



BILLY GRAHAM

Shortly before his 16th birthday, Billy Graham attended a tent revival service in Charlotte, N.C., where he heard the evangelist Mordecai Ham speak. The following is his own account of what happened:

I became deeply convicted about my sinfulness and rebellion. And confused. How could this evangelist be talking to me, of all people? I had been baptized as a baby, had learned the Shorter Catechism word perfect, and had been confirmed in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church with the full approval of the pastor and elders. I had gotten into mischief once in a while, but I could hardly be called wicked. I resisted temptations to break the moral code my parents had so strictly instilled in me. I was a good milker in the dairy barn and never complained about any of the nasty work, such as shoveling manure. I was even the vice president of my youth group in our church (although, granted, it wasn't a particularly vital organization).

So why would the evangelist always be pointing his bony finger at me? ... What was slowly dawning on me during those weeks was the miserable realization that I did not know Jesus Christ for myself. I could not depend on my parents' faith. Christian influence in the home could have a lasting impact on a child's life, but faith could not be passed on as an inheritance, like the family silver. It had to be exercised by each individual.

I could not depend on my church membership either. Saying "I believe" in the Apostles' Creed every Sunday, or taking the bread and wine of communion, could so easily become nothing but rote and ritual, without power in themselves to make me any different.

Nor could I depend on my own resolution to do better. I constantly failed in my efforts at self-improvement. Nobody needed to tell me that.

As a teenager, what I needed to know for certain was that I was right with God. I could not help but admit to myself that I was purposeless and empty-hearted. Our family Bible reading, praying, psalm-singing, and churchgoing—all these had left me restless and resentful. I had even tried, guiltily, to think up ways of getting out of all those activities as much as I could. In a word, I was spiritually dead.

And then it happened, sometime around my 16th birthday. On that night, Dr. Ham finished preaching and gave the invitation to accept Christ. After all his tirades against sin, he gave us a gentle reminder: "*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:8, KJV). His song leader, Mr. Ramsay, led us all in "Just As I Am"—four verses. Then we started another song: "Almost Persuaded, Now to Believe."

On the last verse of that second song, I responded. I walked down to the front, feeling as if I had lead weights attached to my feet, and stood in the space before the platform... My heart sank when I looked over at the lady standing next to me with tears running down her cheeks. I was not crying. I did not feel any special emotion of any kind just then. Maybe, I thought, I was not supposed to be there. Maybe my good intentions to be a real Christian wouldn't last. Wondering if I was just making a fool of myself, I almost turned around and went back to my seat.

As I stood in front of the platform, a tailor named J.D. Prevatt, who was a friend of our family with a deep love for souls, stepped up beside me, weeping. Putting his arms around me, he urged me to make my decision. At the same time, in his heavy European accent, he explained God's plan for my salvation in a simple way. That explanation was addressed to my own mental understanding. It did not necessarily answer every question I had at the moment—and it certainly did not anticipate every question that would come to me in the months and years ahead—but it set forth simply the facts I needed to know in order to become God's child.

My tailor friend helped me to understand what I had to do to become a genuine Christian. The key word was *do*. Those of us standing up front had to decide to do something about what we knew before it could take effect.

He prayed for me and guided me to pray. I had heard the message, and I had felt the inner compulsion to go forward. Now came the moment to commit myself to Christ. Intellectually, I accepted Christ to the extent that I acknowledged what I knew about Him to be true. That was mental assent. Emotionally, I felt that I wanted to love Him in return for His loving me. But the final issue was whether I would turn myself over to His rule in my life.

I checked "Recommitment" on the card I filled out. After all, I had been brought up to regard my baptism and confirmation as professions of faith too. The difference was that this time I was doing it on purpose, doing it with intention. For all my previous religious upbringing and church activity, I believe that that was the moment I made my real commitment to Jesus Christ.

No bells went off inside me. No signs flashed across the tabernacle ceiling. No physical palpitations made me tremble. I wondered again if I was a hypocrite, not to be weeping or something. I simply felt at peace. Quiet, not delirious. Happy and peaceful.

From his autobiography Just As I Am



FRANKLIN GRAHAM

In July 1974, Franklin Graham was forced to choose between the rebellious life he was leading and the abundant life in Jesus Christ his father had preached about all across the globe. The turmoil and emptiness inside him finally reached a climax. Here's how it happened, in Franklin's own words:

That night instead of going to the bar for a couple of beers, I found myself alone in my room reading through the gospel of John.

When I came to the third chapter, I read not just that Jesus told Nicodemus he had to be born again, but I also grasped that Franklin Graham had to be born again as well. (See John 3:3-7.)

I don't remember all that happened that night, but when I went to bed, I knew that all was not well with Franklin Graham. Something was missing in my life. I felt I was a Christian. I was the son of Billy Graham, I went to church, and I memorized Scripture. What more did it take? My mind raced, and I found myself talking as though there were two people struggling inside of me. I don't remember getting much sleep.

For the next several days I didn't have much time to myself because of the demands of the tour. We had gone on to Israel, and on our fourth night in the country, we were at a hotel in Jerusalem.

I went to my room early. I sat on my bed and smoked a cigarette, picked up my New Testament, and re-read John 3. The words of my father a few weeks earlier haunted me: "Franklin, you are going to have to make a choice to accept Christ or reject Him." I thought back to the time I had made a decision for Christ at age 8. I'm not sure I really understood what I had done. All I knew was that Franklin Graham was a sinner who had been running from God. Suddenly, I had an overpowering conviction that I needed to get my life right with God.

