

An Outsider with the Lord

When I was about ten years old I thought that the Lord had saved me. I was in my bedroom sleeping at the time, and it just dawned on me, so I came tearing down the steps to tell my father, and we talked about it and prayed about it. But then I forgot about it for a while, thinking that when the Lord saves you, you are perfect. But I soon found out after a couple math tests in school that I was far from it! After failing four tests in a row I had to take the test papers home for my dad to sign them and he wasn't too happy about the situation, so I didn't bring anymore home. I had my classmate sign the papers instead. But my teacher knew better, and when my dad found out I got the hairbrush! After that the Lord helped me to get better grades. And that really stuck in my mind. I found out you can't play fast and loose with the Lord; you have to do it the Lord's way or there is no way. Even though I wasn't really saved yet, as later events proved, the Lord showed himself great in his mercy and slow to anger.

From there until my service in World War II, I showed no evidence of being saved. I had friends shot down in bombers beside me. Some went on missions and we never heard from them again. On my third mission we were shot down and ended up in Switzerland. Even though God protected me and brought me home again safe, there was still something missing in my life, but I didn't realize what it was.

It wasn't until the death of my mother in 1975 that the Lord began to drive it home to me. Shortly after that I had a serious heart attack where I didn't think I was coming home again from the hospital. God put me right in a corner; I couldn't move or breathe or think. It felt like ten elephants were sitting on my chest. He really got my attention.

I had been an outsider with the Lord all those years, and when death came what did I have to look forward to? The Lord opened my eyes and made me understand. You can't earn your way into heaven; you must totally give yourself to the Lord to do things his way every day of your life. I was scared I would die in my sins and that scared me very much. My mom and dad were an example of how you put the Lord first, but I couldn't claim that. I asked the Lord to open my heart to his Word and to make sure that he saved me. I'm living proof that the Lord answers prayer.

The longer I live, the more the Lord makes me realize how frail we are. And without the Lord our lives are wasted; you live for nothing. The only thing I can say is praise the Lord for his mercy in salvation, and in being a long-suffering God in putting up with me. The Lord has opened up my spiritual understanding in a way I never thought possible, and I look forward to the day when he calls me home.