



# Seasons In Time

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

## *Life Season III – My Young Adult Life and God (Continued)*

### *Help Lord! Save Me From Your Followers!*

**I** was in my second year of seminary and I was “chomping at the bit” to win the world for Jesus! One of the mandatory courses for the semester was “Personal Evangelism”...how to win the lost to Christ. As a final project, the students were required to physically go out in the world and win sinners to the Lord. My assignment was to stand outside an “X-Rated” movie as people exited. With salvation tracts in hand, memorized scriptures in my heart and zeal in my soul, I was “loaded for bear!” As I waited for sinners to walk to their cars, I was ready for them to fall to their knees, ask for forgiveness and receive the Savior on the spot!

**M**y life was in shambles and I knew it was my fault! My wife left me and I lost my job all in the same year. In my sorrow, I turned to alcohol to forget my depressed life. But the drunker I got, the more guilt I felt for destroying myself. Then, just when I thought things couldn’t get any worse, they did. It was my religious cousin clutching his Bible who put the finishing touches on my pitiful life. With a scowled face he shouted, “You’ve failed your family, your God and yourself! If you died tonight, God would send you to Hell for all eternity! Now, repent and accept the Savior! This is your last chance!” When he left the house my sorrow turned to anger. “If that’s who You are, God, then just send me to Hell. I guess I deserve it!”



*Zeal without wisdom is misguided energy (Prov. 19:2 NIV)! But wisdom without zeal is knowledge without action.* Jesus’ final words to His disciples were to receive POWER from the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses throughout all the earth (Acts 1:8). When the power of the Holy Spirit is working in His witnesses, it produces more than human zeal...it empowers them for godly living (2 Pet. 1:3-11) and draws (not pushes) people to open their hearts to the Savior (Jn. 12:32; Acts 16:14). Yes, repentance is essential, but a true witness for Christ never embarrasses, judges, or threatens people with Hell! Jesus didn’t come from heaven to condemn sinners; He came to forgive them of their sins (Matt. 1:21; Luke 19:10)! *If we misrepresent the Savior’s redeeming grace, we’ll run people away from Him.* Now, read what happened in these two stories when God got involved.

**W**hen I returned from my “salvation” mission to the X-Rated movie, I was totally confused. Instead of glorious conversions, it turned into ugly confrontations. One man nearly slugged me and called me a hypocrite. Another just hung his head and walked quickly away. Ten years had passed since that dreadful experience. I was the pastor of a church waiting for my next appointment. In walked a woman with skin tight pants and a low cut blouse. She sat down on the couch and began to weep. “Can you help me pastor?” she whispered. “I don’t know what to do.” Compassion filled my heart as I began to tell her how much God loves her. She said her grandmother didn’t raise her to be like she was now. “Can God ever forgive me?” she sobbed. I shared the story of Jesus and the woman caught in adultery and declared God’s forgiveness over her life. *With a biblical plan to start over again, she walked away a new woman. How different that was from 10 years ago!*

**A**fter my cousin’s condemning visit, I vowed never to set foot in a church again! “If Christians are like that,” I muttered, “I never want to be one!” I finally got a new job and started over again. I’ll never forget the day my life changed forever. I was having coffee at a local bistro and began a conversation with a guy sitting next to me. As we talked, I decided to vent about my life and how I hated churches. “Yeah,” he agreed, “Christians can really be a royal pain!” Then he opened up about his own life. “I went through a gut-wrenching divorce, too, and tried to cover my hurt with alcohol.” We talked for a while and before he left we exchanged business cards. You could have wiped me off the floor when I read who he was...the senior pastor of a local church! “Hey, wait a minute!” I nearly shouted, “Are you serious? You’re a pastor?!” He looked at me with compassion in his eyes and replied, “Yep! God’s love is amazing! Come join us this Sunday. I think you’ll like it.”

*Next: Stories from My Middle Age Years - Single Again! Now What?*

