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When I was 8 years old I made a profession of faith. I tried to trust in a really good feeling that I had in church one time, and if that wasn't good enough I trusted also in a time when I had prayed a formula prayer with a radio preacher. There was no salvation experience, no repenting of sin, no trusting in Christ. I had an intellectual understanding of words like "trust", "faith", and "believe", but none of them meant anything to me beyond that point. I was not out to deliberately deceive anyone, although I was, but I had wrapped myself in religious darkness and I was blinded by Satan in my own heart. I genuinely thought that I was a Christian. When I was faced with the truth that I was supposed to have a changed life after I got saved, I trusted in the fact that I no longer openly fantasized in my mind about certain areas of wickedness. I never had a hunger for God's word, although I sometimes read it. I never prayed except when called upon in family time, at meals, or in prayer meeting. There was just no life. The lack of personal evidence didn't bother me at first because I just enjoyed myself and didn't think about it. There was no thought of God in any seriousness, no battling with sin, no temptation by the devil, nothing that would in any way suggest that I was at all a new creature in Christ Jesus.

As I got older I began to have more and more doubts about my salvation. There was no complete assurance at any time, only fear and torment. The only times that I felt better was when I just didn't think about it. I began to try to grasp at anything that I could hold onto to assure myself that I was truly saved. I looked to men, words, feelings, experiences, logic, anything, but nothing gave me any real peace or calmness in my soul. For example, I took comfort in what a preacher had said about Satan making those that were saved have doubts,

but leaving the truly unsaved to themselves. So I reasoned that since I had doubts I must be saved, for why would they be there if I wasn't? If someone spoke of me as if I was saved then I would trust in that because surely they saw something in me that would make them think such a thing. Sometimes waves of despair would come over me and the only one that I could turn to was my dad. I would go and talk to him and talk to him hoping that he would bolster me up and give me something to trust or hope in, but there was nothing there. When I honestly thought about the life hereafter I realized that I really had no delight in going to heaven. I hoped that worshipping God would not be all that was done for I took no true delight in such things. I loved to hear preachers and Christians talk about other things that we would get to do in heaven besides worship God. I thought about meeting relatives and all the amazing things that we were supposed to be able to do up there, but I never looked forward to meeting the Lord Jesus Christ. When I really got honest with myself at times, I would assure myself that at least I had a 50-50 chance to make it into heaven given my profession and all. Then I would try to rid my mind of such thoughts for I knew that a Christian was supposed to have complete and full assurance of their salvation. When ever something in my life didn't match up with the way things were supposed to be, I wrote it all off as doubts that Satan was bringing to me. I never knew if the assurances that I had were from God or from Satan. I never knew if the doubts in my mind were conviction or from Satan. Whenever anyone said something that seemed to me to be questioning my salvation I was plunged back into doubts and fears and torments. I relied on what other people thought about my spiritual condition. If someone thought I was saved then that was just one more evidence that I was saved, wasn't it? My hope was shakily built on what was done and said and thought, but not on Christ.

When we came to Canada and I was to be baptized, my dad told me what kind of things would be happening and we had a little lesson about the significance of the whole thing. But there was no real meaning to me. I just accepted the facts and went on. Then I had to come up with a testimony. I had never given my testimony before or had told anyone besides my parents that I claimed to be saved. I had no testimony. My dad gave me some pointers on what was supposed to be in a testimony. I was supposed to say what sins I had been convicted of, so I told about my thought life, and added some more things to the list that seemed to have improved for the better in my life around the time that I had said I was saved. I told about what I had said to my parents, but there wasn't much else to put in a testimony besides that. After baptism I became more secure in my profession because I was

a member and all. Whenever I looked back on what was missing in my life I tried to think that I had gotten saved somewhere along the way and just didn't realize it. I just kept up the cycle of searching for the assurance that I longed for, to really know that I was saved and going to heaven. I read I John over and over because there were some tests there that were supposed to tell me if I was saved or not. So comparing myself by myself, I went through the tests and thought I was ok, but it never helped. All this went on until about two years ago.

When I was saved

One night in the spring of 2004 or 2005, God really and truly saved me. My dad was soberly speaking to someone to give diligence to make their calling and election sure, and I was listening. As I listened I was suddenly stripped of everything that I had or thought I had to hope in. I felt as if I was doing a freefall into hell and there was nothing to stop me, nothing to grab hold of, no one keeping me safe. At first I started to go through the routine of claiming assurance and trying to think about the things that I always leaned upon, but it did no good. Then I tried to pray. There was no answer, God did not hear. Then I thought perhaps there were some sins that I had yet to confess, for that was all I could do when I was in despair at other times. Then there began to come to my mind a train of sins of a certain kind throughout my whole life even when I claimed to be saved, things that I had thought of, things that I had looked upon, things I had longed to do, and even done. There I saw that I had no excuse. My mouth was stopped and I was guilty before God. Then I said: "God, if I am saved please forgive me, if I am lost please save me." and He did. There to my heart was the blood applied, glory to his name. I cannot praise my Redeemer enough for his great mercy to me in delivering me from my sin and deception and hypocrisy. What is different now? 2Co 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." I am trusting in Christ who saved me and his blood alone. No man can speak peace to my soul, I've tried that. No good works will ever give me assurance. Only the Lord Jesus Christ. I still sin, but God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Now I have Christ! The Holy Spirit witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God. Now there is life in my soul.

Some verses that mean a lot to me are Ephesians 2:12-17: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: [13] But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. [14] For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; [15] Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; [16] And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: [17] And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

Also I John 4:16-19: "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. [17] Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. [18] There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. [19] We love him, because he first loved us."

May Jesus Christ be praised!