

You might wonder why the name Smiles And Stuff. It started as a name of a shop in the virtual world of Second Life. I also go by Smiles Mornington in Second. Also, I have used a variation of "Smiles," in my username, for example, "SmileySmiles," in This is my testimony of how I became a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ.

Both my Dad and Mom had a Roman Catholic background. So it was both strange and I think an act of God that I started out going to a protestant church. The first one I went to was in Westminster, CA. I believe this was of "Church of God" denomination.

They had traditional Sunday School. I even remember them talking about Jesus dying on the cross and they even had a crown of thorns to show what that might have been like for Jesus.

So the story of Jesus was ingrained in me very young.

I also later went to Calvary Baptist in Bellflower, CA. It was cool, because they would pick up us kids at our house with a Light Green (Minty like color) Bus. So there was no excuse not to go.

Even though this happened and I was baptized into their church. I still believe I had not become a Christian. I went to their Christian camp (in Ponderous Pines, CA) more than one time. I had fun, but there were still people who made fun of me, I was more introverted then and I questioned, aren't these supposed to be Christian girls? I thought it wasn't very Christian like to be making fun of me like that. I never really got what made you a Christian. They would say to come down the aisle and say a prayer. I thought does going down the aisle make you a Christian?

You see no one really explained it well to me.

I would later learn that it takes more than a prayer to save you. But that's later on in my story.

While attending Calvary Baptist, ended up watching up a television cartoon that was voiced by one of my favorite voice actors named Rob Paulsen (the show was called "Mighty Max").It was on Sunday mornings when the church was.

It could have been any show or anything that Satan chose. But still God's providence, that it was. I would guess I was about 12 or 13 then and I was drawn away from church. But church, anyhow, is mainly for believers and I wasn't one then.

After I left, my sisters and brothers followed me also. I even feel bad about that today. I felt that was one of the reasons they stopped going was because of me. Although one of my sister's said it wasn't that reason.

Either way, I left. It wouldn't be until years later, about 18 years of age and in community college, Cerritos College, that I would really seek anything of spiritual nature again.

Well, one day I was going by some little square with a tree in the middle and they had what looked like to be a bible study. I sat down to listen. I think that I wanted to try to get back to learning about God.

After this, a young lady around my age then came and talked to me. Her name was Anora. Then she asked me if I wanted to have a bible study with her.

So I agreed. We went through what later I found out would be called the "Discipleship" study. I thought I was a Christian then.

I started going to their church which was in Long Beach, CA. I studied their studies. I learned their ways, talked the talk, and was baptized into their church. It was very worker righteous, your worth was decided by how many converts you got.

Even though they didn't say this, I didn't live with them, but in a way, I was still controlled by them. It was a kingdom cult. A kingdom cult is one that uses the name of Jesus and/or the bible but is still a cult.

They claimed to be the only ones going to Heaven and we had to convert other people to their church. It

was called "International Churches of Christ," "ICOC" for short. You can see more about it on Wikipedia.com and also about some people who got away from them at Reveal.org.

I remember they kept saying that they were not a cult, but if they weren't why did they have to keep on saying they were not. Also, you could only date people in the church. They even would go so far as having the guys take you out on dates so that you would not get lonely or want to go to other places or leave their church in search for friendship, boyfriends and/or girlfriends.

Well, I was also constantly on edge, because of my Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. I had bad thoughts because of O.C.D. I would feel guilty and constantly felt the need to confess to my "Discipler" Anora.

It was such a burden. Then a good thing happened. My mom helped me get away from them. It was kind of hard because that's all I had thought was my only way to connect to God then to God. I also got on medication to help me get stable.

So, later, I went back to Calvary Baptist. It was enjoyable; they had nice meetings for the youth called, "23 Below," for what else 23 and Below (with a minimum of being in high school Freshman).

I was doing better. But I still didn't have that assurance of Christ's Salvation. They even had classes that you are supposed to take. There were 101, 201, 301, and 401, the basics of being a Christian.

You are supposed to take them in order. There is a flaw with this system because I went to the beginning of class and knew I wasn't saved and I said their prayer (like an equivalent to the "Sinner's Prayer"). And I continued to go to church not being a Christian.

I did not have the assurance of salvation. I kept on feeling I had to say it again and again (praying for forgiveness), such as with the flawed "Backsliding Theology" (saying how people who are not showing the fruit from the Holy Spirit or living carnally and not Christ-like are backsliders, this is another subject altogether).

