

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: Being a Christian is like being a pumpkin. God lifts you up, takes you in, and washes all the dirt off of you. He opens you up, touches you deep inside and scoops out all the yucky stuff, including the seeds of doubt, hate, greed, etc. Then He carves you a new smiling face and puts His light inside you to shine for all the world to see.

## **MY HEART'S CONVERSION!**

By Katie Kee

Jeremiah 17:9-10 tells us that the heart is deceitful...and desperately wicked...

Proverbs 23:7a tells us For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.

“No! No! No!” I spat out the words in anger. “What part of the word “No” don’t you understand?” I’m not going to go to church with you now or EVER, and that’s final, so quit bugging me about it! That’s not my cup of tea! I don’t like church, I don’t like religion! I don’t like Christians, who are always preaching to you and acting like they are better than you. They act like they know something you don’t; like they have a secret of sorts and you are missing out. I hate that! The joy and peace they say they have, and the smiles on their faces I see when I know their lives are in turmoil; it drives me crazy. I feel like they’re always trying to put something over on me. Besides, I like my life the way it is and I don’t like changes! Hell could freeze over and I still wouldn’t go! I’M NOT GOING TO CHURCH WITH YOU! End of story! Final act! Curtain coming down! Close the door and bar it!

“There!” I hissed through clenched teeth, as I slammed the phone down with a resounding bang! “That should discourage my husband’s relatives from inviting me to church ever again!” I probably wasn’t the most favorite person in the family now, but I didn’t care.

Turning from the phone with a smirky smile on my face, I saw Joe, my husband, staring at me with utter shock on his face. “Who were you talking to? Don’t you think you went overboard in your response, Kay? They’re my family, remember, and I have to work with my uncles. You were really rude. That wasn’t a very nice way of saying no! What got into you? Why did you act that way? That’s not like you to be so mean, so hateful!”

Ignoring the shocked, then hurt look on Joe’s face, I quickly defended myself as I spat out, “Don’t turn it around on me; I’m desperate! Your family doesn’t seem to know the meaning of the word “NO! They’re driving me crazy! When are these four, five, six week or so revivals going to end? All your family does is go to church night after night and bug me to go with them! Give me a break!” I replied as I marched out of our living room; checking to make sure the walls around my heart were securely up for my added protection. Now Joe was upset with me. Well, it’s over and done with; can’t change that! I’m going to bed!

Did I feel bad about the conversation and my behavior the next day? Yes, I did, but I would never back down and admit it. I had made a statement and I was sticking to it, no matter what! But, that wasn’t the end of it; the invitation kept coming. “I need a different strategy”, I thought, “This one isn’t working.”

One Saturday evening at a family potluck, much to the shock of everyone, I agreed to go to church with them on Sunday, but under my conditions. I would visit their church one time and one time only and they would agree to never ask me to go again. They looked at each other and nodded their heads in

agreement, but the slight smiles that passed between them didn't escape me. Again, I felt that they knew something I didn't. It made me uncomfortable and angry. I was desperate to get them "Off my back" though, and I figured after Sunday, it would be all over; a done deal!

My mother-in-law and Joe's aunt agreed to go with me to church. My heart certainly wasn't into going to church and I went under strong protest, but I had agreed to go, so with an angry rebellious attitude, I walked through the door of The Pentecostal Church of God that morning and made my way down the aisle to find a seat. We ended up two rows from the front row. It was all I could do to control the impulse to jump up and run out of the church as fast as my legs would carry me, but I was held captive in my seat; I couldn't move. Little did I know that my life would be radically changed that Sunday morning! I entered the church as one person, but I would leave a different person.

The service started. Their worship was foreign to me; off the charts! It was totally different from my Mormon background. I struggled to maintain an outward composure, as I tried to remember what the family had shared about their pastor. Brother Patterson, they said, was an old country preacher from Oklahoma who only had a sixth grade education, but when he preached the heavens opened, his flock dropped to their knees seeking this Jesus he brought to life in their hearts and spirits and the devil took flight.

Don't ask me how I knew because I couldn't tell you, but right away I knew that this was a man who truly loved God and I could trust him (a big thing for me to admit; coming from an abusive childhood background. Gaining my trust was almost an impossible feat!). He had my attention!

Brother Patterson began to preach. His message on the heart, brought conviction; it gripped my very soul. Suddenly, I did not like the lifestyle I was living and I didn't like the things that were being exposed in my heart nor the behavior it caused to erupt from past wounds and childhood bondages that were mean and caused others pain. My tongue was speaking death not life; I needed to change. I wanted to change. The Holy Spirit was convicting, touching and wrapping His love around my heartstrings. I didn't understand what was happening.

When Bro. Patterson shared where your sins will take you, if not confessed and repented of, I was crying deep within and asking how can I change? Then he told about Jesus, the Son of God, and how out of His great love for me, Jesus chose to die on the cross for my sins. He provided a way to set me free that I might be assured of a place in heaven with Him. I wasn't lost and in a place of hopelessness. Jesus loved me. I was worth saving. My life could change for the better. He had and would always be my hope. I just needed to invite Him into my heart; to say yes to Him.

"Could this be true? Dare I hope that my life could change for the better and have purpose? How do I do this? I only let people into the outer chambers of my heart, how could I ask this Jesus, who I can't even see, to come into my heart? Oh help me Jesus, help me," I cried out as the dam in my heart broke and tears streamed down my face. I didn't understand the emotions churning within me. I was frightened.

Here I was, a person that hated changes, but my heart was crying out for His changes. Suddenly, I realized that I wanted this Jesus to come into my heart and live there forever. When the altar call was given, I found myself kneeling at the altar. Oh Yes, I wanted the changes that Jesus could bring into my life. I wanted the hurt and pain to go away. I wanted to love and not hate. I wanted to trust people and believe the good in them. I wanted to believe that I had "good" in me. As the Holy Spirit exposed my heart with all the darkness, fear and pain within, I wanted God's light to come in and cleanse me; change

me. I wanted to become the new person that Brother Patterson said I could become. I wanted the old things to pass away and to start walking in the newness of Christ.

My life was radically changed that Sunday morning on March 27, 1960, as I asked Jesus to come into my heart. I gave Him permission to become my Lord and Master. It was the best day of my life, for I too, found the secret of life behind the smiles; Jesus Christ! Not only was my life changed that day, but my mother-in-law and Joe's aunt, two of my favorite people, also accepted the Lord into their hearts. The angels in heaven were certainly rejoicing over the three sinners that were saved that morning.

Keep praying for your lost loved one; never give up hope that one day they too, will meet the One who loved them and died on the cross for them. God will move! He is faithful to hear and answer our cries for our loved ones. I prayed for my sister for 40 years and she is now a child of the King and serving Him. Not only are we bonded as natural sisters, but we are bonded in the Kingdom of God as daughters of the King.

Thanks for letting me share a part of my conversion story—more to come in the book *Miraculous Love*, the life story of Joe and Katie Kee. I am in the process of writing it and will keep you dear readers updated as to when it is finished and to be published. Please keep me in prayer.