

## My Journey to God...

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My first awareness of God came when I was a child. My father was a cattle rancher in the Sandhills of Western Nebraska. I can't remember how old I was when I found a bible in the upstairs attic of our 2 story frame house. I was 2 years old when my family moved from the sod house to the 2 story frame house. I don't know why I was curious about what was in the attic, but I decided to find out. I climbed up into the attic and found a big wooden trunk. I opened the big lid and rummaged through the stuff and found a small bible among other things that my mother had stored there.

Jumping forward to my 95 years of being on this earth I sometimes wonder how God made me aware of Him. When I picked up that bible for the first time and leafing through it reading a verse here and there, not knowing or understanding what they were all about, I didn't realize at the time but my God-given curiosity kept me wanting to know more. As time went on and reading the Psalms I realized that I am a creation of God ... Psalm 139 says I am fearfully and wonderfully made ... marvelous are Thy works and that my soul knoweth it well... God also knew me when I was in my mother's womb... Psalm 139:13 (He covered me in my mother's womb)... If God knew me that intimately He would give me a path to Him!

My parents lived a life to be patterned after. Although the bible wasn't talked about in our home... but morals were... no liquor was allowed in the house... no bad language, no foolin' around, good morals were instilled in all us. Of course living out in the country we had no close neighbors to influence us one way or the other. Our neighbors were ranchers like us and didn't live close.

We had a community Sunday School that met the first Sunday of the month. They met in each other's homes. The Sunday school superintendent would bring Bible stories to read to the children. Sometimes a preacher from a nearby town would come and preach. We always sang hymns. I learned so many of the old hymns that teach us so much about the Lord Jesus. How precious they are! Through these meetings we got acquainted with our neighbors and made friends.

After high school, and moving to town and getting married, I started going to church with my aunt and uncle. As the kids came along I always had them in church and Sunday school. Going along with the denomination

my aunt and uncle went to, the message was, "You believe in God and do good works and treat people the way you would like to be treated". That is a great way to live a good life but that is not the way of salvation. There are several verses of scripture that tell us that we cannot work for our salvation.

The first word we must consider is "believe". Seek you first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you (Matt.6:33) As the years go by and going to church with my bible under my arm and that, Yes, God loves me and I am a "good" person but no "in depth" bible study, my bible went back on the shelf to collect dust until the next sunday. I had many struggles through the years and needed help so desperately. When I was at the end of my rope I called a pastor of a church that my daughter Nancy had attended with a friend from high school. She came home witnessing...saying I needed to be saved. I rejected that for a while but as my problems grew impossible to deal with, I made the phone call. Sitting in the church office of Santa Susana Baptist Church I gave my heart to the Lord. Dear Pastor Larrabee explained to me that I needed to repent of my sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 3:16) Being a good person had nothing to do with salvation. (Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy He saved us.) In fact I learned I wasn't a good person, I was a sinner.

When I read James 1:2 where it says, "Count it all joy when you fall into trials", well, I didn't feel joyous when trouble came, but I soon realized that without trials I wouldn't need the Lord. Thank God for trials!

After all these years of reading the scriptures and listening to teachers and preachers on TV, I know I am a follower of Jesus. Every day I open my bible and report for duty. My journey continues with faith in Jesus and will continue through my children when I am gone.

Praise His holy name.

Thank you all so much for coming to my party. I love you all so much!

Jean