

# TERESA'S PERSONAL TESTIMONY

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Revelation 12:11 (Amplified Version)

**“And they have overcome (conquered) him by means of the blood of the Lamb and by the utterance of their testimony, for they did not love and cling to life even when faced with death [holding their lives cheap till they had to die for their witnessing].”**

Similar to having a relationship with friends and your family, a person can have a relationship with God and His son Jesus. How do I communicate with God and His son? I communicate with Jesus through prayer, the reading of the Bible, and through the Holy Spirit.

What served as the foundation of *my* quest for a relationship with Jesus? First of all, I did not know I needed a relationship with Him. I knew Him only as a historical figure in a similar way that I know about George Washington, the first president of the USA. So in essence, I did not choose Him but He chose me as He does with all of us.

I am so thankful for my parents because God used them to prepare me for Christ. Because of their Catholic background, going to church was very much a part of our life. They sent my brother and me to a Catholic school from 1<sup>st</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Their lives reflected biblical principle in all that they did. There was such a beautiful purity about them. When I think of someone in my life who exemplified biblical teachings, I think of my parents and, particularly, my mother. My mother was just an awesome lady. There were such rare qualities about her. She was a naturally beautiful person and even more so on the inside.

After high school, I went to a local secular college and was confronted with many different religious viewpoints. There were Buddhist, Hare Krishna's, and Christians. Every day on campus, I walked by those Christians and they would tell me “Jesus loves you.” I would be polite while walking by but refused to listen. College took me out of the sheltered home life in which I had grown up. This was a time in my life where the principles I was raised with were challenged.

After college (my major was business with an emphasis in accounting), I applied for Bank of America's management training program and was immediately accepted. After the training period

was over, which was about 18 months, I was assigned to Red Bluff, California as a loan officer to make agriculture loans. This was the first time I lived away from home. When I got to Red Bluff, it was not easy. First of all, I knew nothing about cows and my clients were men who did not want a woman telling them how to manage their business (cattle operations). One of the customers assigned to me was a young man whose family owned a small herd of cattle. Every time he came to my desk, he would talk about Jesus. Of course, he was my client so I would politely listen to him as we discussed business and Jesus.

My client invited me to a Bible study held by one of my fellow employees in their home. I went because he was cute and single. I was quite surprised to see everyone had a Bible because in the Catholic Church only the priests carried them. I will never forget a little boy there who quoted John 3:16 to me: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that who ever believes in Him shall not die but have everlasting life."* There was a Bible teaching and then they asked if anyone needed prayer. Someone who had one leg shorter than the other was asked to sit in chair and put their legs straight out. The problem was obvious. I watched up close while they prayed in Jesus' name and saw their leg grow out. It really amazed me. Then the people there started praying in an unknown language. The whole experience sort of scared me but also intrigued me at the same time. So, I continued to go back to the Bible study at the same home that met once a week on a Friday night and also continued to go to mass on Sundays.

Later, a traveling minister (an evangelist) was holding meetings, so I went to one of them with the people from the Bible study. The minister gave a message and then prayed for people. He called me out of the audience and laid his hand on my head and started to pray. It felt like he was trying to push me over, so I told God in my mind, "If you are real, the only way I will fall is by your power and not by the hand of a man." Because I did not fall over, the evangelist got upset with me and told me to stop resisting. However, the Lord knew I wasn't resisting His Spirit because of what I told Him.

I went back to the meeting another night and there was a call for people to come up front for those who wanted to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior. I got out of chair and went toward the front of the auditorium. As soon as I got to the front, the power of God comes upon me and I fall over (remember what I had told God at the previous meeting). Someone caught me from behind...it was a lady who had been Catholic but had received Jesus as her Lord and Savior. The minister, who was not near me at the time when this happened, asked for those who had accepted Jesus to be taken aside and prayed with. So this wonderful lady who caught me took me aside and spent some time with me. She asked me if I wanted to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit. I told her I was not good enough for that. Of course, in her wisdom, she knew you could not come to Jesus based on whether you are good or not.

The scripture says ... **“Since all have sinned, and are falling short of the honor and glory of God”** (Romans 3: 23). **“For everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord [invoking Him as Lord] shall be saved”** (Romans 10:13).

Relationship with Jesus is not based on merit but what Jesus did on the cross. Whoever believes in Him will have a restored relationship with God. So she prayed with me and I received that language that everyone had at the Bible study. This was heavenly—a God-given language as referenced in the book of Acts chapter 2. The whole evening was life changing. It was so supernatural and the revelation that “God is real” and that “Jesus is risen from the dead” just overwhelmed me beyond words. It was a life changing moment. All I could say was **“you are really real, you are really real.”** Jesus is not just a historical figure but he died and rose from the dead and is very much **ALIVE!!!!**

The night I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior was February 28, 1981. That was the same day as my father’s birthday so I will never forget the date. With all the excitement inside me, who could sleep? The presence of God was all over me.

The next day was Sunday, so I went to mass. I was so excited that I could hardly sit still. I just wanted to get up and tell people God is REAL!!! I sensed the Holy Spirit tell me to go speak to the priest at the end of mass. So, afterward, the priest was at the door greeting people as they left. I told the priest, “I feel like God wants me to tell you something.” He told me to wait until everyone leaves and he would speak with me. After everyone left, we went up to the front of the church. He sat down in the pew in front of me. While I don’t remember everything that was said, at that moment, the power of God comes upon me and my head tilts backward and the Holy Spirit speaks this through me: **“I am coming soon...and you told the people [in your sermon] trust Me, yet you doubt me now... my church is sleeping...”** Anyway, when it was over I lift up my head the priest face is ash white and he says to me, “Is it over?” I explained to the priest is that all I know is that I asked Jesus into my heart last night. He knew it was a supernatural moment and was just stunned. The power of God was all over me and could barely walk the whole day. In fact I had to lean on things to walk. Some people would have thought that I was drunk on wine or something.

