PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I would like to base my testimony on a passage of Scripture: 1 Timothy 1:12-16 "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man. I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners - of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life."(NIV)

To begin with, let me tell you a little bit about my upbringing. I grew up in an upper-middle class home with both parents and my three older brothers. My father was rather neutral concerning spiritual things. For those who need a label, I guess he would best be classified as an agnostic. My mother took us boys to church regularly, but never seemed to be in full agreement with the doctrine of any of the churches that we attended. Therefore, we changed churches regularly. I think this is the biggest reason why religion never meant very much to my brothers and me. Not that we weren't fairly active in church related social activities. However, for me, by the end of junior high school these activities, and church attendance had ceased altogether.

What replaced church? Sports. Football, basketball and track became very important to me. I became part of the "jock" crowd. Also, coming from a musical family, playing music was a big part of my life as well, and I eventually put that talent into use playing in rock groups. Putting these two influences together, I was soon introduced to alcohol and drugs. Both of which I partook of. This lasted up to my senior year in high school.

At this point, I think the Lord decided that he had let Satan go far enough. First to disappear were the drugs and the drinking. But that was due mostly to the affects they had on my ability to compete in track, and perform well musically. Then I met the girl who eventually became my wife. She was a Christian, and although I now know that she probably shouldn't have been dating me, I can only thank God that she did. The more serious our relationship became, however, the more concerned she became about my salvation. Not only her, but her whole church! She witnessed to me (tearfully most of the time), her youth sponsor and even her pastor talked with me. Finally, while counseling with us about our approaching wedding, her pastor challenged me to read through the Gospel of John in one week. I took his challenge, and finally came to the point where I understood that no matter how much "do-gooding" I did, without accepting Jesus Christ as my personal savior, I would never go to heaven.

That was over twenty years ago. There have been good times, and rough times. And God has lead me through all of them. He has used my musical talents in ways that I would never have dreamed of, and blessed me with a wife that has stuck with me though it all. I am convinced that were it not for our relationship with Jesus we would not have our relationship with each other today.

Can you see the parallel between what I have shared and the passage that I started with? That was me: a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious to the church. But even though I might have been worst among sinners Christ died to save me. Through His patience and mercy, not only has He made me grow in Him, but He has deemed me worthy to be called into his service. For this I can only express my utter amazement, and proclaim my most sincere praise to Him. If He could do all this for me, and more, surely He can do the same for you!