was evident that the Love of God the Father was not in me (I John 2:15-17).

I also knew many of those scriptures that spoke, not only of God's Love for the world, but also of His judgment and wrath that was upon those who would not in repentance and faith humbly turn from their sinful selves to Him and Him alone for forgiveness of sins and the gift of Eternal Life, His Son; and I KNEW I WAS ONE OF THOSE SINNERS. I also knew another thing that I had learned from the Scriptures and from the lifestyle of my parents. That was being saved, born again, and converted meant a change. They called it: "becoming a new creation in Christ". It was a transformation I longed for and yet did not want at the same time. I wanted God's forgiveness, His peace, and the freedom from guilt and fear I saw in my parents and Sunday School teacher but, at the same time, I wanted my self-centered, sinful self and the sinful things that gratified it at the same time. This battle went on inside me all through my teenage years.

Then, in June of 1951, God did a marvelous work in both my girlfriend (now my wife of 64 years) and myself. Many of those scriptures I had heard and some of them I had put to memory became alive, or should I say The Holy Spirit spoke them to me, producing in me great conviction of sin, fear and guilt, so much so that I could not sleep nor rest day and night for nearly a week. Here are a few of those Scriptures that produced this inward turmoil:

"Today, if you will hear His Voice, harden not your heart."

"Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

"Except you repent, you shall perish."

"My Spirit shall not always strive with man."

I even feared that as God gave up on those in Noah's day, so He would give up on me if I did not turn from my sin and call on Him in repentance and faith. I was like those Israelites of Moses day. "I heard, I knew, I believed God's word was TRUTH, but like them I was a disobedient sinner" (Romans 10:16-21). As we read in Hebrews 4:2, "the Word preached and known did not profit them not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." For as long as I can remember, I knew and believed that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again, but I also knew I did

not know Him in a personal way as MY Savior and Lord.

That was a week I will never forget. Days I was working in the woods, cutting logs. Evenings I would spend with my girlfriend. Nights I could not sleep. My girlfriend could not understand what was wrong with me. Evening after evening I tried to explain to her this terrible inward turmoil was from God calling me to turn to Him for forgiveness and be saved. That week all I could think about was that I was a lost, condemned, guilty sinner. I had broken His Law, His commandments over and over again from the first to the last. From - "Thou shalt love me above all else", To - "Thou shalt not covet anything that belongs to someone else". At the end of five such days and nights my girlfriend and I went forward in the little church where I was raised and there, as two repentant sinners, we confessed our faith in the crucified, buried, resurrected living Lord Jesus Christ, based on Romans 10:9-10.

That night our lives and lifestyle completely changed. Although I did not understand it fully at that time, nor do I sixty four years later, but this I know, my desire to know His Word and His Person has only increased from that day to this and I believe will continue throughout the ages of Eternity.

That summer, night after night, my girlfriend and I went anywhere The Word of God was preach-

ed. We drove as far as 110 miles each way just to hear God's Word taught and proclaimed. At that time I did not know the differences between Holiness, Pentecostal, Calvinistic, Baptist or Charismatic Preachers. I just wanted to know MORE ABOUT JESUS. Two weeks after that night in June, I preached my first sermon. As I look back on it I am not sure how doctrinally sound it was, but I know I quoted many scriptures, probably some of them out of context. By the end of that summer, I knew what I would be doing the rest of my life. I would be preaching and teaching the one and only book that is the verbally inspired Word from The One and Only Eternal Living God.

Three months after my girlfriend and I came into a living relationship with God, we were married and in Practical Bible Training School (now Davis College) studying for a lifetime of preaching and teaching The Infallible Word of God. It was the ministry of God's Word by two graduates of Practical Bible Training School that led us to go to Practical. They were two young men just five or six years older than my wife and myself. Their knowledge of God's Word and love for Jesus Christ caused us to choose Practical Bible School to study for our lifetime ministry of preaching and teaching God's Word. Their names: Dick Kruger and Merrill Dense.

Less than two years later we were in our first pastorate preaching and teaching God's Word witnessing Him transform lives just as He had been transforming us since that night we confessed Him as our Lord and our God. Thomas believed in The Resurrected Christ after seeing the nail prints in His hands and the wound in His side. We, along with all those to whom we have taught and preached the Word of God down through the years, are of those our Lord described as the "Blessed ones who have not seen Him and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

From the day God brought me to Himself through His Word, *that Word has been my daily bread*. I love that Word and I love to proclaim it to others, in a group or one at a time with one thought in mind. That is to trust The Holy Spirit to use His Word to change (transform) others as He has been and continues to change (transform) me.

First to enlighten minds, then call sinners to repentance and faith, regenerate (make alive) and continue with the work of sanctification (changing each one from glory to glory) that will culminate in Glorification (restored to His Image and Likeness) when He returns to take His Redeemed ones home to be eternally with Him.

