



# Seasons In Time

ENCOUNTERING GOD FACE TO FACE...  
IN OUR BRIEF JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE

## Life Season II – My World As a Teenager (Continued)

### God...Are You Really Up There?

**G**oing to church on Sunday mornings was a way of life as I grew up in a Christian home. Dad led the Men's Ministry and Mom volunteered in Children's Church. Prayer was also a way of life, as well as reading the Bible in the evenings. But all that changed when I graduated from High School and drove off to State College. I was FREE! *I didn't have to attend church or pray or read my Bible. So I didn't...and neither did any of my buddies.* Then my freedom was taken to the next level when I enrolled in my first Psychology class. "What do you believe, and why?" was the question the professor wrote on the board. As I pondered my answer, all I could think of was that I'm a Christian because my family is Christian. Then the professor asked, "What if I told you that you're the master of your fate and the captain of your soul? Religion is just the opium of the people." *Maybe he's right, I thought. Maybe "Faith" doesn't matter at all!*

**T**hey called me a *Spiritual Wonder...an Anointed Child Prodigy beyond my years!* At 5 years old, I was one of the youngest Pentecostal Preachers and Evangelists ever! I could preach the Gospel with conviction, lay hands on the sick and watch God perform miracles through my young hands. But I also learned how to "work a crowd." I perfected all the "moves" that stir emotions. Just a movement of my head, a look in my eyes and a certain inflection in my voice brought people to their feet. When I was 14, I was preaching conferences in large auditoriums. The roar of the crowd was intoxicating! *By the time I turned 19, I was sick of it all! I stared into heaven and cried, "God...Are You Really Up There? I don't even know You!"*



*Faith is not human willpower struggling to believe in an unseen deity.* It's not a "gift" that some people receive and others don't. God is unknowable...unless He first reveals Himself (*Gen. 15:1-6; Rom. 4:3*). *Therefore, Faith is Responding to God's gracious prior action...meaning the Light of God that reaches to all people (John 1:4-9; 3:19-21).* Not all Faith is the same. A child's faith is "ADOPTED" from their environment. It's not their own faith, unless they respond to God's self-revelation in their hearts (*1 Sam. 3:4-10*). Some have "QUESTIONING" Faith. This is not total nonbelief, but it's searching to know God. *But when we respond with humility, maturity and obedience to the Light of God (His Presence) shining in our hearts, we have "OWNED" Faith. We believe in God regardless of life's circumstances or negative influences.* Read what happened to these two teenagers when they responded to God's gracious encounter that touched their lives.

**A**s I drifted farther away from my faith, my driving motivation in college became drugs and girls. In my newfound psychology, I embraced moral purification as one's own strength. Deliverance of the soul is in acquiring knowledge and worship of nature is eternal. *Until...there came a knock on my dorm room door. It was my Dad! For the next 3 days, I had what some might call a "Come to Jesus" moment!* He never raised his voice, but I knew I was in deep trouble. Through him, God opened my heart to see the deception of the world and the power of wrong influences. I had wandered from my Savior and I knew what I had to do. *I changed my major and my friends! That was when I really knew what I believed...and no one could ever take that from me again.*

**F**rom a *Spiritual Wonder to a Spiritual Disaster...that's what happened to me!* Seeing the façade of Christian leaders, I threw away Christianity and searched for truth in all the religions of the world. I even adopted a hybrid religion of mixing pagan thought with Christian doctrine. After exhausting all efforts to find myself and discover truth, I heard a still, small voice whispering in my heart: *"I'm still here. I never left you. Why have you left Me? It was I who called you. Now go and begin again in My strength, not your own."* Now I know what Prov. 20:21 and Zech. 4:6 mean. *And so I began again...seeking counsel from proven elders in the Body of Christ and trusting in God, not my pulpit showmanship. I truly feel as if I've been Born Again!*

Next: Stories from My Young Adult Life - *I'm Free At Last! Or Am I?*

