

## Julia Quigley's Testimony

My name is Julia Quigley. I was blessed to grow up in a Christian home where I attended church every week. From the day I was born my parents taught me about God and the Bible, and when I was old enough to understand they began explain to me that I was a sinner who needed the Lord to save me, because no sin can go unpunished. Though I understood my sinfulness and did not want to end up in hell, and though I prayed many times to the Lord to save me from that horrible place, I never truly repented of my sin. For in Acts 3:19, I am commanded to "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out", and in Matthew 7:21 Jesus says that "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

At my first Youth Camp in 2013, the Lord really opened my eyes to the fact that I was unsaved. Although I had prayed to Him many times for an escape from the consequences of sin, I had never honestly asked Him to save me from sin itself, nor let Him sit on the throne of my life. So on the second to last night of camp, with a heart filled with repentance and not just fear, I asked the Lord to save me from my sin and self, and instead use my life for Him. I purged many sinful habits from my life and had the best intentions of doing what was right, but sadly I neglected to spend time with the Lord in prayer and in His Word, and I really didn't grow at all as a Christian. My parents had taught me a lot of Bible knowledge, but somehow I never let it take root in my heart. As I went through my teen years I was always treading a confused line between my Christianity, and wanting to fit in with the world and find my identity.

Sadly, the things of God were always the lowest priority and I forged an identity for myself in the things of this world. I almost destroyed myself in living for whatever happened to please me at the time, and when the season of pleasure in one sin ended and the sorrow and guilt began, I would try to drown it in yet another. I became prideful in my sin and cast a lot of reproach on the name of Christ. The guilt of living in sin and the loss of a fellowship with the Lord piled on top of my dissatisfaction and despite the great plans I had for my future and the so-called "joy" of working towards my dream career which would have led many others astray, I was miserable. In 2016, a month before Youth Camp, my life sunk as low as it would get and I was so desperate. I knew that I was always going to be miserable unless I could discover an answer to my problems, but I had no present avenues to explore - my only hope was in an uncertain career, and I didn't think I could last that long.

Why is it that some people never seek the Lord unless everything is a mess? My last ditch attempt was to chat to the leaders at my youth camp, and to ask them a series of what I thought were answerless questions. Surprisingly, and much to my future relief, they were able to provide answers to every question I asked. The only catch - it meant living 100% for the Lord and getting rid of all my sin and sinful plans. There could be no more half-heartedness. This was not the answer I wanted, and it was far too drastic for me to ever agree with, so I can only attribute my decision that night to the Lord's supernatural working in my heart. With great trepidation I knelt on the floor and poured my heart out to the Lord. I

explained my misery and dissatisfaction, my love for sin, my distaste for the things of God. But also, my trust that He could turn me back to Him, my desire to let Him take back my life and reclaim His throne, and my great sorrow and regret over my disobedience and sin. Immediately my stress and misery and hopelessness just vanished, and they never returned. Instead the Lord spoke to my heart and showed me that he has great plans for me in the future and over the next days gave me so many tools to help me live for Him. After a couple of weeks of church and Bible study and fellowship with the Lord, He led me to get baptized and publicly declare my decision to give my life back over to Him. I am so glad I never thought to get baptized until then, because it was such a special and meaningful time which I wouldn't have understood.

For many months I was having a wonderful time of growing in the Lord and in my knowledge of His word, until early this year He brought to my attention a major area of sin in my life I had never claimed victory over. However to obtain victory over this sin, not only would I have to forsake it, but I would have to confess to many people a host of different things. This thought was greatly disheartening because my life was going so well for once, and to confess was to potentially lose all the respect and trust I had so hard won. After days of struggling with the idea of repentance, I finally said to the Lord "no", and resigned to continue in my sin, knowing full well that this meant the Lord would likely stop using me for His glory. Fear of man won out over obedience toward and trust in God.

Bible studies which I used to love became a shameful and painful chore, and I could not pray through the most superficial of prayers without sensing the great divide that had come between the Lord and myself. I tried to ignore the conviction and just do the right thing in every other area of my life, but Sunday sermons always managed to bring the matter to mind in some way, and I was most miserable. Sin in this one area began to infect other areas of my life, and my grip on victory in everything else began to slip. In the ladies meetings we have at Northside, we were going through Jim Berg's "Quieting A Noisy Soul", and one week around March he gave a personal testimony of how he repented over an area of sin in his life and confessed and made it right with both man and God, but how the Lord greatly blessed him and helped him through the process. The Lord spoke to my heart and told me that if I would just commit to do the right thing no matter the cost, He would guide and help me. The unrepented sin was such a burden in my life, and that night I took the step of faith and said to the Lord that I would deal with it all, but that I could not do it without His help.

I followed this with a short season of prayer and fasting, searching my heart before the Lord as to what I must do to completely deal with the sin once and for all. He showed me that I would only be able to follow this process through if I removed every ounce of confidence in self, pride, and fear of man, and replaced it with total commitment to the Lord, total trust in Him and total reliance on how He regards me, even if the whole world was to despise me. So thus prepared and with a heart totally dead to self, I began to confess to others regarding how I had wronged them, the final step in clearing my conscience before the Lord. I had prepared myself for a great season of (deserved) trial and tribulation, but instead the Lord

most graciously blessed me, in that every person I confessed and apologised to responded overwhelmingly forgivingly and lovingly. Truly the Lord rewards those who put their trust in Him and Him alone!

Now that I had dealt with the blockage in my spiritual life, I was able to continue and progress further than before, and I am so heartbroken to think of all the other Christians and unsaved out there who are stuck as I was. Truly nothing is worth holding onto sin, and living in sin is the fastest way to become miserable. Can I encourage everyone here, to follow the Lord in everything and never say no, because He always wants what is best for you, and it is always worth it to follow Him.

I don't know why the Lord continues to be so patient with me when I make so many mistakes and cause Him so much trouble, but I am so grateful and rather in awe at how loving He is. I just pray the Lord will work and glorify himself through me, and continue to help and guide others as he does for me. Thank you for your time, and I hope the Lord will use this to encourage you to live for Him always and in everything.