**Filled with the Spirit, My Story!**

I was born into a Christian home as the son of a Pastor. Our life totally revolved around the church and its activities. But as a teenager I greatly rebelled and was well on my way to rejecting Christ to be in my life.

As I look back on my life in retirement, I am amazed at the way God has worked in my life. While I do not regard myself as special, I do recognize that I have had unique experiences that many others have not had. One was an experience of salvation that can only be described as a crisis in my life. While I have not as a local church pastor required others to have a crisis that I experienced, I know that it was exactly what I needed at that time, and hope others would find what they need.

The same thing is true in what I refer to as another crisis: my entire sanctification—a filling with the Spirit that changed my life. And again, it has not been my goal to lead others to the same experiences or circumstances that I encountered, but that they would be filled with the Spirit in each person’s own, individual way. The question has not been for me, how does your experience compared with mine, but does the Holy Spirit dwell in you and control your life?

For me, I had accepted Christ as my Savior on the second Sunday of June in 1959 and had become a faithful follower from that time on. In High School, and later at Pasadena College, I was a leader in various Christian circles and well-respected among my friends who were almost all followers of Christ.

In January of 1965, I was in a very popular college quartet singing every Sunday in churches and often at special services and occasions that would request for us to come. It was in one of these churches, the Riverside Arlington Church of the Nazarene, that our quartet came and provided the music for a Monday night revival service.

As I now remember, we sang six songs, and the last one was one of our favorites—“O how I love Jesus”. The song ended with a solo from me singing those words as the quartet sang, “to me, it’s so wonderful,” in harmony behind my solo. All went well, the crowd seemed to be very pleased, and the quartet went down to sit with the congregation.

But I no more sat down than the Holy Spirit began to ask me, “Do you really love me?” Like Peter in John, chapter 21, I tried to say to Him, “Surely you know that I do!!!” But the Spirit continued to press the issue—“If you love me, then why won’t you let me be Lord of your life?” (Who is going to choose the one you will marry? Who is going to choose where you live and what you do?) All the questions kept coming to me, and I could see that if I loved Him like I had just sung I did, I had to **deny myself** **the control of my life** and give Jesus that control!

One of the hardest things I have ever done in my life was to be the first one at the altar that night when pastor Herman Burton began to invite people to come. For me, it was a total surrender of pride to what people might think about me or what the college might think, or whatever. I needed to settle who was in control, and I did that night.

As I look back on that night, that decision, it has made a huge difference to my life’s choices. Within a month I began to date the woman who became my wife. (Anyone who knows me would say that was the best decision of my life, except for following Christ.) Within six months I received a call to ministry that has been so much better for me than my plans, as well as for Christ’s kingdom, than the plans I had for my life. One month later I was serving on staff at my first assignment—a job I didn’t apply for but was so helpful in my development and future. I write this to hopefully be a witness of how important it is for everyone to not only follow Christ, but to allow Him to be their Master as they follow…allowing Him to be in control of the decisions and choices they make. I know it is scarry—but it is what we all need.

A song from Calvary Chapel in the 1970’s says it all as far as I am concerned: (sung by “Love Song” praise team)

*I’ve been sittin’ in the front seat,*

*Tryin’ real hard to be the driver.*

*Thinking I was making real good time,*

*And always ending up a “late arriver.”*

*But now I’m sittin’ in the back seat,*

*I’m leavin’ all the driving to the Chief.*

*Whoa, whoa—sittin’ in the back seat,*

*Leavin’ all the driving to the Chief.*