

Fear Not and Have Faith!

Debbie and her husband are members of our church and good friends of Elsie and I. Here is her story of coming to faith in Jesus Christ.

God is good. He is patient, and he is a faithful, loving father who never gives up on his children. Looking back on my life, I now recognize the times he was there, urging me to turn to him. But I didn't. Not for nearly 50 years.

I was not raised in a religious home. We didn't talk about God or pray before meals, but I did go to Sunday School and I went to Vacation Bible School each summer. It was there, when I was about 9 years old, that my pastor gifted me my first bible. I tried reading my new bible, but none of it made sense, and it eventually ended up packed away in the attic.

A few weeks after graduating from high school I left for Air Force basic training. Overnight, I went from living in a town of 200 people where everybody knew me, to living in the 10th largest city in the nation, where no one knew me. Although the military takes great care of their people, they don't watch you 24/7, and I suddenly had a level of freedom like never before. Unfortunately, that new freedom led to a series of bad choices. Throughout my twenties and thirties I was living my best life, or so I thought. Having lots of fun and making memories...but when I think of those days now, I cringe. Fast forward a couple of decades, and I'm a divorced single mother, still living in Texas. I was tired and discouraged, and wondering what life had in store for me next. Little did I know, God was working.

One day, as I vented about my struggles to a friend in Ohio, they told me, "You just have to have faith." Have faith? I had heard those words before, but they never meant much to me... they were just something people said to make you feel better. This time however, the words seemed to stick. Have faith? Those words haunted me. I would go to sleep thinking, "You just have to have faith." And I would wake up the next morning thinking, "You just have to have faith." Eventually, I climbed into the attic and dug out my old bible. About 40 years after I first received it, I started trying to read it again. Unfortunately, it was still a challenge and I understood little of what I read. With "Have faith" still going through my head, I started watching online sermons from an Ohio church. The series was called "Fear Not", and it spoke to me. It's hard to explain, but for the first time in my life, God's word was stirring within me.

A couple of months later, without much of a plan, I decided to leave everything I had known for the last 30 years and move back home to Ohio. I rented a 5x8 U-Haul trailer and only took what would fit in that trailer and the back of my car. I had 6 months of savings to hold me over, and I planned to live temporarily with my dad. Otherwise, it was a complete leap of faith. It felt like something I had to do, but I didn't have much of a safety net if things went awry. And, of course, they did.

Five and a half months later I still hadn't found a job. I had plenty of interviews, but nothing panned out, and I was starting to panic. I had just enough of my savings left to pay two more weeks of bills, and no more job prospects. In the middle of the night the darkness closed in, and my head spun. I was out of ideas. What was I going to do? That is when it happened. I did the only thing left to do. I cried out to God, sobbing in the darkness, asking Him to help me. I told Him I couldn't do it on my own anymore and that I needed his help. I laid my burdens down, and prayed He would help me.

The very next morning, out of the blue, I received a phone call from my old boss asking me if I'd consider coming back to work for her. She said I could work remotely, but she needed me to start immediately. God had heard, and answered, my prayers! Hallelujah – I had a job!

I rented a home and settled into my new life, but God wasn't done with me yet. After trying several different churches, I eventually ended up at Light in the Valley Chapel. There, I immediately felt welcomed and at home. For months, I faithfully attended, listened, and learned. One Sunday the pastor began speaking about baptism, and after a couple of more weeks, I felt like I should be baptized. It seemed important, but I wanted to talk to the pastor face to face – could someone like me even qualify for baptism? Was it possible? I was anxious to speak with him, but Sunday after Sunday I chickened out, or found something "more important" to do. One Sunday, I decided once



Debbie Mullen



Phil & Elsie

Souls4Him Ministries

Our Mission: Calling people to a vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ.

P.O. Box 368 • Berlin, OH 44610 • 330-231-2589
 philipstutzman@gmail.com • souls4him.com

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and for all I needed to speak with the pastor...but once again, I didn't. Instead, I went shopping at Walmart.

Later, while leaving Walmart, I noticed a man walking towards me, intently staring at me. Did I know him? He held my gaze until he reached me. Then, as he approached, he extended his hand and, with great purpose, handed me a hand-carved wooden flower. Without breaking eye contact he said firmly, "This is for you." He never slowed or broke his stride. He never broke eye contact. He just kept walking. Startled, I stammered, "thank you" and continued walking out to my car. As I got into my car I looked at the flower more closely. The craftsmanship was beautiful and it must have taken quite some time to make. What shocked me most though, were the 6 bible verses neatly written around the flower's stem. I couldn't wait to get home to look them up.

Once home, my old bible in hand, I started looking up the bible verses. Imagine my shock when all six verses, one right after the other, had to do with baptism! I had skipped talking with my pastor about baptism to go to Walmart. Amazed, I looked up the final verse - Acts 22:16, "And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name." Instantly, I knew that flower was a real, tangible message directly from God, and I immediately called my pastor.

By the grace of God I was baptized shortly thereafter, and I am forever grateful for the life I have now. I am blessed! God is good. He is patient, and he is a faithful, loving father who never gave up on me, and he won't give up on you either. You just have to "Fear Not" and "Have faith"!

In March of 2020 Elsie and I were at Pastor Antony's church. We had distributed Bibles at that time and since have been sending bibles. He posted the following message on Facebook.

In a special way I want appreciate Rev Philip Stutzman .

Sir you've impacted my life deeply.

I love how randomly write messages to me like Paul to Timothy, full of God's presence and fatherly love. You've helped me grow in bible study , you insist I underline or colour the scriptures I read.

Also that I should preach with the bible on my hands. Thank you soo much. Thank you for the bibles you send us. This year we managed to distribute the bibles you sent us, to remote villages in Kenya and Uganda. Some of which would have been impossible for them to access such quality bibles.

Thank you Sir for helping us know God through his word.

God bless you.

Pastor Antony Nyaga Alan

Ephatha Church

Kianjokoma, Kenya



Some of the Bibles we handed out March 2020 at Pastor Antony's church



Pastor Antony with Elsie and Phil

Points *for* Prayer

- August 2-4Rosedale Network of Churches, Annual Conference, Greenwood Delaware
- August 8-11.....Annual Church Camping, OH
- August 17 Annual Bethel Camp Benefit Auction, KY
- August 24Wedding, OH
- September 1 Zion Mennonite, OK
- September 15.....Trinity Church, VA



We have a Souls4Him page on FB or you can follow me on FB and Instagram under Philip Stutzman. Many have told me how they follow me as a "silent" follower and can keep up with what we are doing.

WHO WE ARE

Philip Stutzman Souls4Him Ministries invites people to authentic relationship in Jesus Christ. We do this through Evangelistic Meetings, Revival Meetings in churches, prisons and community meetings, stateside and overseas. Having a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt status makes all gifts tax deductible.