

## RELIGIOUS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I grew up in a church where the gospel was preached, but I was always afraid that I might lose my salvation. I had an important conversation, though, with one of my pastors when I was about 10 years old, and he assured me of God's grace. I look back to that conversation as an important moment in my spiritual life, as I realized that salvation is not something I earn through my good works, but something that God has accomplished and that I receive through faith. I would consider this to be my most significant spiritual experience.

Because I recognize the need of God's grace, Christ plays a central role in my religious experience. In fact, as a Christian, I recognize that my salvation comes through a person, not a system of thought. So my spiritual experience is based on my encounter with Jesus Christ and my subsequent discipleship. All of my theological study is founded upon the person of Christ.

My faith in Christ affects everything in my worldview. Because "all truth is God's truth," we should not be afraid to seek truth in the arts and sciences, but in all things, Scripture should be our final rule of faith. As the Creator of all things, God does not see a contradiction between the various disciplines, and neither should we as believers. If we truly embrace God's sovereignty, our Christian faith should shape our perspective of the world.

In regards to life in the church, my spiritual gifts include teaching/preaching, discernment, and encouragement. For a decade, I have served the church in these areas, and I have been blessed to see God use my efforts to build up individuals and churches. It has been a humbling experience to be a part of God's mission in the world, and I look forward to seeing what God will continue to do.

I attend church for the purposes of worship, discipleship, fellowship, evangelism, service, and prayer. As a pastor in the local church, I hold the conviction that spiritual growth is best accomplished when individuals share together in community. In other words, we grow best when we are known and when we know others. As important as individual growth is for all of us, it is in the context of community that we realize our shortcomings and find the encouragement to change.