

## TESTIMONY



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### My Boring Christian Testimony

How I know it's nonetheless real.

**Megan Hill/ DECEMBER 31, 2014**

*The December issue marks two years since we launched Testimony, CT's back-page feature spotlighting stories of conversion to Christ. One of our most popular features, we've heard from ex-atheists, ex-Muslims, and ex-bank robbers, from football stars to LDS Church escapees to media pundits visited by Jesus in a Taiwan hotel. We celebrate both the dramatic and the normal, day-to-day ways Jesus reaches us, precisely because it is Jesus doing the reaching. In Christ, no testimony, including the following from Megan Hill, is unremarkable. — Katelyn Beaty, managing editor, CT magazine*

I have no memory of becoming a Christian. I didn't pray a prayer or walk an aisle or have a eureka moment. In fact, I don't remember a time when I didn't love the Lord Jesus. My Christian testimony—the story of how I came to faith—is downright boring.

I was born in 1978 and raised in Connecticut by godly Presbyterian parents. I ate my peanut-butter sandwiches with a prayer of thanks, recited answers at bedtime from the children's

catechism, and the songs I remember my dad singing to me invariably were from either the Beatles or the hymnal.

But mine was not merely a private religion. Church life shaped the weekly rhythms of my childhood. The Sunday school teachers and eventually youth group leaders reminded me by their very presence that other people love Jesus, too, and we sang “Amazing Grace” (I can think of three different versions) together.

To this day, many of the Scripture verses I keep in my mind and heart are from the King James Version, a sign that I memorized them early in life, before copies of the New International Version appeared in my church’s pews. To me, John 3:16 will always be a child’s linguistic challenge: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Everything important to know in life, I embraced by age 3 or 4. God my Creator, Jesus my Savior, the Spirit my Helper, the Bible my rule. To someone who didn’t come from a Christian home or grow up in the church, this probably sounds lovely. But it took me most of my life to appreciate just how extraordinary was the grace I had received in ordinary circumstances.

In fifth grade, I began to attend a school where dramatic testimonies were a regular part of morning chapel. Week after week, speakers—a drug addict, a party girl, an atheist—told of God’s rescue. I loved these stories, and today I am thankful for revivals of such “testifying” in places like this regular feature of CT.

In retrospect, though, I’m not sure why the administrators chose to feature only the extraordinary. The pews, after all, were filled with church kids whose parents were committed to their religious education. I suppose such testimonies were meant to broaden our awareness of the world outside our youth groups; possibly the faculty wanted to encourage students who were struggling with sin or doubts. But I am baffled that I never once heard a testimony like my own.

And so I began to fear that I hadn’t really been saved—or, at least, that my story of being saved wasn’t quite legitimate. My before-and-after-conversion pictures (assuming I could even

pinpoint a particular moment) didn't look that different. With no outward markers of coming to Christ, I questioned whether I had at all. Perhaps I was floating on other people's convictions, happily living in a Christian environment without actually being a Christian.

If I didn't have a specific moment of repentance, maybe my repenting didn't count. I became convinced that my boring testimony was inferior.

### No Great Terrors

Nearly 250 years before my birth, the town in which I grew up, Coventry, was mentioned in the narrative of pastor–theologian Jonathan Edwards. In 1736, he recorded his observations of the Great Awakening, what he called “the *late wonderful work of God*, in this and some other towns in this country”:

There have been some who have not had great terrors, but have had a very quick work. Some of those who have not had so deep a conviction of [their sinfulness] before their conversion, have much more of it afterwards.

Like some of the New Englanders that Edwards described, my great terrors and deep conviction lagged behind my childlike faith. By the time I was a teenager, I knew my sins well. The old man in my heart displayed a shocking amount of wickedness: lusts and selfishness and idolatry. And I realized that if these sins, which I sincerely attempted to fight, were only the shudders of a defeated enemy—if these were not sin set loose but sin restrained—I could only imagine the extent of my offense before I came to Christ. As idyllic as my childhood seemed, I knew it was marred by nothing less horrible than my own sin.

Yet I was thankful for the church that had validated my testimony. In December 1989, I approached the elders of the church and asked to become a member. They, who had heard all kinds of stories from all kinds of people, declared my testimony to be a work of God. A few weeks later, I stood in front of the congregation and received the right hand of fellowship from those who had been lost but now were found. My testimony may have been boring, but it was welcomed.

And I was also thankful for grace. As Puritan preacher Thomas Watson wrote:

The Lord does not tie himself to a particular way, or use the same order with all. He comes sometimes in a still small voice. Such as have had godly parents, and have sat under the warm sunshine of religious education, often do not know how or when they were called. The Lord did secretly and gradually instil [sic] grace into their hearts, as dew falls unnoticed in drops.

**It is not the outward circumstances that are amazing. It's the grace.**

I knew that I had been blessed. I found tears in my eyes when, as a teenager, still sometimes doubting that my testimony was valid, I sang the words of Isaac Watts: "Why was I made to hear thy voice, / And enter while there's room, / When thousands make a wretched choice, / And rather starve than come?" But it still seemed a bit prideful, a little rose-colored, to stand up and say I was practically born with "Jesus Loves Me" on my lips and in my heart.

It wasn't until I became a parent, at 27, that I began to see that in all testimonies, it is not the outward circumstances that are amazing. It's the grace.

Tiny Rebels

I am giving my three sons the same ordinary Christian childhood that I had. Their Sunday school attendance charts are dotted with stickers; their minds are filled with memory verses and catechism answers. But without a doubt, each of my children is a rebel against the King. Whether they embrace faith tomorrow or spend hard years going their own way first, their salvation will be the work of amazing grace.

There is no dull salvation. The Son of God took on flesh to suffer and die, purchasing a people for his glory. As Gloria Furman writes, "The idea that anyone's testimony of blood-bought salvation could be uninteresting or unspectacular is a defamation of the work of Christ."

For myself, I cannot point to a specific day of spiritual awakening. I can point only to my Lord, who says, "All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away" (John 6:37). My Jesus, I come. Every day in need of grace. And I find myself not cast out.

When I don't tell my story, I deprive the church of what should be one of its sweetest gifts. Boring stories like mine are just what the church, especially its young people, need to hear. Testimonies of childhood faith have all the elements of God's amazing grace—beginning, middle, and end. And when I look at my children, I pray that their testimonies turn out to be just as amazing as mine.

*Megan Hill lives in Mississippi with her husband and three young sons. She blogs at [Her.meneutics.com](http://Her.meneutics.com) and [SundayWomen.com](http://SundayWomen.com). Go to [ChristianBibleStudies.com](http://ChristianBibleStudies.com) for "An Unremarkable Testimony," a Bible study based on this article.*