Now to that question on that questionnaire to which I said I would give an answer at the end of my life's testimony. Here it is: "What have been your

greatest accomplishments in life? Please answer in two or three short paragraphs." My answer: My Father and Mother, two of the most humble, godly, honest, moral, loving, caring people I have ever known literally prayed me into a lifetime ministry of preaching and teaching The Bible (The Word of God). That I have prayerfully and faithfully done with the result of seeing many of those to whom, and with whom I have ministered God's Word become a lot like my parents were (humble, godly, honest, moral, caring, born again children of God) and a number of their children go into a lifetime ministry of preaching and teaching The Bible as God's Infallible Word, both in this country and several countries around the world.

Their transformed lives and homes are not anything I have actually accomplished over my lifetime of preaching and teaching God's Word. They are "His workmanship" created in Christ Jesus unto the good works He has fore ordained for us to express outwardly in this fallen world until He calls us Home to be eternally with Him (Ephesians 2:8-10). As were the Thessalonian Christians to the Apostle Paul (they were his "glory and joy" (II Thess. 2:20), so those transformed lives and homes are not any of my accomplishments but they are "my glory and joy." In two books I have had published entitled: *God Is Busy Fixing Things* and *Fifty Years A Country Pastor*

(Shepherd) I have given accounts of a number of those lives God has brought to Himself and transformed for His Glory. Here is a poem written by one of them more than 50 years ago, two days before God took him home by the way of a sudden accident. I read it at his memorial service and added three more verses he might have written after a few days with his Savior in Heaven.

I'm His, For Himself by Belden Baker

When I look back upon my life,

Lord I confess to thee,

My life has been a selfish one.

I've made you exist for me.

When I first received you as my own,

These things appealed to me,

Forgiveness of sins, a home in heaven,

My soul from sin set free.

These things are true, praise your name.

But Lord they are selfish still.

For You to exist for me,

Has never been your will.

Through Your Word my eyes are open now.

I clearly see your plan.

To love, serve and worship You,

That's why I exist as man.

You created everything for Yourself.

Redemptions purpose is the same.

I'm eternally yours for your glory.

Blessed be Your Holy Name!

Written by Pastor Jim Walter speaking for Belden in heaven:

Through Your Word, while back on earth
Blessed Lord, You taught me true.

You created and Redeemed me
To love, serve and worship You.

Child of God, still back on earth,
Here in Heaven it's the same.

We're all gathered around His Throne
Singing praises to His Name.

Until the day the trumpet sounds
And we all His Resurrection share,
We are His for Himself, All awaiting
That reunion in the air.

Allow me to close my life's testimony where it began. On my mother's lap, where she not only read and taught The Scriptures to me; she sang to me and did her best to teach me to sing with her. That did not go as well as memorizing The Scriptures. I was able to memorize the words of those songs, but carrying the tune to them was not one of my talents. Here are the words to one of those songs she taught to me that Dr. Woodrow Kroll calls "One of the grand old hymns of the faith that would do us well if The Church learned to sing again."

The B. I. B. L. E. yes that's the Book for me.

I stand alone on the Word of God, the B. I. B. L. E.

The B. I. B. L. E. yes that's the Book for me.

I'll read and pray and then obey the B. I. B. L. E.

But you know, the music I enjoyed the most in all the thousands of Worship Services I have conducted over all the years I was a Pastor were those 15-20 seconds after I spoke these words at the beginning of every message I preached. Here they are. "Let us take our Bibles and open them to (then the Book, chapter and verses)" that would be our meditation and/or discussion for the next 30-45 minutes, sometimes even an hour. To me there was no sweeter music than the rustling leaves of our Bibles as we turned to the passage of God's Word through which God had already spoken to me as I had studied and prayed in preparation for days and sometimes weeks before.

The turning of those Bible leaves was sweet music, but my greatest joy would come when I would see God's Grace Transformed Lives expressed twenty-four/seven by obedience and good works that would glorify God, and love for one another that would manifest itself by unity and peace within His Church (The Body of Christ). That's who we are if we are His through Redemption (Titus 2:11-15) and not just members of a local church.

That's what my book *God Is Busy Fixing Things* is all about (just a few of the many members of His Church which He has purchased for Himself with His own blood). I am humbled by the thought that He has used me through a lifetime of preaching and

teaching His Word to save and sanctify a people for Himself. I love each of them and they love me. At my age now there are far more of them like Belden who are HOME WITH OUR LORD than there are left down here. Here is what Dr. Woodrow Kroll, of Back to The Bible, says about that Book:

Some people write from theory. Others write from life experience. Still others write as Bible commentators with no experience. It is rare when you find a book like *God Is Busy Fixing Things* because Pastor Jim Walter writes with theory in his head, his Bible in one hand and his years of ministerial experience in the other. Real Life situations, Real life problems, Real Life answers; that is: GOD IS BUSY FIXING THINGS!