

# Paul Washer's Testimony

## And How God Saved Him

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My mother was converted when she was about twelve years old from a Croatian family. Her parents had come through Ellis Island. My grandmother on my mother's side was oftentimes persecuted for her faith because being Croatian and Catholic were almost synonymous. You're almost a traitor if you leave Catholicism. Plus, the only evangelical church she could go to was Serbian, and the Catholics and the Serbians are constantly at war, so for my grandmother to leave Catholicism and then fellowship with Serbians was oftentimes very looked down upon. She suffered. My mother was over at her girlfriend's house when she was twelve years old and they happened to be Baptist. And she was playing with dolls up on the 2nd floor. And the family was gathered around the piano and started singing hymns. And my mother said she heard the hymns, but all of a sudden, such a great remorse and weeping of sin came over her that she started weeping so hysterically that they stopped playing piano. They ran upstairs thinking she was injured. They shared the Gospel with her with regard to her sin and she was converted.

My mother eventually married my father. Both his parents - my grandparents - were some of the first Baptist missionaries to Brazil in Manaus back in, I think, the '20's and '30's. But my father was never converted that I know of. When I was 17, we were out building a fence, and he yelled and I grabbed him. We fell to the ground and he was dead. I had never known him to profess faith in Christ. At that point, basketball season was beginning and such, and I was one of the captains on the team. I was president of the Beta Club or Honor Society. Within just a few months, I digressed to finally getting kicked off the team and getting kicked out of the honor society. And I drank a lot. People said that the trauma of my father's death led to all that - in fact, that's what I said. When in fact, what I'd soon come to understand, after I was a Christian was that my father's death gave my flesh a wonderful opportunity to do everything it had ever wanted to do. It just manifested what I really was. I was a liar - the best. I don't know how to describe me except look up "jerk" in the dictionary, and it had my picture there. Conceited, self-absorbed, jerk.

And I went to Murray State University for a few years and then decided that I wanted to be an oil and gas lawyer. Wherever that idea popped into my head I don't know. Maybe it was because of the program "Dallas" or something. And the only place to do that was either Oklahoma or Texas, and I enrolled at the University of Texas. While I was there, I thought to myself, I can change my life and not be such a jerk, not be so self-absorbed, not be such a liar. And nothing changed. Within a few months, I found myself right back into the same place I'd always been. And I moved into a place called Plaza 25 there at the University of Texas, and I noticed there was a group of guys there that just seemed different. They just seemed very different. After a while, I came to understand they were Christians, and they would have Bible studies and things like that. And I didn't pay much attention to them.

And then one night in February, after I'd spent a semester there, and just messed up my life altogether, I was sitting on the edge of my bed. It was like 1 in the morning. And I was on steroids really heavy. I lifted weights all the time. I wasn't any good at it, but I lifted weights all the time. And I remember crying. I hadn't cried, and I just kept saying to myself, I am so miserable. I am so miserable. And I looked down and I had some steroids and I thought if only these were some kind of pill that I could just take and die. But I knew enough from my mom - I believe that there was something, you know, you didn't do that. And I just kept saying over and over, I'm so miserable. I'm so miserable.

And it was like 1 or 1:30 in the morning and someone knocked at my door. And I thought, who's that? So I opened the door and here's this freshman. His name was Mike Moore. He was standing there - not a very tall guy, maybe 5"8' or 5"9' or something. He's standing there and he was kind of scared. I looked at him like... what? And he said, "You're probably going to beat me up." I thought, "Yeah, you're probably right." He said, "I've got to talk to you." And although I knew him; I knew he was a nice guy, I didn't really know him. I said, "Well, what do you want to talk to me about?" He said, "Look, God has been dealing with me for two weeks and I need to come over here and talk to you. I've been scared. I can't take it any longer. I've got to talk to you." And I said, "Well, what?" He goes, "I just feel like God wants me to tell you something." Now I'm thinking this is really strange. This guy's coming over with a word from God. I said, "Okay, well, what?" He goes, "You're just miserable and you're going to keep being miserable until you surrender your life to Jesus Christ." And we talked till like 4 or 5 in the morning. And it really impacted me.

And then, I was reading - my mom had given me a Bible and I found it and I started reading it, and I came to Psalm 103. It says that man's days are like grass, as the flower of the field, so he flourishes; when the wind passes over him, he is no more and the place acknowledges him no more. And that made me angry because that's exactly what I knew. I remember going to my dad's funeral, and he was a very brilliant man. He was a powerful man in his own right. Just many things about him, but at his funeral, people were talking about other things like the weather, sports, what's going on in a company. It was like this man just died. Shouldn't everybody just be quiet or something for awhile? Shouldn't they think about him? And that verse where it says the wind passes over it and it's no more and the place acknowledges it no more. It's like he never even existed. I got angry and I kind of threw the Bible down on the bed. Then I walked over and I picked it up again. And it said, "but the love of the Lord is everlasting on those who fear Him." And that word "everlasting." And then, I think maybe a couple times, somebody visited me or something.

