

## Living the Lie

I have gone to church nearly all my life like so many people today. My parents took us to church Sunday morning, Sunday night and the mid week service. As a child church was fun, as you got older it seemed to be something that everybody did on the weekends and went about their own business the rest of the week.

When I was about twelve years old my Sunday school teacher had been talking to me about joining the church. Little did I understand what all this meant, but I said, "sure why not everybody wants to go to heaven." Nothing was really said about salvation, accepting Jesus as your savior. So I joined the church and was baptized. I knew right from wrong but I thought well if I wanted to sin all I had to do was ask the Lord to forgive me and go on with life. I thought this is what being a Christian is all about.

As I grew into a young man, I met the love of my life and we would soon marry. Her pastor said that we should be members of the same church. So I joined my soon to be bride's church. The pastor asked me if I was saved and I told him, "Yes I had joined the church as a young lad." After we were married we attended church regularly. We were active in Sunday school and I was on the church ball team and had even coached one of the teams for a few years. We attended almost every church function. I really thought there was nothing to this religion thing. After all I couldn't remember a time that I didn't believe in God.

In September of 1985 we were having a three-day revival at church. We decided to attend. On Friday night we watched a movie on Hell and listened to the pastor's message. Everyone searched the scriptures with the pastor to see what God had to say about Hell. The Bible is very descriptive on this subject. How there will be torment day and night in the lake of fire forever and ever. No fellowship with the Lord and no escape for all eternity. There is one scripture that would remain on my mind the next few days. Revelations 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

After the message the invitation was given. The pastor asked if anyone would like to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and savior. Several people responded to Gods call.

I wanted to go forward but something was telling me you don't need to receive Jesus. I remembered when I was young how I had joined the church.

Surely this was the same thing. I went church all the time anyway. I coached one of the ball teams and was very active in the church. Wouldn't this be good enough? What would people think of me if I went forward? They would know I was pretending to be a Christian all those years. They would know I was Living the Lie.

Satan kept telling me I didn't need to do anything. Jesus was telling me to come and turn my life over to him. Still I had a death grip on the pew and would not go forward. Satan kept saying, "it's okay you'll be fine these feelings of guilt, shame, and insecurity will pass." But they didn't pass.

We attended the rest of the revival. All I could think of was dying and going to Hell forever. This is all I would think about for the next few days. God was really dealing with my heart but I kept rejecting him. Satan kept saying, "everything will be okay just stay the way you are and do nothing." But it wasn't okay.

Then Tuesday September 17th 1985 a day I will remember the rest of my life. The day started like the past couple of days, worrying about my eternal future. It seemed as though the Lord kept saying, "please accept me and make me Lord of your life." And then Satan would say, "you're all right, you have nothing to worry about." But I knew that I wasn't saved. I knew that if I died that very minute I would go to Hell forever. I didn't like this bleak outlook on eternity.

Finally I called our youth pastor at church, as we are very good friends. The telephone rang and rang. Satan said, "hang it up." The Holy Spirit said, "just one more ring." I was about to hang up when he answered. I told him I needed to talk to him. He replied, "come by and see him after work." I agreed. When I got home I told my wife I would be back in a little while. She asked "where are you going?" I told her I was going to see our youth pastor. Then she asked what was wrong because I had a worried look on my face. I told her it was nothing to be worried about. Which was a lie I was just too embarrassed to tell her the truth. What a shame I wish now I would have told her and she could have gone with me. My wife, my lover, my best friend she would have understood the situation.

When I got to church we started talking about what I had been struggling with over the last three to four days. After I told him I believed I was lost and on my way to Hell he looked at me for a moment in silence. Then he said, "George, you have been in church nearly all of your life. You've heard Gods' word preached. You have studied Gods' word. You know what you need to do so why don't you just do it? So with a heart burden from sin, I cried out to the Lord confessing I was a sinner and asking him to come into my life and save me and forgive me of my sins and become Lord of my life.

Believing John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perished but have everlasting life. And Romans 10:9-10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

After receiving Jesus as my personal savior I could hardly believe how the burdens of guilt and shame were gone. I knew I had a spiritual change in my life. I know now that it doesn't matter how long you have been in church or what position you hold, or how good a person you think you are. It takes the saving grace of Jesus. Ephesians 2-8:9 For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. Not by works, lest any man should boast.

Isn't that wonderful? It is a gift from God. You can't earn it nor can you buy it. The shedding of Jesus precious blood on Calvary has already paid the price. Dying for our sins and then rising from the dead on the third day and is now seated at the fathers' right hand. All you have to do is just receive this wonderful gift by asking the Lord for it. I hope there is no question in your mind about your salvation or your eternal security.

The Bible says in Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. You don't have to pray a fancy prayer. Just open your heart to the Lord. Tell him you're a sinner and you want to receive him as your Lord and savior. Romans 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Praise God have you received him today?

It is my prayer today that if you do not know Jesus as your Lord and Savior that you will soon before it is everlasting too late. It is also my prayer to the people who have been in church all of their life that you will do some deep soul searching. Don't let good deeds blind you to the truth. Please pray about it. Don't be caught Living the Lie.

Statement: What you have just read is my own personal testimony, I truly pray that you will search your heart and know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus is your Lord and Savior.

Inspired by: My Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him I give all the Glory and Praise.  
By: G.L.F.  
Ephesians 2-8:9