

The Examined Faith Is Worth Living

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Why I'm Sharing This Story

We all inherit traditions, beliefs, and values from our families and cultures. But how often do we stop and examine whether those beliefs are grounded in truth; especially when our eternity is at stake? I'm sharing my journey because many, as I once did, may rely on ritual and family heritage without having truly encountered the person and work of Jesus Christ in the Bible.

Family heritage and experience can be powerful, but neither defines truth—truth stands on its own merits. Even the many stripes of Christianity need to be compared objectively with Scripture, because drift, poor interpretation, and inventions imposed by tradition can obscure truth. Biblical Christianity rests on the authority of the Bible as the objective standard. Unlike feelings or traditions, the Bible continues to endure every test over time because it is fact-based, supported by manuscript reliability, archaeological confirmation, fulfilled prophecy, and historical coherence. My hope is that my testimony invites you to examine your foundations—honestly, carefully, and prayerfully. If you've never personally examined your faith through the lens of Scripture, I hope my story encourages you to begin. You may be surprised by what you find—just as I was.

Background and Early Life

I was born into a devout Roman Catholic family with deep Irish and Italian roots. My father, an Irish Protestant from the Bible Belt, converted to Catholicism to marry my mother, a committed Italian Catholic. In that culture, being Catholic and being Italian were practically synonymous. Yet identity is not the same as truth—and experience is not the same as truth.

Have you ever questioned the spiritual beliefs you inherited against the Bible?

From an early age, I was immersed in sacraments—Baptism, First Communion, Penance, Confirmation. I attended Catholic grammar school, high school, and college, trained as an altar boy, and started in sixth grade being a lector at Masses, weddings, and funerals. Outwardly, I looked devout; but inwardly I felt something vital was missing.

Ritual and Reverence Without Relationship

By age sixteen a nagging question haunted me: If I'm doing everything the Church requires, why do I still feel far from God? Blaise Pascal captured my ache: "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator made known through Jesus Christ."

Could I be trusting rituals instead of a relationship with the living Christ?

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A Community of Real and Vibrant Faith

When I arrived at Villanova University, I met about forty students with Campus Crusade for Christ (now CRU). They radiated joy and spoke of being born again through faith in Christ, not tradition. John 10:10 was alive within them: “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” Their authenticity stirred even a deeper hunger within me.

*How could I have what they have—more than ceremony
but something personal, transforming, vibrant?*

Intellectual Curiosity Meets Spiritual Hunger

As an analytical person I wanted evidence. A CRU missionary, Dennis Becker, explained the gospel from Scripture with clarity and conviction. I understood it intellectually and sincerely desired the relationship with Jesus that I saw in others. So, I prayed a sinner’s prayer perhaps twenty-five times, hoping for some sort of mystical feeling—but nothing happened.

What Is the Sinner’s Prayer?

The Sinner’s Prayer is not a magic formula but a repentant, faith-filled response to Romans 10:9–10—“If you confess with your mouth ‘Jesus is Lord’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” One form of prayer is:

“Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I trust You as my Savior. Come into my life and make me new. Thank You for saving me.”

This prayer is not the saving act—it’s the expression of a heart that finally surrenders and trusts in Jesus’s redeeming work on the cross. Revelation 3:20 captures this invitation: “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in.”

When Trust Replaced Vain Repetition

My breakthrough came months later when a new CRU missionary, Mike Green, came on campus. He too said the sinner’s prayer multiple times, hoping for some sort of perceptible change. Then he realized that asking repeatedly showed a lack of trusting faith. That struck me deeply.

*Have you ever considered whether you’re
trusting in feelings—or God’s promises?*

That night, March 6, 1973, in my Sullivan Hall dorm room, I prayed the following one last time:

“Lord, this is the last time I ask. I know You are real, willing, and able to save. I receive Your gift of salvation by faith alone.” At that moment, I was born again—not by any ritual, water baptism or priest but by grace through faith according to Ephesians 2:8–9 and the authority of the Bible itself.

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A Transformed Heart and Mind

That same March 6th night, I again opened the Bible Campus Crusade gave me months earlier and for the first time, it came alive. It was as if God was speaking directly to me. The Holy Spirit filled the God-shaped hole in my heart, and my priorities shifted: self-interest gave way to genuine love. As the Bible says I became a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Faith That Seeks Truth

Socrates once said, “The unexamined life is not worth living.” I discovered that the examined faith is worth living. My parents were sincere, but sincerity is not a good standard—truth is. My heritage offered rituals but not a relationship grounded in truth. Truth is objective, not subjective, and supported by facts. Biblical Christianity rests on facts and builds a cumulative case for objective truth based on fulfilled prophecy, historical and archaeological corroboration, manuscript evidence, eyewitness testimony, philosophical coherence, and lived experience. No other worldview shares this evidentiary weight. The Christian faith is anything but blind. It is reasonable, verifiable, and deeply compelling. Acts 17:11 praises Bereans who “examined the Scriptures daily.” When I began examining Scripture using principles of sound interpretation, I realized how many of my childhood inherited beliefs contradicted the Bible.

Have you opened the Bible to test your beliefs?

Relationship Over Religion

Jesus didn’t come to start another religion; He came to restore relationship. He invites you to know Him personally. Have you ever come to Him directly and personally—not through a church or a priest—but through reasoned faith—faith in both the person and work of Jesus? We don’t earn our salvation by sacraments because Jesus already paid our sin debt in full!

Consider how profound this question: “If Jesus paid 100% of our sin debt, how much are we responsible for?”

What makes this question profound is that religious rituals can’t possibly add anything if our sin debt is already paid in full. This is the great divide between cultural Christianity and Biblical Christianity. Consider these three “paid-in-full,” supporting Bible verses noting the italic’s text:

- **Colossians 2:13b–14** — “He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.”
- **2 Corinthians 5:21** — “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

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- **Hebrews 9:12** — “He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.”

How You Can Know Christ Personally

(Adapted from the Four Spiritual Laws, Campus Crusade for Christ, first shared with me in 1972)

1. **God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.** (John 3:16; John 10:10)
2. **Humanity is sinful and separated from God.** We all fall short of God’s perfect holiness (Rom 3:23; Rom 6:23). Man is continually trying to reach God and the abundant life through his own efforts, such as a good life, philosophy, or religion—but he *inevitably fails*.
3. **Jesus is God’s sole provision for man’s sin.** He died in our place for our sins, was buried and rose from the dead (Rom 5:8, 1 Cor 15:3-6).
4. **We must individually receive Him.** “Yet to all who receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).” “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast (Eph 2:8-9).”

To respond:

- Admit your need (sin)
- Turn from sin (repent)
- Believe Christ died and rose for you
- Invite Him into your life as Savior and Lord
- Trust in God’s promise that “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13).

Prayer of Salvation

“Jesus, I confess I am a sinner in need of Your mercy. I believe You died and rose again to save me. I trust You alone for eternal life. Come into my heart and make me new. Amen.”

Conclusion & Invitation

This is the examined faith—and it is a faith worth living. I share my story not to diminish anyone’s journey, but to urge every reader—Catholic or not—to weigh tradition and experience against the truth of God’s Word and Christ’s finished work.

If my story resonates with you, or raises questions, let’s talk. I welcome respectful, two-way conversation. Call me on 631-835-0510; if practical, let’s meet in person. Eternity is worth the time it takes to seek the truth together.