

### **-- Anonymous 3: My Life-Changing Experiences With Jesus Christ**

I begin by stating that I have been blessed to have had two life-changing experiences with my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. There are many people who live their entire lives and never get to experience the power of the Holy Spirit. Sadly, many of them are Christians. My experiences have strengthened my faith in Jesus and taught me that He is in control--ALWAYS.

My first experience with Christ came through what I consider to be my greatest blessing, motherhood.

When my son was born, he was perfect. Like all babies, he had ten fingers and ten toes and was a healthy, happy baby. The day he was born was one of the three greatest days of my entire life (the other two being the day I was married and the day my other son was born.) My son was a very easy baby who slept as often as he smiled. Everyone told me how blessed I was to have such an "easy baby." By the time he was 18 months old, I noticed that he was not "talking" like all of my other friends' babies who were around the same age. He would just make funny sounds and point to things. The doctor told me that all babies develop at different stages and not to worry until he was about two years of age. Well, his second birthday came and he was still having a difficult time communicating. I was pretty much beside myself with worry at this time. It saddened me so much that my child was so different and not developing like the other two-year-olds! He could walk and do all of the other things that toddlers his age could do.

Why couldn't he talk? Not even a "MaMa" or "DaDa". I believe that God uses other people to help His children. One day I was at a Mother's Guild for Christian moms, and I literally broke down right in front of all of the children and other moms. Another mom named Claire Knolle (some of you will remember her!) took me aside and just stayed with me until I could control myself. The Lord used her that day to ease my fears. Her presence was calming, as if she knew she was to be there for me that day.

I have always known that the Lord is control, but I had never experienced it. To know something and to experience something are really two different things. It is like knowing that water can be cold, and then FEELING cold water.

I went home that day and my feelings of dismay and worry intensified. Fear is like pitch darkness; you sometimes cannot look past it to see the light. I will never forget crying and thinking, "Maybe I really do need to give this to the Lord and let Him be in control." I decided to pray with all of my heart for the Lord to show me why my son was having this developmental delay. I prayed that the Lord would use His word to tell me and that when I finished praying I would open my Bible and see. When I finished, I breathed a huge sigh (still untrusting) and opened to Exodus 3:11-12:

"The Lord said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

An overwhelming feeling of peace and lightness came over me. The Lord was telling me that HE had made my son this way! HE formed him. HE was in control!

This verse has become my reminder that God works in all ways for the good of those who really do love him. When I feel misgivings about my life, my loved ones and my situation, I recall how on that cold winter day I prayed earnestly for the Lord to show me why my son was having such difficulty, and He answered me. Powerfully.

Footnote - my son went on the have speech therapy and a few days after he turned four he said his very first word: honey. He now is a happy-go-lucky, normal teen who won't QUIT talking.

### My second life-changing experience with Jesus Christ came at an unexpected time in my life.

It was October of 1999. I was 32 years of age and my children were finally both in school all day. I felt like I had a little more freedom. I remember thinking, "Life is good. I am on a smooth road!"

One day in the shower, I happened to feel a hard spot on my right breast. Hmm. I wondered what it was? I remembered that some women have "cysts" and that sometimes they go away on their own. It was a strange lump, because it felt like it belonged there. I decided to just keep my eye (or hand!) on it for about a month to see if it went away. By November, it had still not gone away. I was not worried--just curious. I remember standing in the kitchen (the sun was shining brightly) and telling my husband Dean about it. I had him feel it and he said the same thing. It almost felt like it was supposed to be there. I turned around to walk away, and something urged me to call my doctor. I said "I think I am going to call the doctor anyway." I picked up the phone, and made the call that saved my life.

It's funny how many times you call a doctor to make an appointment and you are placed on hold or given an appointment in a month. Not this time. The nurse told me to come in the next day for a "breast exam" and she said it was probably nothing but it was still a good idea for me to come in.

I saw the doctor the next day, and he examined me thoroughly and said the same thing that I was thinking: it was probably nothing but "just to be sure I am sending you for a mammogram." Huh? I was 32, and I had no idea what it was like. When I left his office, I felt a sense of peace. After all, he didn't think it was anything to worry about. I decided to wait to get the procedure done until it was a more convenient time for me.

December came, along with the holidays. I turned the calendar over and realized that in January I was scheduled to see my doctor for a regular yearly checkup. I remembered that mammogram; if I didn't have it done before this upcoming appointment then surely he would not be pleased. So I scheduled it for Monday, January 4, 2000.

That day came and when I awoke I DREADED going to the hospital for this test. That was the last place I wanted to go on the last day of Christmas vacation! I got myself out the door and drove by myself to New Castle. Never having had the luxury of a mammogram before, I did not know what to expect. I remember sitting and watching a video explaining all about the procedure and thinking "Yeah, yeah, yeah...let's get this over with." The technician came in and was very bubbly and friendly from the start, so that made the process easier. She took several films on my left side, and then took some on the side with the lump. She told me to have a seat, that she needed to make sure they were OK. After a few minutes, she came in and told me she needed more films on my right side. More films turned into a total of 15. I didn't think anything of it. After all, I'd never had a mammogram, so I didn't know what to expect. She asked me to have a seat again, and after a few minutes she returned with the radiologist who proceeded to introduce himself and pop up one of the films so I could see it. He circled two white areas on the film and said, "This doesn't look good." My mouth went from a smile (having just met the man) to my jaw dropping to the floor. WHAT doesn't look good? He proceeded to tell me that I had two areas of "calcification" and when I questioned him he said it could be cancer. Cancer? CANCER?! What on earth is that? I had always heard of cancer but had never paid much mind to it. I felt like someone had pulled the rug right out beneath me. The room began spinning and I started to shake. He left me with the technician, who turned to me and said "Jody, there is a reason for everything. Our Lord only gives us what we can handle. Would you like me to pray with you?" I squeaked out a "Yes," and she prayed with me that the Lord would watch over my doctors, my situation, and me. I have no doubt that she was placed in that room that day to be there for me, as Claire had been several years before.