

Journey to Unbelief

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2/28/1994

The following are excerpts from my hand-written journals over several years. During that time I would write nearly every day. When you see writings [in brackets], those are added as I write in February of 1994. During this time I was the Worship Leader at a church and I worked part time in the middle of the night at UPS. Names have been changed for the privacy of those named.

1989

Jan. 1, in the "State of the Life Address" – Spiritually – This area also goes well. I feel like I'm growing. I know I've got a long way to go, but I feel like it won't be long until I'm sharing my faith (being led and strengthened by God) more often.

Jan. 6 – [Speaking about movies] They may seem harmless, even when we convince ourselves that we can overlook the violence, sexuality, and foul language, but I know it has an effect, and I believe that entertainment today is an extremely successful tool used by the enemy. It lulls us away from dynamic Christianity.

Jan. 11 – I can't believe how horrible my spiritual life was. One minute I was motivated for God, and the next I was depressed. The time is now to be a Spirit-filled Christian and not a fleshly one. There is so much good that needs to be done in the name of Jesus. PRAISE- This is one I've been praying for, for a while. Allison went to the doctor and it was found out that she doesn't have to have tubes put in her ears for drainage. Thank You oh ever Faithful Lord.

Jan. 23 – Thank You Lord for the great church service. I hope that more and more we are experiencing worship together and giving up ourselves more to You. Thank You for the afternoon with Dennis. In spite of the flesh and the evil one, You can do a great work in each of our lives and I praise You for that. Help me to remember!

Jan. 24 – My Christian walk has been going well lately. Two things I've been thinking about. One is I need to trust God for the opportunities to share my faith and when He does, I need to trust that it's not my words, but His Spirit. The second thing is I need to rest in Him throughout the day. Too often I get full of worry due to my stressful schedule, but I need to believe He's in control of that!

Jan. 31 – Lord, my schedule is completely out of control and it fills me with anxious thoughts. Deliver me in this time. I know I'm the cause of most of my troubles. Help me to trust You, to rest in You.

Feb. 9 – Acts 9 – I'm amazed at the power Peter had. He healed people and even raised Tabitha from the dead. There's not a lot of power in my life. Even this morning I feel tired and little motivated to do anything but sleep and eat. I'm going to spend some time in prayer and then maybe I'll feel better.....Well, I just prayed and I do feel better, of course. I need always to be more consistent in my trusting of God and one area that needs work is when situations arise that might alter my well thought out plans.

I need to view them as opportunities to see God work instead of annoying distractions as I often see them.

Feb. 14 – How come, whenever I get more time in my schedule, I usually end up giving it to the flesh before discipline sets in? I wish it weren't so.

March 1 – Spiritually things have been going well. I've been disciplined enough to have fellowship time daily.

March 15 – Let's talk about the flesh. It has a desire to be in the spotlight. Events like last night help to draw that out [a college choir concert – I didn't begin college until late 20s]. When people perform, I can feel jealousy. My flesh tells me I'm more talented than them and I should be receiving the applause. This is an area where I need to be cautious since I lead in music and have opportunity to seek fulfillment of the flesh's desires.

March 25 – There's too much living for self and not for others as God would have me do. When my life is over, the only acceptable way to be remembered is that I helped others to live a better life, to show them God. What I often strive for is accomplishments and to be remembered that way is not acceptable. Lord, guide me to help others in a way that will bring glory to You!

March 26, Easter – This should be a day of great celebration for us Christians. We stake our lives and eternity on the event which we commemorate today, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. I feel it's a big responsibility to be in the position where I am to be leading over 100 people in this celebration today. How about a prayer? Lord, thank You for the honor to be leading the people in worship today. I know the reason I can be there at all is because of Your blood which has cleansed me from sin and purified me. Help me to be celebrating as I lead today. In Your name Jesus and for Your glory, Amen!

March 27 – After church yesterday, we were home for a short bit and then we went to Irene's [my wife] parents, and they drove us to Colorado Springs. I had a good time. Michael [my father-in-law] really needs the Lord and I wish I could be used to help see that accomplished.