The problem was I had never slid forward in the first place (Become a real lasting convert to Christianity, See the bible for the "Parable of the Sower" in the new testament). I was work righteousness and self-righteousness, which can't save you. That is you can't work your way to Heaven.

Near the end of my college run I started to have "panic attacks." The first one started after a swimming class at Cerritos College.

A panic attack, I will tell you is a terrible thing. In my experience, it's not being able to think straight and my mind repeating thoughts in my head over and over. Then, followed by, being afraid of it, then being afraid of being afraid. It's just over-whelming. I know that panic attacks can be different for each person, but this was my experience having them. Something that can help is getting a paper bag to do deep breaths or to slow down your breathing. I now have some medications, that helps me to not have them.

Back then was different, then. I would not want to move (sometimes I would be in a fetal position at school on a couple of chairs in the lobby of the theater) and It got so bad I didn't want to leave my house and then even in my own bed it would happen.

I later moved to Fairfield, Ohio. My Mom and I were gonna live there with my older sister, Christina. The panic attacks subsided for a while, but still, some of that fear would arrive once again.

Then we had to go back to California because my sister got in trouble with the Law again. I began watching TBN (Trinity Broadcasting Network). As, I got agoraphobic. I thought this would help me, filling myself with stuff from God, I thought (of course I learned not everything on there is right teaching from the Bible), but it did help a little. I had TBN almost 24/7!

Then it (my conversion) happened the day that what God wanted for me to know came clear. What I did not get before. The one thing I had not got understood, then became clear.

I started watching an episode of "Praise the Lord," on TBN.

I saw on TV that there was Kirk Cameron. Famously, I knew him from the show "Growing Pains" and "Kirk." (formerly on the WB).

I already liked him as an actor and thought he was cute, so I was interested. Then I saw later him with this guy with a mustache and I thought then an Australian accent (big blunder, found out he was a Kiwi, from New Zealand, later) who ended up being Ray Comfort.

I was like who is this guy? But I was open to listening to both of them. Then I heard from Ray Comfort the very two lessons that changed my life forever. "True and False Conversion," and "Hell's Best Kept Secret."

What made these lessons extraordinary and different from all the other lessons that that cult and other churches taught me, is that they didn't just present the Gospel, they gave me the bad news first, so that the "Good News" of Jesus Christ, to make sense.

I first learned that I was a false convert, I was filled with self-righteousness and had no genuine love of God and thought of what do I do to get saved.

I learned that before we become Christian (being born again, born from above, spiritually) we do not know the things of God, nor do we understand them, or genuinely seek after God.

For all this to make even more sense we have to go way back to the beginning in the garden of Eden. God made man from dust (breathed into him and gave him life) and later after God made Adam name the animals, see that he was without a proper helper. Then God put Adam asleep and took a rib from Adam and made Eve, his wife. God told them they had access to everything except not to eat (the fruit) from the tree of the "Knowledge of Good and Evil."

God wasn't being a comic meanie, he knew if they would eat this they would die, both spiritually and physically. He loved them.

One day Eve was tempted by Satan in the form of a Snake. He asked her if God really said not to eat the fruit. He made her doubt what God had said. Then Eve said God said they were not to eat or touch it. She already added to what God said.. Then Satan said you will not die (he meant that not an instant death). He also said you will be like God knowing good and evil (he deceived the woman, like he still deceives today, with the promise that we can be our own gods and believe anything we want as long as it's not in the Bible or biblically accurate (Research "Hermeneutics")).

She did eat and gave it to her husband Adam and he ate the fruit, also.

So their eyes were opened, and they saw they were naked. God in his grace gave them clothes to wear, but he had to kick them out of the Garden, because of their sin.. So they died spiritually that day and would die physically later. Just like us. For 10 out of 10 people die. The ultimate statistic.

Through Adam, death and sin entered the world. That is called "The Fall," the Earth was cursed, because of the sin of Adam, the first man. Ever since then sin, has been passed on from human to human. That's called "Oriignal Sin."

You may ask or wonder what sin is. Sin is anything that breaks the 10 commandments. I realized that I was building up God's wrath for me by all my sins adding up, one by one. I realized that I was not a good person. Not good enough by my own efforts to go to Heaven? No one can do that.

I always thought I was alright compared to others, that was self-righteousness, in it's essence. Easily, I would look good to someone else to say I am better than them. Or even am much better than someone like Hitler, because compared to others I was good (in my own sight), but of course, I was only deceiving myself.

God's standards are higher than ours. God's holy Law acted as a mirror to show how Good I was not and a schoolmaster to teach me what was morally perfect.

