

## Faithful Endurance

When I was in grade 3, my best friend's Grandma always referred to me as "that nice little Christian girl". I kind of took pride in that. **I lived for making my parents proud, and obedience was something unquestioned.** I guess, deep down I took pride in that, too, even though I often felt like I was in a very small minority. What put me in an even smaller minority was my Christian upbringing. The name Jesus meant something completely different to me than it did to my friends. When they heard it, it was usually an expression of disgust or frustration from adults. To me, it signified the reason I was going to heaven someday.

### Rebel without a cause

In my teens, I began to envy some of the freedoms my friends had. In an attempt to be more independent, I allowed myself to be influenced in a few ways. **I rebelled in the way I dressed and spoke, and I watched shows and listened to music that portrayed ideas that were in sharp contrast to the morals I had been taught.** Somehow "that nice little Christian girl" had lost its ring. In hindsight, I can see that what I really wanted was freedom from my conscience, not from my parents. I still worried about disappointing them, because I knew they trusted me. I started to think about what kind of person I wanted to be. The "majority rules" were more popular, but I missed the warmth I had once felt in my life.

### The Father's pride and joy

Fortunately, I had some Christian friends, too. On May 15th, 1989 my cousin took me to see a Christian concert. **When they gave an invitation for people to dedicate their lives to God, it was overwhelmingly clear that God was asking me personally to decide what I was going to do.** I could continue doing things my own way, or try things His way. I thought about it as hard and fast as any person can think in 60 seconds. Then I took a deep breath and said, "OK Lord, I choose you. Take control of my life, and all of my bad habits." **In that moment, I changed.** It's hard to describe, but I had never been so happy in my life. I had a new-found self-discipline, and I suddenly wanted to pray and read my Bible everyday. It felt so good to be living a life that was pleasing to God.

### His faithfulness endures forever

In the past 10 years, I have experienced life. **I've lost people who were close to me; I've gone through times of spiritual questioning and personal struggles. On the other hand, I married an incredible guy, I have the greatest family and friends in the world, and a wonderful church family.** God has provided me with opportunities to share my faith with people all over the world, and in all this time, **He has never stopped keeping the promises He gave me** in His word. Now, I think to be referred to as "that kind Christian woman" would be the greatest compliment I could ever receive.

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