April 7 – Although I've not had enough sleep, I feel real good. A lot has to do with it being Friday, but fasting yesterday helps, too. I felt more sensitive in my prayer time this morning.

April 13 – The spiritual fervor hasn't been around recently, but I feel good today. I know a lot has to do with right and wrong priorities.

May 27 – Quick thoughts from prayer time – Praise God for the abundance of love and acceptance and hope He gives. Hallelujah! Thank You God!

Sept. 9 – Tim's visit [nephew on wife's side] caused me to realize better the degree of holiness to which God has been calling me for years and which I've been ignoring. Those kids need to see Christ in us and that wasn't happening in my life, but recently I've been more conscious to give God control. Praise You Lord!

Oct. – 25 – I prayed and then practiced piano [for college]. I could feel strong urgings of the flesh to quit playing and just eat and watch TV. I ended up giving in about 6:30, leaving much still needing to be accomplished.

I just lost all power to study.

I really hate when that happens.

I don't want the flesh to have that much control over me, but sometimes it does.

Lord, I'm sorry for giving in to the flesh. I repent. I thank You for forgiveness and pray I might walk more by Your Spirit and less by the flesh. I trust You for deliverance.

1990

Jan. 21 – Will I ever learn to trust God more so I won't worry, so I'll make good decisions?

Jan. 24, 2:26am – I'm kind of hurting health wise right now. Some pain in my back, wrist, and upper leg muscles. Lord, I'm up early to seek You this morning. Please heal me and give me the energy needed to make it through the day.

Jan. 25, 2:35am – I've been doing fairly well spiritually lately and my attitude has been good. But although things seem to be under control, I do battle impure thoughts which I wish wouldn't be there.

Jan. 29, 3:03am – It's a strange life I lead. One minute my attitude is positive and hopeful and the next it's negative and pessimistic. It seems to be more of the latter recently. I don't want it to be, but it is.

Jan. 30, 2:22am – I've been doing a lot of questioning my faith recently. I wonder at the validity of Christianity when it looks to me like it has accomplished so little in different people's lives. Mainly me, I still have the same "evil" desires and fears that I've always had. I have earnestly and fervently, at times, asked God to change me, but change hasn't come. I'm not sure what His involvement is in our lives.

Feb. 1, 2:26am – Irene and I ate without watching TV and we had a nice visit. Our discussion got into expressing our doubts about our Christian faith. In bed at 8:30.

Feb. 8, 2:23am – This schedule has been very difficult for me. I've been doing a lot of questioning my faith and questioning the way God works.

Feb. 18, 7:33am – I've had a walk around the lake and a pretty good time of prayer this morning. Although I still have questions about the way God moves in changing people on the inside, I also believe for me to see Him working and for me to be changed, I need to seek Him first, be a servant, and get away from the pleasures the world offers.

March 24, 6:18am – I've neglected prayer time all week and that's after being so encouraged spiritually last weekend. God has been faithful but I need to be. I've been too busy. I hate this schedule and the pressure I allow school to put on me. The next couple weeks look to be especially rough.

November 10, 7:07am – Ben and Edith Mitchell came by about 6:40 and we went to see Larnelle Harris out at, I believe it was Cherry Hills Community Church. It's right behind

1st Naz. The concert was pretty good. It took me a while to get into it. I was somewhat critical at first, an attitude of standing back, arms folded and saying, "OK, prove it."

That's my general attitude towards Christianity now. Does it work? Is it for real? Just who is right? Church also has been a source of failure, frustration, and anxiety. To our knowledge Michael never became a Christian and yet I can't accept or believe that he is spending eternity in hell. He wasn't bad enough to deserve such a fate.

People prayed for Irene and yet she felt no supernatural comfort. My belief about Michael is not faith that God answered our years of prayers and saved him, but doubt which affects my beliefs in other areas of Christianity.....I hear a mouse scratching in the ceiling of the basement. I'd better take steps to go kill it.

1991

Feb. 11, 4:07am – Spiritually – Things are difficult. I'm having a faith shortage. I'm wondering just what is God's role in our lives these days. Is He to be trusted as much as some people say? Does He really do all people say He does, or do they just twist what they see in order to justify Him?