How would you do, before a perfect and Holy God? Let's see the 10 commandments.

1. You shall have no other gods before me.

2. You shall not make yourself any graven image"(Don't make an idol to bow down and worship it, of anything.

(This can also be idols we make in our mind when we make a our own god to worship).

3. "You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain"

(Don't use your lips to dishonor God, such as using God's name as a cuss word or just irreverently. Or to swear an oath to like

"I swear to God," "Oh my God," or even saying Jesus or Jesus Christ.

God's name is Holy and not to be taken flippantly.

4. "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy"

(6 days work 7th-day Rest. We are to make time to worship God on the Lord's Day, also known now as Sunday.

5. "Honor your Father and your Mother"

(As a child we should obey and respect our parents when it does not go against any of God's laws. And as grown-ups, we should still make an effort, and show respect for our parents.

6. "You shall not kill."

Do not murder people. Jesus goes one step further, if you are angry at a person without just cause, or hate filled toward a person it is the same as being a murderer of the heart.

7. "You shall not commit adultery."

Jesus takes this one step further than the physical sin of cheating sexually with some one who is not your husband or wife. If you lust after a man or woman, have sexual desire for them, then you have committed adultery with them in your heart.

8. "You shall not steal"

(this can include such as stealing time from an employer, doing something else when you were working so taking their time. It doesn't matter how big the thing is you steal, either. God sees you stealing once as you being a thief).

9. "You shall not lie (also known as "bearing false witness"

(Even one lie makes you a liar, such as it only takes one rape makes someone a rapist or one murder a murderer)

10. "You shall not covet."

(Want what others have, want something that is not your own).

So how did you do? If you are like me, you realized that you are not a good person, you are a sinful person, in need of a savior, and just like me, if I would have died in my sins I would have gone to Hell.

For it is appointed once for a man to live and then die and face judgment. "All liars, thieves, fornicators, homosexuals, adulterers, and others who live like this will have their part in the "Lake of Fire," which is the second Death. Hell and is very real and last forever. But that is the bad news, so here is the "Good news." There is a savior. He was born of a virgin a little over 2,000 years ago. He lived a sinless life, He was both equally God and Man. He died on the cross.

Do you know why he died? He didn't die to set an example or to start a religion. He died because of yours and mine sins. He died to take our punishment on the cross. Paying the fine in His Life's blood. He paid for the sins. Like same way if some one pays a fine, for someone else, they can go free. So, that we could go free on Judgment day and have eternal life. There is a day coming for all of us, a day of judgement, when we die it's to late. The Bible says today is the day of salvation, turn from your sins and trust in Christ for salvation alone. He paid it, you can receive it.

While we were still sinners Christ died for us to pay our fine and debt we could not pay, because he was the only perfect one without sin, because He was born of a virgin. He lived a life for those who would receive his forgiveness. All our good deeds, our works done to try to earn salvation is like a stinky used menstrual cloth. You can not bribe the judge of the Earth, who is God Almighty."

After He died for sins, He rose back to life on the 3rd day. He went to be seated at the right hand of God in Heaven to intercede for all who turn from their sins and forsake them, not have anything to do with them, and put their trust in Jesus alone for salvation, just like you would a parachute. Put on the Lord Jesus to save you from God's wrath (God's intense anger and punishment against sin.

So I urge you today is the day for salvation. Trust in Jesus Christ for salvation and turn from your sins. When you do this you will go from spiritual death to life, your eyes will be opened to know God, you will be a new creation, the old will be gone, He takes our heart of stone and gives us a heart of flesh.

I learned this from Ray Comfort and Kirk Cameron.

That very night I put myself on the floor and prayed that God would forgive me of my sins and for salvation.

Repentance (turning 180 degrees from sin, going one way turning to another) and trusting in the savior (which starts first then, but goes on until you die physically) and is brought on by God himself. He made me a child of God. I was adopted into God's family.

Before we are saved we are storing up our sins and judgment. We are children of wrath and Satan, before salvation.

On that day, February 16, 2004. I learned now, that with one TV show personality, Satan lured me away from God, but with another, He brought me to Himself. For no one can go to God unless he is drawn by God.

If you are not a Christian I encourage you to respond to the Gospel with repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, if you are a Christian I encourage you to be a witness, share your testimony, and evangelize. For if you do not tell other's the gospel and have desire for others to be saved, then it is more likely you are not saves yourself.

Here are some websites that will help you with right biblical teaching and tell others about Jesus.

www.livingwaters.com

www.wretched.org