

The Light Unto My Path

**Personal Testimony
of Carrie Biddinger**

Saved June 24, 1997

My name is Carrie Biddinger. I was born on October 9, 1970, in Kokomo, Indiana to two loving parents, Mark and Carol Lowe. Beginning at about seven years old, they raised me in a Christian home. We were very faithful to a local Baptist church throughout my years living at home. At a young age around eight or nine I asked Jesus into my heart and was baptized, making me a member of our church. I really enjoyed going to church for the singing and fellowship especially. As a teen-ager I attended youth camp with our church. There were times the Lord would speak to me about my sin, but since I thought I was already saved I would rededicate my life to the Lord and dismiss the conviction.

In 1989, I began college classes at Cedarville College in Ohio. Because it is a Christian college, we were required to minor in Bible. I had many questions about God and would ask the professors for answers. I was surprised to find they didn't know much more than I already knew.

While living in Cedarville, I met my husband, Matt, and we soon were engaged and then married a year later on July 20, 1991. We immediately moved to the Ann Arbor/Detroit area of Michigan for Matt's career. We would have chosen to stay in Ohio so that I could finish school at Cedarville, but God had other plans and used Matt's work to move us in His paths. God led us to move our membership to South Side Baptist Tabernacle. It was here that I heard preaching on the requirement of repentance for salvation. God began showing me that what I experienced as a child was not real salvation. "For our gospel came not unto

you in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.” (I Thessalonians 1:5)

I watched Melissa, one of my closest friends, go through much seeking to find God. Her salvation experience was nothing to compare to anything I had seen before. The church held camp meetings in the summer where we met some great men of God that would help us in our journey through life, such as Brother Charles Shipman, Brother Jim Grapp, and Brother Tim Rutherford.

Once again, we would have stayed at this church if God did not have other plans for us, but He used Matt’s job to move us in His path. We moved to Los Angeles knowing that job would eventually put us in the Memphis area. Spiritually, we were miserable in Los Angeles, and I am so thankful we didn’t have to stay there any longer than eight months.

In March of 1995 we came to Memphis following Matt’s job. Within a month we joined Oak Crest Baptist Church in Frayser. After one year at that church, our rental home sold and we moved closer to Matt’s work in Olive Branch, Mississippi. We decided to follow one of the church’s members, Dan Hall, who became pastor of Victory Baptist Church, since it was much closer to our new home. I was feeling very unsettled in my life with all of the moving to different homes and churches in the last four years. We had our first child, William, during all of this moving. I was very empty inside but did not make it a priority to find God because of the busy days and nights in my life.

Then in 1997, we had our second son, Stephen. We began attending special meetings back at Oak Crest where Brother Doug McDaris was preaching. I could sense the power of God on him and his preaching. He spoke with much assurance on repentance and faith toward salvation. This is when God began dealing with me on a consistent basis. My heart would feel so heavy when the preaching focused on hatred and I could not understand why, because I thought I had repented and been saved a few years before when we lived in Michigan. I thought I surely didn't hate anyone. I had thought too highly of myself to see my sin. I saw many people, including my own husband, get lost during this meeting and heard their testimonies. It made me examine my own heart. I heard a friend's testimony about realizing she did not have the joy that one of God's redeemed should have. Again, I examined my life and saw it void as well.

On the evening of June 24, 1997, God once again gave me the opportunity to hear hard preaching on repentance and faith. The Lord spoke to me about my sinful heart and how much of a hypocrite I had been. You see, I grew up trying to measure up as a Christian, went to a Christian college, attended church faithfully, found a Christian husband (who was in the same boat that I was), taught Sunday school, sang solos and in the choir, but the whole time my heart was far from God. I wasn't sure about everything I was feeling, but I knew I didn't want to go home without finding a rest for my troubled mind and soul. I went to the altar and asked for help from the pastor. He showed many scriptures to me explaining what I was feeling inside. He helped me to see that the uncomfortable feelings of bitterness I fought in my heart toward anyone unlike me were rooted in hatred. God

kept showing me the wickedness of my heart. I John 3:15 says "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." My heart was heavy over the thought of the murders I had committed in my heart. I felt pains of separation from God. Since I had heard so much preaching on repentance I knelt and began to pray. I asked God to help me. I asked Him to forgive me for all of the hatred I had in me, and for each sin that was brought to my mind over the next several minutes. I was expecting some feeling to come over me once I repented, but actually I felt nothing at all. I never knew repentance was not just asking for forgiveness of certain sins in my life, but the turning away from whom I am, a sinner. Years later, I realized that this was the beginning of the peace God gives us. "No condemnation now I dread, I am my Lord's and He is mine."

The pastor continued to read passages of scripture to me, but I was focused on the Lord. The next scripture I remember him reading was I John 4: 11-13 "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." At that moment I heard the Lord reading that scripture to me, not the pastor. God gave me the faith to believe that this salvation was for me, not just a story. It was as if I wasn't in the church anymore, but with the Lord himself. All of those feelings I was expecting to have a few minutes before suddenly filled my soul, and it was the most precious time in my life. I knew that God loved me, not because of the songs I had sung and memorized, but because He revealed himself to me. Now I can say, "Thank you, God, for moving me away from family, friends, and

other churches, and leading me in Your paths so that I could find You!"