

**MY PERSONAL TESTIMONY**  
**(For Receiving Christ as Savior and Becoming a Christian)**  
**John M. Stephenson; June 4, 1964**

At the time, 1964, I had a wonderful wife and family, and a good paying engineering job. We owned our home and were in good health. We had life pretty good.

One evening, I was sitting in my easy chair after all has gone to bed. I was collecting my thoughts and taking account of all our lives. We had great times as a family. But somehow life did not seem to make sense. It was not heading anywhere in the long term. I realized that I was planning my engineering work when I was taking my shower, getting dressed, driving to work, and even at the dinner table. I was what people call a company man. Why should I raise my son and family to have such a good life that in the long term that did not make sense.

Somehow I knew the answer rest with God and the Bible. I had gone to church periodically as I was growing up and went to college. I graduated from college in 1950 and took a job in Philadelphia PA. Near where I was living, I attended a church young adult group. We had fun and great fellowship, We played volley ball every Tuesday night. This group is where I met my wife Mary. This was a good time in my life about God and with close friends, but without the Gospel. Although generally we all believed in God, I never heard the Gospel preached, presented, or discussed. About this time, Mary and I got married in this Church in June 1956. I could not have a better wife.

The Philadelphia company where I was working had a study contract with a firm in the San Jose Silicon Valley Bay area in California for building satellites. As a team, we won the hardware contract and a group of us moved to California. Our job was to build the communications hardware for the satellite and ground terminals. This was 1957. This is when Mary and I with our first child moved to California where I now live. The engineering work was great and I got to travel some.

About 7 years after coming to California is when I begin thinking things over. This was now 1964. I decided to search out God and the Bible. I began to attend a nearby church for church services and a Sunday evening class. After church one Sunday, I asked the pastor for how one enters the Kingdom of God. He said that would be a good sermon for the fall. I came way believing he did not know the answer either.

About this time, an engineer came to California from across country and began to work for me. I was designing a phase-lock satellite signal tracking receiver, and he was an expert in stable local oscillators that were needed. He began to tell me about Christ and the need to be saved in God's Plan. At first, I was not interested. But soon thereafter, I visited him in his home for two consecutive Sunday afternoons after church. He was not a perfect person, but he had an outlook with God that was different than others around me. I asked him many-many questions for why we were on the earth, what God wants us to believe and do, what the future will be, and where we go after we die. What was God's overall plan for people? He described the sin problem and what Christ did for us on the Cross satisfying God's Justice for sin. He should me every answer to my questions in the Bible. I had never seen anyone ever do this before. I learned much on these two visits.

At this time, he made an appointment with his pastor for me. He was the pastor of the new church Mary and I were attending and where he and his wife was attending. I came to the pastor with one question. How does John Stephenson enter the Kingdom of God? He very patiently spent 1 1/4 hours with me answering all my questions. He presented much information all from the Bible. He

told me what the Bible said about sin and what Christ did to satisfy God's Justice for our sin. And that we needed personally to receive Christ by faith in what the Bible taught and pray to activate that faith. It seemed that God's love for me was coming strongly through and I was convicted of my sin. I was not so much sorry for my sin, but it became very clear that it was wrong, and I must in time depart from it as God would lead and help me. I needed a changed life. This is called repentance. So with God working strongly in my heart, I knelt down and prayed to God and received Christ as my Savior. I became a Christian. I learned later that this pastor kept his Church board waiting a full hour while he was talking with me. He had a board meeting that night. He had initially planned to spend only 15 minutes with me. But no one spends but 15 minutes with me with the questions that I ask. The next Sunday morning I walked down the aisle to the front of the Church showing publically that I had received Christ as my Savior. A few weeks later, I was water baptized giving my self to serve God and as a public testimony. My wife Mary came to believe two weeks after I did and received Christ as her Savior. This happened after she heard a sermon on the vine and the branches. Now Mary and I both were Christians. We began to share Christ with our four children as they were growing up. They all became Christians.

When I became a Christian, I made four commitments to God.

1. I would go all the way with God even if no one else did. (I wanted His best and live in a sense of excellence before and with Him. My ways were not working.)
2. I would use only the Bible for my life's direction. (This is God's only authority. I began to study the Bible in depth-breadth.)
3. I would present myself as an instrument of righteousness and as a living sacrifice to God daily. (I would give up my life for His.)
4. I would attempt to restore any lost fellowship with God, my family, and people before going to bed and to sleep at night. I would confess my sin to God. I would ask my family and others (by phone) for forgiveness, admitting wrong.

My engineering friend's wife said that our coming to the Lord was the best thing that happened to them while they were in California. They only spent two years in California. I believe that God brought them across country just for us so that we would be saved.

I then began to study the Bible many hours per week mostly in the morning before going to work. I began to read many books on the Bible and write many papers on Bible topics. I began to walk by faith. I went to Bible classes and worked in Bible Study Fellowship for five years. My Mary did also. Then I accepted teaching jobs in the adult Sunday School. As a result I learned the Bible quite fast and I began to witness the Gospel to many as I traveled. (You might now read my document "*Next Steps*" after you become a Christian. Much of my life is in this document.)