And one day I was at the library - the undergraduate library at the University of Texas - and we were competing against other oil companies supposedly, other students, and we were running off some oil surveys and the girl on our team came up to me and she said I'm going to have a party - I think it was tomorrow night, she said. Why don't you come to it? And I had kind of gotten to the point where I used to really party and things, and I had gotten to the point where I didn't do that anymore. I would just sit in a bar all by myself and drink. And so I looked at her and I said, "no, I'm not coming to your party." And she said "why not?" She goes, "you never do anything. Why don't you come? Why not?" And really this is what happened. I didn't think about my answer. I didn't design it. Just all of a sudden it came out of my mouth and it shocked me as

much as it did anybody else in the room. I said, "I'm not going to your party because I'm a Christian now and I'm going to follow Jesus." And I looked at the guys. They all kind of turned around and looked at me because they knew what I was. I drank, lied... And they looked at me. And when they looked at me, it's like all of a sudden I realized what I said. And it's like light just (went on). It wasn't a literal light. No, don't criticize me for that statement. It's a metaphor. It was just like all of a sudden, it was like, that's exactly what I'm going to do. I believe in Jesus. I do. I believe. I'm sitting there in front of these guys going, yeah, I believe in Jesus. I really do believe in Jesus.

And I just walked out and then I started walking quicker because I was just like what has happened to me? I mean, what has happened? I felt like I was just new. And I remember getting to the library doors - the outside doors - and I opened them up and there was a girl coming in who was in the same dorm. And I didn't know this, but a whole group of people had been praying for me since when I first moved into the dorm like several months prior. She was one of the girls. When I opened up the door she goes, "Paul! What's happened to you?" And then I got scared. I got real scared. I was like, "I don't know." And I just took off running. I walked/ran as fast as I could back to the apartment and I found that guy and I said, "Mike, Mike, I'm really scared. Something happened to me in the library. All I know is I believe in Jesus and I am new." He said, "You look new." And so he took me down to the guy who was like the RA who had been leading a Bible study named Mike Martin. And all these guys, Mike Martin, Stuart Depena, Mike Moore, and all these different guys that had been studying the Bible together and were kind of leaders, you could say, of like Campus Crusade and things. I sat down and I started telling them everything that happened. I'll never forget, one of them goes, "You've been born again!" I was like, "What's that?"

And then here's something. I had the filthiest mouth and it stopped. It just stopped. But I'll tell you what didn't stop. Lying. And after the joy of that day, I began to think about I had lied to people. And then, so many things in my life changed, but then I would be talking and something would pop out that wasn't true. And before, it didn't bother me. I was proud of my lying. I could make anybody believe anything. And I would be so struck down by the Holy Spirit and so ashamed, that I would have to go back and say, "I lied. I lied." And it went on. It's amazing, some things - drinking and cussing just stopped, but other things were like this thing that constantly broke me; constantly broke me. And the Lord then gave me victory over it. And now, it's like one exaggeration... my wife says that I speak in superlatives. She says everything is the greatest to you. Everything is the biggest to you. And that's true, but even in that sometimes, the Lord just gets me. So that's why when some of you guys get real fired up for the Lord, and you see someone else that maybe comes into your circles, and yeah, it seems like God's done a work, but in one area of his life, he's really struggling for change, don't discount him or think he's unconverted. Sometimes the Lord will remove so many things, but other things, we just deal with throughout our life.

And then, so the next day, this study group that was there got together and they bought me a big old Ryrie Study Bible. New American Standard Ryrie Study Bible. And I carried that thing to class. (incomplete thought) I remember my second day as a Christian, I'm walking back though the student mall there, and I hear a bunch of people over here and I go over there to look and there's this guy talking. And I thought, is he preaching? This guy isn't preaching. He

was sharing about why sex is good and marriage is just an artificial institution and promoting wickedness. And I'll never forget, all of a sudden I just got so... and I just went through the crowd. "You're lying!" "You're a liar!" "That's not true!" So that was the beginning of my street preaching. My ministry was defined.

Another thing, when I was a boy, 14 or 15, I would have dreams all the time. Well, not all the time, but frequently. I would have dreams of me preaching. And I would wake up crying and telling God, I'll get saved if you promise me I don't have to preach. And so when I became a Christian, I also knew basically that I was going to preach. And I started going out like at the student mall there and handing out tracts and everything. And it was a real change for me because it went from being a cool guy with a really nice car to people taking your tracts - girls - and laughing at you and throwing them back at you. And it was a time of killing the flesh. But God has been faithful. God's been faithful.