

## **Mark Kowalski Testimonial**

Hello! My name is Mark Kowalski. I was born in the mid-80s in Poland and grew up there till I was seven years old. I'm the middle child of three and my parents have been married for about 45 years now. I was raised Catholic at a young age. Growing up Catholic in both Poland, and the US shaped my childhood a great deal including my views on religion and faith. While my parents instilled Catholic values and traditions in me, I didn't really have a deep connection with the Lord growing up. I viewed Church and prayer as more of the checking off the box thing than developing a connection. This really didn't change till after college when I started to explore and question my faith.

I got married in 2014 and in 2016, my daughter Evey was born. As many parents can attest, being a parent changes your life, and I love the journey of fatherhood. Even at a young age, Evey had a passion for her faith, and we worked on developing our faith together. Sadly, I got divorced in 2018. But the experience showed me that I need the Lord's help and that I could only get through this situation with the Lord's help. Reflecting on that time in my life, I believe that is when I surrendered by life to the Lord and became saved. With the Lord's grace, I face the challenges of being a single parent who balances parenting, work, faith, and the many challenges that life throws at us.

Every church I've ever attended as a Catholic just seems like a business and a place where people are just checking off a box. It didn't seem to resonate past the short time on Sunday or the holidays. Although my parents worked hard to instill religious beliefs in me growing up, I knew something was missing. I realize that I followed Christianity a lot closer than I ever did Catholicism. I attended Bible activities with friends during and before college. I understood how damaging sin was to my life and felt

like I was lost in a forest. I wanted a stronger faith and to put God at the center of my life. But could not find a way out of the forest.

My daughter and I attended a church in Troy. Although we both enjoyed the church, something seemed off about it to both of us. I spoke to Shannon Tighe about my concerns about the church and she invited us to Lighthouse. Attending Lighthouse felt like coming home and has been transformational for both of our faith lives, and we cannot be more grateful. Prior to coming to Lighthouse, I very rarely read the Bible or knew exactly how to get out of that forest I spoke of earlier. Since attending Lighthouse, the Lord Jesus Christ has transformed my life. The fears that I had in my past about money, situations or anything else I've handed over those fears to the Lord and I'm much happier for it. I'm almost daily reading or listening to the Bible. I have strived to be an example of my faith in all parts of my life. Since surrendering my life to the Lord, truly believe that the Lord has put a close friend of mine into my life to help me with my journey. She leads a strong faith-based life and watching her has helped me to grow in my faith. I have also been able to connect with co-workers and others about our faith.

I want to thank Shannon Tighe for inviting Evey and I to Lighthouse. I want to also thank Paster Alex for meeting with me on Saturdays and guiding me through the Foundations journey. Finally, I want to thank the Lighthouse family for always making Evey and I feel so welcome!

The passage I have selected is:

Psalms 91 v1-2

The one who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. The Lord is my refuge and fortress.