

Lighthouse Testimony - Jacob Garringer

I have known about the existence of God and Jesus Christ for as long as I can remember. Whether it be learning as a young child through multiple grandparents like my Mammaw Gayle, Pappaw Chuck, Grammy Lu and Pappy Henry, or Pappaw Dan; whether attending VBS in the summers as a child, or by doing my best to listen in on Easter services or Pappaw Chuck's stories of Christmas during those holiday observations, I have at least known *of* His existence and what the Lord means to others in my family through my childhood. My own journey with Christ, however, did not really grab a hold of me until later in my life.

As a man originally born extremely premature, I feel blessed to even be here in the first place thanks to the medical miracles by the doctors from when I was a newborn to the prayers brought by my family and answered by the Lord. Looking back, I had taken many of those blessings for granted as I went through childhood and high school, not understanding the weight they had and still hold. Whether that was being able to practice driving, receiving rides to places like concerts and bowling practices, or even just the ability to spend time with the people that meant so much to shaping the person I would become as I entered adulthood. As I was finishing both my high school education, as well as my bachelor's degree in Film from Bowling Green State University, the Lord had brought two of my aforementioned grandfathers, Dan and Chuck, home with Him through heartbreaking ways...

I had lost two huge figures in my family life that were more than just people that drove me places to get where I needed to be, but guides on how to be a man and learn from Jesus how to act as a leader: firm in command, but kind and gentle in understanding, mercy, guidance, and aid. The grief hit hard many days through my college career with one passing in 2017, and as I entered my next chapter while moving to Xenia in 2021. I began struggling to find consistent work, here and there having to work two jobs to just make enough hours and wage to cover my bills, and felt as though I was leeching my

family along with that instead of doing the right things. I'd lost my family dog, just adding more grief to the pile that turned me to sinful habits and vices which made me feel so lazy and not worth growing out of the rut I'd found myself in. Through overconsumption of alcohol, to rotting in bed instead of being productive and focusing on just myself...So, I asked God to guide these next steps; I'd confessed that overtop of the help I had been receiving from others, that it was His I needed more than ever. That next January with prayers through tears, I came to Christ and was given a devotional from my grandmother to aid in practicing daily habits with the Lord.

I was invited to Lighthouse around Christmas of 2025, which Mammaw had been attending shortly after her own invitation earlier that year. Everyone here has been fantastic, whether I'd met you from outside church, known you well before, or have yet to meet many of you, this place has felt like a true church home in both sense of community, and in the way Pastor Josh's sermons can further my spiritual growth by the manner in which he preaches. Simple, factual, straight from the Word in a manner that we can all relate to and understand. Not too far behind that, I had finally been given a blessing in the form of a career change, going from working mainly food service and retail work, to far more consistency in hours and wage through office work and dispatch for my stepfather's HVAC company here in town. These gifts of community I truly believe have been blessed upon me by the forgiveness the Lord has given me, and by the faithfulness of family members who both have passed and are still here. I am prioritizing better, healthier habits and caring for others more thanks to the Lord's help. Now, I feel stable in all facets of my life at the moment: financially, socially with family and friends, routines have gotten better, and now I know that I can and will turn to Christ the next time I am at a fork in the road. Has it been perfect? No, not at all. Yet, that's why I've turned to Jesus...through His forgiveness, my repentance, and His guidance, I keep moving and looking forward to what the Lord has for me next, and know that the Holy Spirit protects me along the way.