

## AYDAH SILVA'S TESTIMONY



My name is Aydah Silva. This is my story of how I came to know Christ. From the tender age of five I began my journey with Him by praying the Lord's Prayer. I never knew the true meaning of my prayer, but nevertheless I never doubted God's existence or needed proof that He was real.

As I grew up I spent my Sundays going to a Syrian Orthodox Church. This never helped me further develop my relationship with Christ as the mass was based on rituals and man-made traditions. People were never encouraged to call on Christ personally and accept the gift of salvation. I felt the priests, bishops and archbishops wanted all the praise and worship.

My school years were ruled with Catholic teachings. I remember going to the school Catholic Church with my peers and I would feel a strong sense of wanting to connect to God. I knew that participating with my school friends lining up one by one for communion and confession would not help me access Him. I knew that God had to be better than that and that I should be able to communicate with Him directly. I didn't like the idea of the priest being the mediator between God and myself. Why should I access the All-powerful, Almighty God that created the heavens and the Earth through this person standing right next to me? Did they have such power? I never understood the many traditions and began to question them. Over the years I hated going to church and without realizing it, I began to lose any little relationship I had with Christ. To look back now I could truly understand why man would come to hate religion. Religion has a way of keeping you captive, but true Christianity sets you free.

From about the age of twelve I started going through teenage depression. I felt empty, confused and suffered poor self-esteem. For the most part most I could not explain my depression. At 16 years of age some family members committed their lives to Christ and I started to feel a real pull for Christ in my life again. I believe I prayed the sinner's prayer and wanted so much for God to change me. It was the happiest I had ever been. I remember being so full of joy that I no longer had room for depression. I began to spend much of my school time discussing Christ with my friends.

Through all this my best friend's parents who were strong Marionite Catholics stopped allowing me to visit and at home I faced the battle of not being allowed to go to a real Bible-believing church. Without any further encouragement I found it very difficult to continue my journey. I pulled the plug on Christ and I fell right back into the teenage life the world knew. For me the depression was off and on for the many years to come.

I met Alex when I was 20 years of age. We were engaged within two years and married by the age of 23. Being the eldest daughter in my family had well equipped me with the responsibility of marriage. I tried to do everything perfectly. I hated blemishes and yet ironically I felt so blemished inside. To look at my life you would say that I was very much gifted with a loving husband, a close family, many friends and a big social circle. But unfortunately I found that all of this was not enough to make me truly happy. This soon

formed the basis to a lot of guilt in my life, as there was no huge reason for my deep feeling of sadness. I went through long periods of self-punishment that soon developed into an eating disorder for the many years to follow. On the surface no one would have known, as I never reached the stage where I looked like death but inside I was dying emotionally. No husband, no family member, no friend and no amount of anything from this world could have filled the hole I was feeling in my heart. I tried so hard to fill it with things but it was no surprise that those things just made it worse. I mentioned to Alex during many of my dark moments that I felt a need for God. But again I continued to dig myself into the hole. It was insanity at its best. I just kept repeating the same old mistakes of not surrendering to Christ. My sin had me drowning.

Being in the health industry for so long exposed me to so many new age ideas, philosophies – healers, yoga, astrology and so on. I discovered so many ways to fill the void temporarily. I read many books about finding calm and peace and invited many new ideas into my life. I especially loved reading about astrology. The devil mixed many half-truths and although I didn't believe them all I found myself getting more and more involved with wrong and corrupt ideas. I exposed myself to healers of all sorts and engaged in the services of dozens. Sadly, I still believed in Christ being the only way but I still did not surrender. What was it going to take?

The devil was very content keeping me in bondage. I was trapped in his ways and ideals and continued to search for happiness through people and books. I was the slave of my own sin.

I began to put all my energy in my Homeopath – a health practitioner who had over the years given me some temporary relief from my depression and my battle with anorexia. To me he was like a god - I looked up to him. Five years ago I was struck with a bizarre virus so I went to see him. Although I was in familiar territory and was always very comfortable with him I felt really strange being there this time and afraid of the remedy he was giving me. I believe that God was alerting me with a strong feeling of conviction, but my own inner rebellious nature did not allow me to listen. The fact is that this guy meddled with astrology, psychic healing and witchcraft.

Days went by and I was at work by myself when all of a sudden my whole body went clammy, my knees went weak and my heart was racing a million miles an hour. I could barely move. I didn't realize that what I was facing was one of the many full-blown anxiety attacks that were going to take place over the next year. I then knew that I should have listened to that voice but it was too late. I spent the next three months at home with no rest, no proper sleep, no income, no real answers from doctors and a constant state of anxiety. My family, Alex and his parents had to take turns remaining by my side as I could not bear to be left alone.

Sadly, it is exactly where I had to be to call on the Lord. He was trying to talk to me for so long and this was probably the only way I was going to listen. Fortunately He was patient with me. I began my prayer journal 30 November 2005. It was the point at which I cried with everything I had for the Lord to truly change me. I felt such guilt for having forsaken

Him. I prayed deeply for salvation and healing and over the next few months I found that I was able to get back to work again.

As I trusted in the Lord I found I slowly began to gain my confidence again. Since that battle there have been many more. I could say I have grown spiritually in many ways but I know that I have created many blocks by being angry with the Lord for not providing me with some of the desires of my heart such as having a child and a somewhat broken marriage that was in deep need of restoration. I have slowly had to learn the strength in obedience, yielding and trusting the Lord even when it does not make sense. I know that the Lord wants what is best for me – he does not need to give me anymore than the gift of shedding his blood on the cross to save a selfish soul like me. The truth is that we don't understand our needs and ourselves as Christ does. I had tried to fulfill my desires my way for years and failed miserably every single time.

I have learnt that victory comes when you let go and surrender completely to the Lord. Nothing is too hard or complex for Our Savior. My Lord has watched me fall many times in my life and given me the strength to get back up. He has been patient with me when I have had to let go of certain sin in my life. He has given me victory over some of the anger in my life. He works with me daily to become more like Him. With each waking hour as I learn to walk and trust the Lord Jesus I feel the weight of life's burdens lift. My marriage keeps getting better and better as I trust in the Lord's work and my depression has found some answers through making some personal changes in my life. I will never be free of obstacles, worries or the effects of my sin in this life but the freedom I have is knowing that Christ will come back to take me and those that have called on His name to their real home in Heaven. The gift of Salvation is open to all that call upon his Holy name.

Although church does not save you it is so great attending a true Bible-believing church where I can hear God's word preached and I can be strengthened by the many things that I learn from day to day and week to week. Jesus says in Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Christ truly does quiet a noisy soul. We have all filled our souls with too much of the wrong noise and in turn we feel so bogged down. The great news is we can leave it all at the feet of Jesus. What a blessing and a wonderful gift that we can trust in Him alone to change us, renew us and to give us rest!!

I will finish with this verse - Romans 8:28 says "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." I believe that God is working a strong purpose in my life, Alex's life and the many that have chosen to believe in His very name.

Thank you for reading my testimony. Make a decision to trust in the Lord Jesus today.