

Lovin' Life Welcomes Returning Member Bobby Jackson

Bobby Jackson

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I joined the church in 1987. I left in 1988, and then I re-signed membership in 2009.

I was born in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, but I've lived in Mobile, Alabama most of my life. I had a pretty rough childhood. My mother and dad divorced. I lived in and out of foster homes, and once I graduated from high school, I was a mess. I guess I was looking for something, just like everybody else was. And the church seemed to fill the empty space for me.

I went to work for Master Marine, a church business that builds ships and does boat repairs in Bayou La Batre. I was in maintenance there, and my spiritual father, Karl Zambon from Bridgeport, was my boss. I was in an upstairs room one day, and I just happened to find boxes full of copies of the *Divine Principle*. I briefly read through one of them so I could get an idea about it, and then I asked my spiritual father about what he believed.

It was about a year later that I joined the church. He started teaching me the *Principle* in 1986, and I became a member in 1987. He took me to workshops. I went to one in Mississippi, then a 21-day workshop in California.

I think the idea for me was to go onto a fundraising team or something like that once I finished the workshop, but I had some intense allergies and had to come back to Mobile. So, when I came back, I went to work for International Oceanic Enterprises (IOE), a church-owned seafood business. While I worked there, I met Robert Finamore. He liked to play basketball and work out, and I was one of those exercise fanatics back then, so we spent a lot of time together. I felt pretty close to him.

“God Sent My Wife to Rescue Me”

In all honesty, I left the Unification Church because of a woman. She was a secretary at one of the church businesses. I wound up marrying her, but we divorced three years later. When I came back to life in the church, I started asking myself, what would have made me stay in the church? But, I was just a basket-case. I mean, I had a lot of issues that were unresolved. I think my brothers and sisters were trying to nurture me the best they could, I just wasn't cooperating. I had many opportunities; I just didn't take them.

When I married and left the church, my spiritual father would sometimes come visit me for dinner. From time to time, I'd also meet with Robert and we'd go canoeing together, or spend time with his family. That ended about two or three years after I left the church, by my own choosing. Because of the life I was living, naturally I didn't want my brothers and sisters in the church to see the state that I was in.

I don't want to paint a totally negative picture about the years between the time I left and the time I returned. I was a very responsible person, and I took responsibility for my family, especially my mother. Not only that, I wound up taking care of my brothers- and sisters' children. I worked and made a living, just like everybody else does.

But I was a very secular person. I actually lived a life of drugs and alcohol, before I joined the church and after I left. I finally came to a point when I was about 43 or 44 years old, where the drinking and the drugs affected my health. My mother got sick, and I had a business, and it seemed like so much pressure. It just got to be more than I could handle, because of the way I was living my life.

While all this was taking place, my wife, Bay, came into my life. We met in 2007 through my business; I've been in auto-repair business for over 25 years and I've owned my own repair shop since 2006.

Can I just tell you this? God sent my wife to rescue me. If it wasn't for her, I'd be a dead man right now. That's my testimony. Within six months, I had quit drinking and doing drugs, and began to turn my life around pretty rapidly. I married her in 2009.

Finding a Path Back to the Unification Church

Believe it or not, I came back to the church because I started reading the Bible. I started to realize that the Bible wasn't enough, so I pulled out the books I had acquired years back, when I was in the church. I started reading these old books, including the *Principle*, as well as some books written by Paul Werner.

I spent the entire year of 2008 reading, praying, and doing a lot of crying. I realized what I had done, and I realized again that True Father was the messiah; I had convinced myself that he wasn't over the years. When I realized with a more mature mind who he was, there was a lot of grieving and a lot of sorrow for the simple fact that I knew I'd wasted 21 years of my life.

I started going back to church on God's Day, 2009. I looked up Robert's number up in the telephone book and gave him a call. He welcomed me into his house with open arms. Next thing you know, I'm attending Lovin' Life Ministries regularly, and six months later I re-signed.

It's been almost two years, and I'm not going to lie, it's been a living hell since I re-joined. I've read many of Rev. Moon's speeches, and he said that people who leave the church and come back have hell to pay, and I can attest to you, that is the truth. But if you persevere, you can begin to see how God is really working in your life, and how easier things become if you just cooperate with the good spirits that are in you. It just makes a world of difference. There are still a lot of difficulties for me. But the last few years, it's gotten easier as time went by.

To begin with, I thought I was going to go crazy. I suffered from anxiety and fear, and I put down the alcohol and drugs around the same time I re-joined, so I'm pretty sure my body was going through some crazy changes.

But the upside is that I'm beginning to prove God's love to myself every day. When I came back, I promised God that I would never leave again. And I'm still here after two years. I tell God every day that I'm going to continue for the rest of my life seeking out who the real Bobby Jackson is, and help some

other people find God's love along the way.

I met In Jin Nim a couple of years ago, and I'm really inspired with what she's doing with Lovin' Life Ministries. I want to do anything I can to contribute to Lovin' Life. It's helping me become a better person.

Using Business as a Witnessing Tool

I dedicated my business to God. As a matter of fact, I heard one of Hyung Jin Nim's speeches a few years back, he said, "we need to let people know who we are." He had that big necklace with the 12 Gates Symbol on it, and he said, "We need to quit hiding who we are." When he said that, it inspired me to go out and have those logos made and put on the sign out in front of my shop.

I give out autobiographies to my customers, those that'll take them. I use my business as a witnessing tool, and it's been very rewarding the way I've used it. I committed my life to this business, because I'm really good at what I do, and it's a valuable tool for me. It's an opportunity to have good contact with the community I live in, and I'm beginning to see that in the past couple of years that I have a big influence because of it. People are beginning to show me a lot of respect.

Word goes around town; people say things like, "Take your car over to Bobby Jackson's because he's a good, honest, Christian man," and I never heard anything like that spoken about me before. I would just like to say to anybody in the church and has a business, that there's definitely nothing wrong with using your business as a witnessing tool. I don't just bring people in and work on their cars and take their money, but I have good relationships with about 90 percent of my customers. So, it's been an uplifting thing, not just making us a living, but it's also an inspiration.

My wife believes that True Father is the messiah even though she is Buddhist. We're hoping to be Blessed, but we both have to be ready for that.

I would like to thank Marion Porter who took me under her wing. She took me to many workshops and spent a lot of time taking care of me. She is now in the spirit world. I would also like to thank Teresa Yamane for making it possible for this testimony to be published.