The book of Act chapter 2:15 -18, explains what happened to me:

**“For these men are not drunk, as you imagine, for it is [only] the third hour (about 9:00 a.m.) of the day; (16) But [instead] this is [the beginning of] what was spoken through the prophet Joel: (17) And it shall come to pass in the last days, God declares, that I will pour out of my spirit upon all mankind, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy [telling forth the divine counsels] and your young men shall see visions (divinely granted appearances), and your old men shall dream[divinely suggested] dreams. (18) Yes, and on My menservants also on My maidservants in those days I will pour out of My Spirit and they shall prophesy [telling for the divine counsels and predicting future events pertaining especially to God’s kingdom].**

I continued to go to the Bible study on Fridays, mass on Sunday morning, and another church on Sunday night that understood what happened to me. I was in one meeting at the Catholic Church and some women there asked me why I was going to another church. I said that there is far more to Jesus than what I am being taught here. One of the ladies told me "I had lost the faith." I had not lost the faith for the first time in my life, no, I had really found *the* faith! Once Jesus became real to me than, I knew that the Bible was real and not just another old religious book.

One of my conversations with that priest that I had met earlier was about Creation versus the theory of Evolution. I told him I believed the Bible—that God created the heavens and the earth as it is stated in the first book of the Bible in Genesis. He began to tell me that I am an idiot and only stupid people would believe that. This priest believed in the theory of Evolution!!!! I was absolutely shocked. This priest was Irish and I found out later that a lot of them become priests in Ireland because it is considered a very prestigious and honorable position. The position of a priest in Ireland was esteemed like the way people look at the position of being a lawyer or doctor. It was all about appearance with no real conviction and relationship with God. Later at a meeting he told everyone there that he had never had a supernatural experience and is looking straight at me when he says it. Needless to say, I stopped attending the Catholic Church because I was hungry for so much more.

The Lord directed my steps and one of the ladies (she was a widow) at the Bible study I attended was a powerful woman of prayer. I learned how to pray from her and she saw that I was hungry for the things of God. During this time, Bank of America relocates me to Sacramento, California area. I became a consumer loan officer and was promoted to head of the Consumer Loan Department overseeing 10 branches. I felt the call of God on my life and He began to speak to me about more training. The lady who I prayed with had moved to Sacramento, California with me. She had also told me about a wonderful Bible college in Dallas, Texas called *Christ for the Nations*. I was so hungry for God that I applied got accepted and resigned from my position at the Bank of America. It was a step of faith but one of the best decisions of my life.

For two and half years I learned about my heavenly Father, His son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. It was one of the most awesome times in my life. I went on an outreach to Mardi Gras in New Orleans, Louisiana. We told people about Jesus as we ministered on the streets and the power of God healed many, causing them to believe in Him. People received that heavenly language. One example of an incredible incidence that happened on this outreach (and there were many) was when several of us went up to a group of beautiful young girls who attended a Catholic high school and were drinking alcohol from a cup. We talked to them about Jesus but were obviously not interested. Well, I asked them if we could pray for them and out of politeness said yes. We gathered in a circle and held hands. The Spirit of the Lord began to reveal to me that one of them had a brother that was sick. So, I spoke out what the Lord told me and one of the girls began to shake and her drink spilt out of her cup. She knew that there was no way I would know that. After that, those girls received Jesus and the baptism with the Holy Spirit (including that heavenly language) and also threw away their

drinks. They started crying tears of joy. Jesus at that moment had become real to them. Nothing else will satisfy.

Christ for the Nations is where I became acquainted with Gary, my husband. After graduating from there, I went with a team from Christ for the Nations to Jamaica to head up a Bible school there. From Jamaica, I returned to Eureka because my father was not well and my mother had passed away several years earlier. [I was still working for the bank when she passed away. A few months before she died, I had a chance to pray with her to receive Jesus as her Lord and Savior. It brought me much comfort with her death to know that she was with Jesus.]

I stayed with my father for a while and then returned back to Dallas, Texas and lived in alumni housing on the CFNI campus. I went to the same church as Gary my future husband and our relationship began. We were friends and I had a prayer meeting in my apartment every Tuesday. It was just three of us and we would pray for the nations. Anyway, from the time of him coming to the prayer meeting to us getting married was about 10 months.

We had an **awesome** wedding ceremony. Our wedding reception was done *Italian style* (without the wine). The attitude about wine in America is so very different from the Italian culture although I grew up with it in our house. People in America get drunk and become addicted to it like a drug. Therefore, most Christians in America do not drink alcohol because of what it represents to the American culture and the problems that come with it. People here often ask to be prayed for to be set free from alcohol addiction, drugs, and smoking cigarettes.

Gary and I got married November 23, 1991 and at the end of February 1992 I found out I was pregnant. In September the Lord began to speak to Gary about the name for a girl. We had a name if it was a boy but had not picked one for a girl. The Lord said to call her Grace Elizabeth (the name "Grace" means God's favor and "Elizabeth" means God's promise). Our precious daughter was born October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1992 at 4:45 p.m., weighed 5 lbs and 5 oz and was born 5 weeks early. The number 5 in the Bible speaks of God's grace.

As my husband would say, we have been on a journey with Jesus as the captain of our ship that will continue until we go to be with HIM.

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