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Followers of Jesus

Dear Friend:

Before knowing Jesus, I knew of Jesus. There were times, when I was little, that I would cry out to Him when I was in major fear, but I always questioned if He could hear me, or I was afraid that He wouldn't answer me the way that I wanted Him to.

As a teenager, I was very self-righteous. Outwardly I demonstrated that I was a perfect human, but inwardly I hated who I was as a person. I couldn't do anything good enough in my eyes. I justified my sins by judging others.

Throughout my teen years, I was searching for a purpose. I had idols, but after time, I would always feel empty and broken. I still remember the first time that I heard the gospel. Through Jesus, the almighty God wanted a relationship with me. Why me? Don't you see all that I carry with me? Because of His love for us, He sent His son to die on the cross.

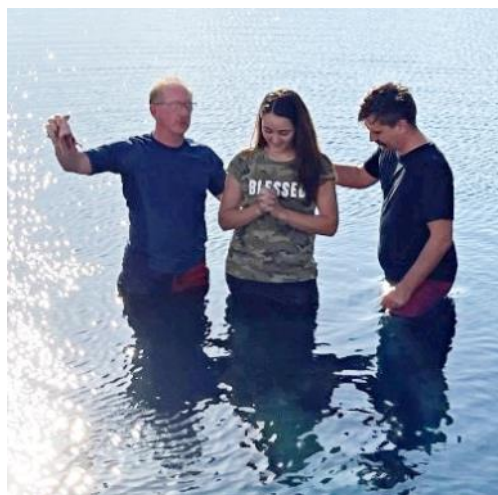
"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

From the example that Jesus set, I choose to be baptized today as an outward profession of inward possession. —Anna

From Esther Keim:

Anna moved to New Beginnings in January 2019. Immediately I was drawn to her gentle, quite nature. She seemed so shy and timid; yet with an inner strength. We have been very blessed to have her join the Beyond Measure Market team. She is faithful, committed and hard working. Currently Anna answers the phone, works at the register as well as in the deli, does ordering, receiving, and restocking, and is willing to do just about anything to help the market succeed.

We have seen Anna grow spiritually. She attends church regularly and helps in the children's class. She has also furthered her education by getting her GED. She has expressed a desire to go to college or take more classes. She is a gem! We praise God for allowing us to be a part of Anna's life journey. —Esther



In September, Ray and Martha shared their testimony in our Sunday school class. And let me just say, in 20 years of ministry, I do not believe I have ever heard a more heart wrenching testimony.

For almost a year, Ray had kept his new birth experience a secret, knowing the consequences. Eventually, he shared his testimony with his wife, Martha, and after a great struggle, God opened her eyes and she got saved also. But for the children, it was not so easy. All eight of their married and unmarried children have turned against them. The church turned against them. Ray lost his work crew, and overnight his business and income came to a halt.

It does not matter that they still wear Amish clothes and live the old lifestyle. All of their family and community do not want anything to do with this strange belief that Jesus alone is enough for salvation. Please contact MAP if you would like to have Ray and Martha come to your church and share their testimonies. Ray and Martha have given ALL for the sake of Christ. —Joe Keim

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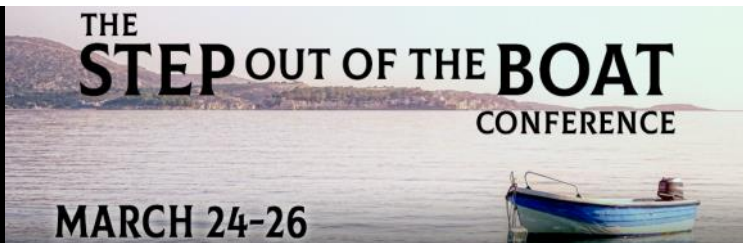
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Levi's Testimony of Deliverance!

—by Levi Hochstetler

In 1996, I left the Amish without my wife. I knew that she would not understand my reasons for leaving. I had already made peace with myself that I was going to hell for leaving the Amish. I had no plans on ever attending church again. Within about two months, God had provided housing for me from a Christian family, and I had understood my need to repent, and had given my life to Jesus. My wife eventually left the Amish as well, but our marriage fell apart after 11 years, and we ended up divorcing.

I lived a non-Christian life as a whole, with church attendance being sporadic. I knew that God desired me to be connected to Him, but I struggled with unworthiness and feeling like God would not understand.

In 2012, I met a beautiful young lady who was to eventually become my wife. We began going to church more frequently, and I served by singing on the worship team. In 2014, as I listened to the pastor preach, God told me that He wanted me to go into ministry. I did not understand it, nor was I willing to take a step in that direction. I would argue with God and tell Him that, like Moses, I was not well-spoken (Exodus 4:10-13).

When God called me, I was indignant, unwilling, defiant, and resistant to the idea of going into any type of ministry. After all, I had been divorced, and was doing

and using things that I was too embarrassed and too ashamed to talk about. I was angry at God for wanting me to preach, so I chose to be directly disobedient. I became a Jonah by running away from God's directions (Jonah 1:1-3).

In 2016, I started a business, telling God that if He blessed my business, then the notion of me being in ministry must just have been something that I dreamed up. Even in my blatant disobedience, God blessed me tremendously. Our business was very successful. Imagine how much more He would have blessed if I would have been obedient!

Looking back, I realize how often I had feelings of emptiness, loneliness, hopelessness, defeat, and utter despair. I was not able to connect emotionally with my wife or allow her in, because it would require me to be vulnerable and honest with her about the horrible and sinful lifestyle that I was hiding. Our marriage suffered. I was spiritually and emotionally miserable.

In April of 2019, my wife was told about the double life that I was living. She was extremely hurt, traumatized, and could not believe that her husband would live such a lie. Through all of that, she realized that I have an addiction.

After days of praying, crying out to God, and seeking direction, my wife made the choice to stay in the marriage as long as I

would get help with my addiction. Even after hurting her so tremendously, she found a 12-step program that has allowed me to experience sobriety and recovery from this horrible addiction as well as brought me closer to God by allowing me to connect, pray and read the Bible.

The reason that I have chosen to share my testimony is simply this: I love Jesus—and I love Him enough to no longer be silent about my story. It needs to be told. You don't need to live with feelings of defeat, utter despair, hopelessness, unworthiness, not being good enough, or needing a fix to drown out the pain, shame or embarrassment.



If you find yourself in a situation that what I have shared makes sense to you, I would be honored to speak to you directly, or perhaps speak at your church to share my testimony. I can only imagine how helpful it would've been for me, had someone had the courage to share their testimony in church about their addiction.

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