

Our times together one-on-one were exactly what I as a young Christian needed. Later I joined a Bible study at a friend's house where the truth of Christ continued to drastically re-shape my life.

Not only did God bring me closer to Himself with spiritual changes, He allowed for some further professional challenges. He not-so-subtly pointed out areas of my life which were not pleasing to Him. These life-wrenching experiences brought me still closer to our great God

Though I had known her for years, my wife and I did not begin dating until the Spring of 1989. I soon fell in love with her more deeply than I could have ever imagined. We were married on December 2, 1989. Our daughter Sara Ann Elizabeth was born the next September, and our son Richard Sterling was born December, 1992 and our son Matthew was born November 1994. God has blessed us in so many ways—especially through friendships and deep personal relationships. Over the years, many people have encouraged us in our Christian walk. Precious to both of us have been those times sharing deeply with mature Christians.

In 1995, I had a burden to help reach friends of mine in the health care profession. I remembered how effectively John Guest had communicated to me when I needed the Lord, so I thought it would be a good idea to have him to speak to my peers. Beginning in the summer of 1995, a group of friends with a similar vision gathered to plan a "Health Care Prayer Breakfast." On the designated morning late in February, 1996, over 600 men and women attended. Dr. John Guest gave a most powerful presentation of the Gospel.

Our two-fold goal was to encourage other Christians in the health care arena, and share the Gospel with those who did not have a personal relationship with Christ. WE were not disappointed.

That morning 130 people responded, indicating several kinds of commitments: some trusted Christ for the first time; others rededicated their lives; many signed up for small group Bible studies; some even offered their services for short-term mission work! The ongoing effect has been the establishment of three Bible studies in area hospitals since that breakfast.

God was yet to teach me about his providence. I had heard of terms like sovereignty and providence from the pastors in my church. On the night of February 20, 2011, my wife left church with my oldest son to prepare supper. Crossing the street together they were hit by a motorist. My wife did not survive the incident and my son needed surgery. Prior to walking on the street to assist this family, I stopped in the narthex of our church to pray for wisdom. As I approached the first victim in much darkness I realized it was my teenage older son. A bystander motioned behind her and said there is a woman who is in worse shape. As I walked over to her, I realized it was my wife. At that moment, I began a journey that took over four years as God led me to accept his providential working in my life. Romans 8:28 was etched into my soul. Many supported our family and many lessons were learned by believers and unbelievers. I knew that night at church that my wife went immediately into the arms of her risen Lord.

In his time, the Lord sent me a second blessing. She had been in our small group and had two college age girls. Cindi Taylor had a strong faith, a joyful spirit, and a humble walk with the Lord. I fell in love with her. We were married June 17, 2015 in a small chapel wedding. Cindi teaches kindergarten at Ben Lippen School. One of her life verses surely would be, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." Neh 8:10

Trusting God in any and every circumstance is a life long journey. It is important to God and he is constantly building "Faith" in his children. Cindi's children Addie and Ann are still living in Columbia. My children Sara Ann, Richard Jr., and Matthew are much stronger. I feel more and more that we have more links in heaven now than on earth. We are surrounded by a church triumphant. May we live each day to his Glory.



Rick McCain's Story

"For the past 25 years, God has been quietly transforming my life from a person filled with himself to one filled with Himself."

My inadequate life-plans were transformed into His purposes which have proven to be far more fulfilling, fruitful, and fun than anything I could have dreamed for myself. Dr. Rick McCain

I write this brief story to encourage you that God loves you and has a plan and purpose for your life. Here's what he did for me.

I joined the First Presbyterian Church in 1983 on returning to Columbia to practice Orthopedic Surgery. My future wife was a long time member of that church. Between 1984 and 1986 several significant professional, personal, and financial crises nearly devastated my life. These had the fortunate result of driving me to seek answers from God when I realized how powerless I was to handle such pressures.

Week by week I attended the services of our church looking for answers to my needs. I experienced an insatiable hunger for the Word of the Lord. In that environment, I soon found what I was looking for—the missing key—the foundation of my life. MY pastor's sermons began to touch me in a way I had never felt before.

During this same period, yet separate from any of my personal involvement, my future wife was growing up in this very church. Claudia herself had wandered far from the Lord. She also had tasted many of the world's pleasures. But her pilgrimage

Took a turn toward the Lord through the unfortunate death of her grandfather. It was then that she experienced her first truly personal encounter with our pastor. His compassion, mercy, and genuine interest in her welfare during this loss profoundly touched her heart.

It was during this time Claudia was befriended by a mature Christian woman. "Anne" in large measure loved my wife-to-be unconditionally and drew her into service in the church. Anne spent so much time with Claudia that she had no time for any of her old pursuits. This set the stage for both of us to be present that fateful weekend when John Guest came to Columbia

John Guest arrived in town in early April, 1986. I distinctly remember sitting in the church pew after a long week of work, listening to John Guest with his English accent preach the Gospel that Sunday morning. I didn't know much about him before then, but learned through his testimony that He had lived in the worldly domain as much as any sinner. Yet his love, relevance, and energy were contagious. He had an innate ability to communicate the love of Jesus Christ, something I definitely needed.

At the end of the message John asked if anyone wished to recommit his or her life to Christ. Perhaps hearing these words from a new voice, combined with my own particular malleability at that very moment, and the prompting of the Holy Spirit drew me across the threshold of committing my life to Christ.



What I didn't know then, but came to discover later, was that my future wife came forward the very next night to give her life to Jesus Christ. Many people before that weekend had told us about the love and truth of Christ, but in those meetings it was as if Jesus was talking directly to me. He came seeking me—as if I were the only one in the room! That weekend we both made our commitment to Christ and began our new adventure, which eventually led us to each other. Starting with Christ is one thing, but growing is a daily matter. It was mostly my associate minister who led me into a more mature relationship with Christ