

David Oaks – Testimony

I knew who God was from an early age. At a kid's camp, God gave me the faith to believe that Christ was the one that could fix my sin. Ever since then God has provided many opportunities to serve and grow in Him.

God called me to youth ministry when I was a junior in high school. One of my youth leaders encouraged me to get involved with Jr. High students. Shortly after graduating, Jessica and I led the Jr. High group at our church in Tucson. After moving to Tempe, we found a new church family, Church on Mill. It didn't take long to start getting involved in ministry at Church on Mill and in youth ministry. Over the last 14 years I have grown in my faith and experience working with youth. I definitely could not have done it without Godly leaders and mentors, Bill, Andrea and Pat to name a few. Those mentors helped me move from being terrified to teach to wanting to teach. They helped me grow in my administrative tasks such as event planning, teaching schedules and trip planning. I have always known that God wanted me to work with youth. When it comes to teenagers, I get it. It's hard to explain. Maybe because I am still a little awkward and goofy. I have been nominated a few times for the role of deacon over the years but didn't think I needed to have the title. God spoke through Kent and Randy encouraging me to become a deacon. Thank you, God, for being patient with me and I will follow in obedience with Your will. I appreciate Church on Mill for their encouragement through this process. I love serving the youth and will continue to do so as the deacon of youth ministries.

David Brown - Testimony

God saved me in late 2001 when I went to a men's camp at Prescott Pines with one of my neighbors. He had been taking my boys to church on Wednesday nights for a couple of years. When he would ask me to come to church, I'd say I don't need to be at a church to know there is a God. But he was persistent and I eventually went to the camp with him. I had never seen anything like all those men who loved Jesus, and I really sensed God calling me to himself. So I was baptized on July 16, 2002.

The Lord brought me to Church on Mill in 2010 and I started serving doing the inside maintenance within a couple months of coming here, even before I joined the church. For a long time, people have wondered why I am not a deacon. I didn't feel called for that, and I didn't feel like I was far enough along in my walk with God to be a deacon, and so I didn't feel like I'd be a good fit. I have a heart for serving people, but I didn't feel like I needed to be a deacon to care for others.

When I was asked this last time to be a deacon, I still wasn't sure if that was where I was being called. But I agreed to go to the deacon class, and after only a few sessions, I was certain that was where God was calling me.

I still wasn't quite sure where God would want me to serve specifically, and so I asked if I could try a few different ministry areas. The first one was IHELP. I didn't realize it before, but I had already been helping the IHELP ministry for a while. So as I served, my heart grew more for that ministry. Now, I'm looking forward to serving in that area.

Megan Roberts – Testimony

God is at work all over, all the time. He began to soften my heart to truth when I was young, growing up with Christian parents who would sometimes read the Bible to me and often take me to church. Looking back now, there is no mistaking how God has used the situations in my life to lead me closer and closer to him. I started going to church around age 11, and realized that I really enjoyed serving other people at church. One summer, the church group had organized an event to help those in need. As I looked around and saw how God was using his people to help each other, I knew that this was a community that I would want to be a part of in the future. I recognized that life would have its ups and downs, and that God's people are those who help one another, those who love one another, and those who have someone in the driver's seat of their life that is not themselves. This was something that I wanted—to be a part of a people who are not only selfless, but first loving. I had heard the gospel message of Jesus's death and resurrection many times, and believed in a loving God who created the world, but as the Holy Spirit used something as simple as a community service project to draw me to him, I began the journey of walking with him. I was baptized soon after, but I was not one of those radical life transformation cases; I was saved, but Christ wasn't yet Lord over my life. Through high school, God grew my knowledge of him, the Bible, and of what worshiping God looked like. I enjoyed the social aspect of going to church and seeing friends that shared my beliefs, but I still continued to hold on to the controls of my life.

Christianity is not a check box of which religion you follow; following Jesus means allowing him to transform you from the inside out. "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart," (Psalm 37:4) was a verse that really struck my hard as I moved out of my parents' house and went to college. This verse is often misconstrued, taken as God giving people whatever they want if only they desire him. As I have continued to walk hand in hand with Jesus since that first day where it all came together and "clicked," I began not to keep God as just a part of my life, but as my purpose for life. What the verse really says, is that when you value, you treasure, you enjoy who God is and what he has done, he will give you new desires, better than you could ever have imagined for yourself. God is not a wish-granter, but a heart, life, and desire changer. The longer I have walked with God, the more I have grown from the young girl who wanted security in a community to a woman who desires to please God above all else. I want him in the center of my marriage, my family, and my life as a full support, not just a piece of who I am. I want to help and love and care for others not only because it makes me feel good, but because I want to give back to God with all that I am, because I recognize that he has created me to be this way. He is the reason that I am, and the reason I am what and who I am. My identity is not found in myself, but in the new creation that He has made me to be.

Amber Ward – Testimony

I came to faith in Christ when I was nine years old. During my walk I have had times when I trusted the Lord and times when I have gone off, to my detriment, in my own direction. Even in times when I lived a life as far as I could get from Christ, and tried to replace him with other things, he was always pursuing me. It is always amazing for me to look back in my life and to see the places that God has been working!

I have also had the privilege to serve on the worship team at Church on Mill for a long time. I am grateful that God has made a way for me to use my skills and talents for his Glory. I could have never foreseen that this would be how I would be using my music education degree. It is also an opportunity to learn to rely on him more and more every single day. Over the past couple of years I have been serving the worship team in administrative and leadership rolls. Being in a position of leadership, and a place of vulnerability is completely out of my comfort zone. Every day I learn how much more I need the Lord, how unable I am to do things in my own strength, and am amazed at how he renews and sustains my joy in praising him.

There is something special about the way music moves us to worship, and helps us to internalize the truth of God's word. It is truly a highlight of my week, and as a deacon I hope to continue to serve and praise the Lord with you.