Lord, I need You to build me up in You. Increase my faith and make me more like You so that I can know it's not me doing it in my own power, but it's You. I need You now as my father.

May 6 – "State of the Life Address" – Spiritual – Lousy! I have doubts and questions. I haven't spent the time seeking God and at times don't really know the best way to go about it.

May 13, 3:26am – Lord, I desire to walk more closely with You. I have recently, however, just given in to the flesh. Thank You for still loving me and speaking to me to get me on the right track. Purify me, help me to see things as You do. Rise up in me that You might be glorified!

June 10, 9:58am – Attitude – I can't seem to get my beliefs or career together. One depends on the other. If I don't believe in hell, or don't believe God used His power to transform the inner person, what am I doing in a career at a church?

June 19, 1:35pm – Randy Southland and his wife Dawn came by at 10:00. They're Jehovah Witnesses and we had a good 2-hour discussion on why they believe what they do. They say "hell" is a false doctrine. It was a nice time, but they believe they have the absolute truth, which of course doesn't agree with others who say their truth is absolute. I guess I'm left still questioning so much.

Nov. 1 – I'm too busy and I really don't like the pressure and commitment of my church job so I think I'll give Neil [church pastor] a 2 months' notice. I want to have an extended period of time away from those responsibilities. That's my plan right now and I feel like I really should follow through with it.

Dec. 2 – Evening church was a bore as usual. Not much longer now!

Dec. 10, 10:20pm – WHERE HAS MY WITNESS GONE? At work today [UPS] they had some guy I didn't know come help me later in the morning. I was mad. Now you know I've been cussing more recently, but still not much and never in anger. Well, I was showing this guy something in a truck. It was cramped and I was mad and I left saying, "I'll get the hell out of your way." Within 2 minutes my boss asked that guy if he was the one studying to be a minister. He was. I was embarrassed, ashamed, and guilty. Was then the time I should have told him I was a Christian also and even do music for a church?

1992

May 18 – Yesterday I was up about 5:30. I paid bills and did a little comedy organizing. I even sat through much of Sunday School. Church went well, but the message was a drag. Nothing new. "To cultivate a love for God, you must spend time with God." Church seems more and more like a waste of time for me.

May 29, 11:21am – Irene and I ate and went to TLC. It was OK, it creates different thoughts as I no longer believe what I used to, but can still talk the talk very well.

June 29, 2:13am – I jogged and put together a tape of music for the morning's service. I showered and ate and we went to church. I don't like going to church anymore. It takes up too much time.

July 2, 1:51pm – Things are changing. If I could, without having to deal with all the consequences, I'd drop out of all church activity and wouldn't attend much at all.

July 5 – Hmm, thoughts were stronger than ever today to quit all responsibilities at church. I'm beginning to feel like such a hypocrite up there, but the guilt of letting all those people down seems too much to bear.

July 14 – I feel awkward planning for upcoming worship services when my beliefs have changed so radically.

Aug. 30 – It was wonderful staying home from church. I used my arm as an excuse. It should be this way every Sunday.

Sept. 2 – [Here it is!] It was then I left here and went to Edith's to water plants and then to the church office for a meeting with Neil. I began our talk just as I'd planned, that I'd given up on Christianity and religion in general. We had a very nice talk. He's very understanding and we ended with me not being a deacon anymore or worship leader. Pretty much, I think, I'm free of all responsibilities.

February 28, 1994 – Today. I've wanted to do this project for a while. I believe the reason I was able to give up on Christianity was largely due to my journaling. I was able to see that it just did not work in my life. Too many people have the absolute truth.

I gave Christianity a good try. I was at it for about 15 years. I met a lot of other Christians during that time and from an objective point of view, I know I sought after God more fervently than almost all other Christians I knew. I have come to the conclusion, it just is not the absolute truth.

It was a long and difficult decision to break away, but I'm glad I did. I sometimes wonder how I could have stayed in it so long. It would be easy for me to now spend a long time writing about all of Christianity's flaws, but really there is a more pressing need. I've got to take my clothes out of the dryer.

