

Heath's Testimony

Jen and I put our trust in Christ for salvation about 8 years ago right here at SGC.

God used many means to bring about salvation, including the personal reading of his Word, prayer, and to a significant degree Christians who were faithful to share the truth with us.

Two of those people were David and Shiloah Ohrvall. I first met David after I graduated from business school and took a job in Chicago at the same firm he was with. I remember meeting David while I was getting a tour of the office about a week before I started. He shook my hand, and if you can believe it, in a 2 minute conversation he mentioned his church and how important it was to him and his wife. I smiled and thought to myself, "What a weirdo Jesus freak."

Meanwhile, Jen and I were committed church-going Catholics. I was zealous for religion and believed I knew the truth and that I was at peace with God. Over time, through the reading of scripture, I had a growing sense that I did not know Jesus, yet I was drawn to him. I specifically remember reading "seek and you will find..." one night in bed and prayed earnestly that I would know him truly.

Within a few weeks of praying, my neighbor began directly sharing the gospel with me, challenging me whether I believed what he was telling me. I feigned agreement but in my heart didn't believe at all. I went on to debate why what I believed was right. I had no idea really what I was talking about. I just liked my life... and wanted to be right.

At the same time my neighbor was sharing with me, David began asking me questions at work. He was telling me about his church and what it meant to be a Christian. He spoke fondly of the people, what he was learning, and how it was a blessing to him and his family. I still thought he was nuts... I mean, seriously, who really talks this way?

David also gave me a book to read, called *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald Whitney. I remember being affected by what I read. The reading gave meaning to what it means to walk with God. I continued to have a growing sense I was missing something. I can't pinpoint the exact quote, but somewhere Mr. Whitney said something like, "Catholics do good works to be saved, authentic Christians do good works because they are saved." That really stuck with me in the coming months.

Relationally, David and Shiloah had us over for dessert and wine one night. I remember what a pleasant evening that was, and the way they spoke to us was different than our other friends. There was genuine affection and care shown by asking questions about our lives. Very selfless. We still thought they were strange, but we were beginning to really like them.

About 6 months before I was saved, the Ohrvalls asked us to go to the company Christmas party together and offered to drive. I thought to myself, "Great, that means I can drink as much as I want." And I did. Nine martinis later, I don't remember anything that night. They can fill in the gaps, but I guess I rode home with the window down in the back seat of David's car because I was acting like I would get sick. It was about 20 below windchill that night! You would think this would have driven the Ohrvalls away from loving us, but it didn't. David did ask me why I liked to get drunk a few days later, and that was very convicting. The Spirit was really at work by now.

In a few months' time, David invited me to church. I thought to myself, "Sure, I'll go, just to make him happy." I ended up visiting church on June 2, 2002, and by the grace of God was converted through a message on Daniel 5. Amazing how God works!!!

One thing is for sure, without the Word, prayer, and His people, Jen and I would not be standing here today, redeemed and raising our children in the knowledge of Jesus. We are grateful for the faithfulness of David & Shiloah and this church!