I read John 3 again where Jesus told Nicodemus, "You must be born again." Nicodemus was a respected religious leader in his city. Yet, all of his religion and learning were not enough to gain entrance into Heaven. Nicodemus had to be born again. All I knew was that I wanted the big empty hole inside of me to be filled. I was tired of running.

I read Romans 8:1 over and over, and I realized that I was not “in” Christ. More than anything else, I wanted to be, but didn’t know how.

I put my cigarette out and got down on my knees beside my bed. I’m not sure what I prayed, but I know that I poured my heart out to God and confessed my sin. I told Him I was sorry and that if He would take the pieces of my life and somehow put them back together, I was His. I wanted to live my life for Him from that day forward. I asked Him to forgive me and cleanse me, and I invited Him by faith to come into my life.

That night I had finally decided I was sick and tired of being sick and tired. My years of running and rebellion had ended.

I got off my knees and went to bed.

It was finished.

The rebel had found the cause.

From his autobiography, Rebel With A Cause



WILL GRAHAM

My childhood was very similar to other children's. I was raised in a Christian home, my parents were strict but loving, and I was generally a good kid. Sure, I'd get in trouble a little bit, but not too much. I was Billy Graham's grandson, but I had no way of knowing what that meant at the age of 6 or 7.

I still remember the first time that I began to realize there was something unique about the last name Graham. I was in kindergarten, and the teacher put her hands on my shoulders and explained to another teacher, "This is Billy Graham's grandson." As I went outside to play with the other boys at recess, I paused for just a moment to wonder how she knew who my grandpa was.

I share these stories not because they are a part of my testimony, per se, but to say that neither of those two things could save me. Being a good little boy wasn't going to save me. Being the grandson of Billy Graham wasn't going to save me.

One Sunday, as I sat nestled in beside my parents at our church, I saw plates carrying small bites of bread and little cups of grape juice being passed around the sanctuary. I was excited! I was hungry, I'd behaved, and I was ready for this grown-up snack that was being handed out.

As the plate came by me, I reached out for a little piece of bread, but my parents wouldn't let me have any. I went through the checklist in my head, and—try as I may— I couldn't figure out what I had done that would disqualify me from the treat. The best I could come up with was that they were worried that I would spill the grape juice on the nice church carpet.

In a boy's world, puzzles like this tend to be quickly forgotten, and before long I was back home on our farm with my family, eating the Sunday meal. Afterward, my dad took me up to my room and started to explain to me what this thing they called communion meant, and how Jesus, to whom I had prayed often, loved me so much that He died on the cross for my sins and had risen from the grave. My dad invited me to make a decision to ask Jesus into my heart.

The fact that I was a good kid and that my last name was Graham didn't mean anything. Rather, that decision I made in my bedroom with childlike faith is what secured my eternity

in Heaven and is how I began a relationship with my Savior. It's been some 30 years since that afternoon, and I've lived a life full of joy, hope, and purpose thanks to that decision I made with my dad after the communion service at church.

Since that day I have had the opportunity to travel the world and tell others about the same Jesus who was introduced to me by my father. From Kentucky to Hong Kong, Calgary to Kenya, I've been blessed to watch people lay their burdens at the feet of Jesus and claim that same hope in Him that I've found.

YOUR FAITH STORY

Before you can share your story, you have to know your story. This questionnaire will help you express what God has done in your life.

Most times, people will give you two minutes of their attention while you share your faith story. That's enough, if you are prepared. To practice, write your faith story on this page.

1. What was your life like before Christ?

2. How did you receive Christ? Mention one Bible verse.

- How did you hear?

- What did you hear?

- How did you respond?

3. What is your life like after receiving Christ?

“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”
JOHN 10:10, NKJV

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”
JOHN 3:16, NKJV

GOD LOVES YOU & HAS A PURPOSE FOR YOU

1

NO BRIDGE REACHES GOD ... EXCEPT ONE


“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
ROMANS 3:23, NKJV

People often try to bridge this gap by doing a lot of good things.

SIN SEPARATES US FROM GOD

2

JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY



“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”
JOHN 14:6, NKJV

GOD'S BRIDGE: THE CROSS

3

fold in half on dotted line, then tri-fold

HERE IS HOW YOU CAN RECEIVE CHRIST:

1. Admit your need. (I am a sinner.)
2. Be willing to turn from your sins (repent).
3. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross and rose from the grave.
4. Pray a prayer like this: Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. I want to turn from my sins, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe that Jesus Christ is Your Son. I believe He died for my sins and that You raised Him to life. I want Him to come into my heart and to take control of my life. I want to trust Jesus as my Savior and follow Him as my Lord from this day forward. In Jesus' Name, amen.

LET US KNOW YOU DID!
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STEPS TO PEACE WITH GOD

BILLY
GRAHAM
Evangelistic Association
Always Good News.

4

OUR RESPONSE

TRUST JESUS

“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”
JOHN 1:12, ESV

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”
ROMANS 10:9, ESV

WILL YOU RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST
RIGHT NOW?

HERE'S HOW I FOUND PEACE WITH GOD:

Use this space to write out your testimony, so you can share it with others. (If you need help putting your story to paper, use "Your Faith Story" worksheet.) For your convenience, you can print this on the back of the "Steps to Peace With God" foldable tract.