

My Story - Dr. Shawn E. Seitz

I grew up in a stable and secure household with absolutely wonderful parents. As a family, we attended a large church on Sundays and typically prayed before meals. I had bought into the idea that being a good person got you into heaven and believed most people were basically good; some just had bad breaks. I had also grown to believe in, “The American Dream,” that if you worked hard, you could have anything or become anything you wanted. That’s where joy came from. It made sense to me, and I had no reason to doubt any of it at the time. As a young boy I guess you’d say I was content, secure, happy and without worry.

As I entered the 5th grade, everything abruptly and unexpectedly changed. My father, who was my very best friend and role model for living, drowned in a duck hunting accident off the shores of Lake Erie in Michigan. He was lost along with a friend of his for an entire month before finally being found washed up on Canadian shores. At first, many people made attempts to visit us and to encourage us. But eventually they all did the same thing. They simply disappeared. In time there was really no one around us anymore; no calls, no encouragement, no assistance. I found it terribly difficult to make sense of. Why did God take my dad anyway? It was impossible to understand at the time, and although I didn't realize it until years later; the questions, the loneliness and the uncertainty I was experiencing all set me on a journey to restore some kind of meaning to my life. I began pursuing all sorts of things; but nothing I ever did or sought after brought me any lasting fulfillment. Everything ended the same way; leaving me either rejected, disappointed, or hungering for more. The “American Dream” I had grown to believe in wasn't working for me. I found myself becoming a slave to a number of unfulfilling appetites, and I increasingly carried around a burden of guilt over my disintegrating lifestyle and values. Where was I going? What was I doing? Why was I doing it? What was I looking for?

Though unaware of it at the time, I now know there was a heavenly Father who was looking out for me every step of the way. He was there reaching out to me even when everyone else seemed to have vanished. With consistent regularity He would send people into my life that seemed to have that something I was lacking. These were people who happened to talk about Jesus Christ in a way I wasn't comfortable with. They seemed at peace and victorious in their lives and alive in a way I couldn't pinpoint but could definitely recognize. Ironic as it may sound, I tried to avoid these people, thinking they were fanatics or perhaps involved in some sort of cult. But as hard as I would try I'd run into another one, and each time it would impact me a little further.

By the time I was in my mid 20's I had run into a number of people like this. An older missionary woman at a military airport in the Philippines, a young black man on an assembly line of an engine plant in Michigan, a young woman at an apartment complex I used to manage, and many more. As I began to consider it might be something more than coincidence I decided to go to church again (I had stopped shortly after my father had died) and began reading the Bible. It was around this same time that also I heard an evangelist on television, a preacher named Billy Graham. I had heard of Billy Graham before but never had the opportunity to listen to him, so I decided I would listen to what he had to say that day. As I did, many things finally began to make sense. For the first time in my life I heard a clearly articulated message about who Jesus Christ was and what that meant for me personally. Dr. Graham said we were created to be in fellowship with God and could only find true fulfillment in a right relationship with God. That’s what we were made for. He then went on to say all people had a significant problem, because all were guilty of breaking God's laws. I had no trouble acknowledging that truth in my life. It was the source of the guilt I carried. He went on to say that breaking God's laws eternally separated us from fellowship with God. As I listened, I knew that's what was missing in my life; I was made for God, but I was separated from Him by my disobedience, by something called sin. He then went on to explain that God, out of His great love, had

provided the way to have that severed relationship restored. That's what Jesus Christ came to do. God sent His only Son to die on a cross in my place and for my disobedience, to take away my sin and restore me to the Father. I realized then, that even if I were the only person alive that day, Jesus would have still come to die on the cross just for me. It was something very personal. That's love and concern for a person's wellbeing like I never understood before. A lot of people had seemed to abandon me in my life, but God never did. As I pondered these things, I was so cut to the heart that I began to cry as I realized that Jesus Christ personally died on the cross and rose from the dead victorious over the grave so I could be forgiven for everything I had ever done wrong and be perfectly and eternally restored in my relationship with Almighty God. God is the sole refuge where true fulfillment and peace comes from. There is no other. Dr. Graham said I needed to acknowledge my disobedience to God, turn from it, and ask Jesus Christ to come into my life as Savior and Lord, yielding my life over to Him. That's what I did. Since the day I was born, it was God working in and upon me to bring me to a point where I was able to make that decision. It was all His work.

That day I asked Jesus Christ to take over my life. (*"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."* John 1:12)

I remember feeling as if a large weight had been lifted off my shoulders. Over the next couple of years my life slowly began to change as I studied the Bible more (it's God's word to us), got more involved in a good church, and continued to surrender more of my life over to Jesus Christ. God was giving me a whole new set of priorities to live by. I increasingly found my life was no longer lacking significance or purpose, and I wasn't lonely any longer. I found myself to be finally at peace and more and more saw my life as being victorious because of Jesus. I realized I didn't have to be a slave to appetites any longer. Difficult times would come again but I now handled them differently. Jesus made all the difference in the world. I became a new person just as the Bible promises: (*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."* 2 Corinthians 5:17). I now have a personal relationship with God and I know I have the gift of eternal life. I owe it all to Jesus. I'll admit I had a rough time and a lot of questions at first but none were too difficult for God to deal with. He made me; He stood in the gap when I lost my father, He stuck with me while I walked aimlessly through life as a young man and never abandoned me; He called me to Himself and loved me enough to give His Son Jesus Christ to die in my place. That's purpose, that's fulfillment, that's victory, that's love, and that's joy. He's real, He loves you just like He loves me, and you can know Him too.

One of the descriptive names given for God in the Bible is "The Alpha and The Omega" (the beginning and the end). I thought it fitting to name Alpha Tech Pet, Inc. with this thought in mind. My first (beginning) desire for the business is to honor God in all of its' affairs and to continually give witness to the glory of God's Name and the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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