

# From Resistance and Prejudice to a Tremendous Transformation

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Looking back, I have been on this path of faith for over 10 years. Praise the Lord, for his joy is always in my heart. I would like to share my experience of how I came to the Lord. May the Lord be glorified in everything, as he should be.

## **Disdain and Hostility**

Before I knew God, I considered theism to be extremely foolish. I strongly believed that I was an atheist and a Marxist (though I didn't truly understand what Marxism was at the time). My original impression of religion was from textbooks and my own observations of life. The late Qing Dynasty that was described in my high school textbooks was very corrupt. Its rulers sought after many gods and used superstitious methods to rule the country. Because of this, the people suffered greatly, and the nation was in grave danger of collapse. I believed that the root of the decline was the ruler's superstition and religious beliefs, and so I detested religion.

I agreed with Karl Marx's saying, "Religion is the opium of the people,"<sup>i</sup> and believed that this kind of opium would corrupt people's soul. At the time, I thought one's soul was similar to one's mental health.

Among all religions, I detested Christianity the most. I thought that Chinese Christianity was a product of the Opium Wars, a kind of cultural invasion, and a tool used by Westerners to rule the minds of the Chinese people. The moment Christianity came to China, it was associated with the nation's shame. Affected by this view, I naturally treated Christianity as an enemy.

In my hometown, Buddhism was very popular, and most of the Buddhist believers were old people. On festival days, every family would visit Buddhist temples and burn incense. Of course, I was unwilling to go along. But under pressure from the elders in my family, I had to go with them. Still, in my heart, I thought they were quite foolish.

In short, I despised religion and was hostile towards it.

During college, an upperclassman shared the gospel with me, telling me that there is a God. I was quite shocked to hear it because I didn't expect that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century there would still be people who believed in God. Later she told me that not only does God exist, but Satan (the devil) exists, too. This statement was even more unbelievable to me. I was scornful of her opinion. I loved using my debating skills and thought of all kinds of difficult questions to confront her with. A lot of the time, she couldn't answer my questions. This made me more certain that religion is foolish.

Although I was against Christianity at the time, one thing puzzled me. That is, my upperclassman friend who shared the gospel with me was gentle, kind, and loving, and she had a good character. She studied very hard and had good grades. Compared with other non-Christians, I'd rather hang out with her. And that was why I would listen to her when she shared the gospel with me.

### **Struggles in My Mind**

After getting to know each other better, she invited me to go to church with her. I went for the first time, and I was surprised that there were so many college students there. I was not amazed by God's power, but I was amazed that the minds of so many college students had been corrupted. I thought to myself, this power of religion must be controlled; otherwise, society will be in trouble.

While at the church, I couldn't understand what the pastor was preaching most of the time. So, I would just flip through the pages of the Bible during the sermon. I remember reading verses such as when the Lord spoke, the enemies' hearts melted, and thought such things were way too idealistic. If it were true, then why would nations go to war with each other?

After the sermon, a sailor shared his testimony. He said that at first, he didn't believe in God. However, one time he encountered a storm while sailing. He prayed to God saying that if God saved him from the storm, he would believe in God. Later, he sailed back safely, and thus he came to the Lord. I thought this was merely a psychological crutch. How could there be a God involved in this event?

After the gathering, I met with people in the church, and they were friendly enough. They asked me to leave contact information, and I left

my QQ<sup>ii</sup> number. They started a seekers' QQ group. In the following days, they daily shared faith-related information in the group, but I frequently shared news and current affairs in the group. Within a week, I was kicked out of the group by the group admin.

Another time when I was in the church the choir was singing a hymn named "Inviting Jesus to Be the King." The believers were very sincere and excited when singing it, but I was extremely angry. Why? Because China is one of the countries with the longest history of a feudal system. The Revolution of 1911 resulted in the emperor being dethroned. It took great effort to finally abolish the feudal system, and yet people here in the church wanted to invite somebody to be on the throne again. Did they want to restore the feudal system? How dare the church openly preach the idea of restoring the feudal system! The more I thought about it, the angrier I got.

Before I came to the Lord, I had a lot of mental struggles like this. Afterwards, my upperclassman friend invited me to go to church several more times, but I still didn't change my opinion towards Christianity. I said to her impatiently, "Please don't talk to me about this again. If I were to believe, then the whole world would believe."

I was like that for over half a year.

## **Overcoming Rational Obstacles**

A while later, my upperclassman friend was about to graduate. When she was on the train coming back to the school, she met a Christian who told her that there was a preacher near the college who preached very well. Seeing that I was not touched by the sermons in the church, she invited me to attend the Bible study that was led by the preacher. That night at the Bible study, I experienced the first turning point in my faith.

At that time in my college life, I was not doing well in school. I thought I worked very hard, and yet my grades were bad. I was depressed. I was the class monitor at the school, but I couldn't find a good strategy to handle things well. I had trouble carrying out the class monitor's duties and offended many people. When the preacher spoke about Proverbs 18:2 ("A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion."), it shook me, and I wrote this verse on a piece of paper. The more I thought about it, the stranger I felt. It was as if this verse had been spoken to me, and it precisely answered the questions that haunted

me. I had never talked about those problems with others, and I didn't think anybody could answer my questions. I never expected that I could find answers here.

I was so surprised. I knew the Bible was written thousands of years ago. How come the words in this two-thousand-year-old book were still so alive? I had thought that the Bible was just a book of religious doctrines, like the Koran or Buddhist texts, which were irrelevant to me. However, I didn't expect that the words in the Bible, as if travelling through a time tunnel, could touch me in such a miraculous way.

Later, after several interesting encounters, I went to a house church, and started to fellowship regularly in a teacher's home. The Christians I met were much gentler and humbler than the average person. They were very kind and loving—all of which helped reduce some of my prejudice towards Christianity. However, these weren't sufficient reasons on which to build my faith. Does God exist? Does he love me? Did Jesus Christ die for me? I wasn't sure, especially about that last question. I couldn't imagine that a person who died two thousand ago could have anything to do with me.

Therefore, I told myself, I needed to have a practical approach when seeking God. If God really helps me and I really experience his love, then I will say God loves me; but if I can't experience it, then I won't believe. If I personally experience and acknowledge from my heart that Jesus died for me, then I will admit that Jesus is my Lord. Otherwise, I wouldn't surrender.

I remember the teacher recommended a book called *Song of a Wanderer*, which greatly impacted me. Through this book, I was led into a whole new world. Inside it, I found many things that were familiar yet at the same time new to me. There were so many familiar scientists, whether from ancient times or modern times, whether Chinese or foreigners, who were all Christians! Then I explored the traces of God in physics, biology, thermodynamics, archaeology, philosophy, etc. From macroscopic areas to microscopic areas, I got the same answer: There is a God in this world!

I came to realize that faith in God is not foolishness, and that faith and science are not contradictory to each other. Those views dismantled my previous understanding of the world. I, therefore, started to actively seek. I needed to know if God existed in this world. I remember when I was in

a Marxist philosophy class, during the five-minute free talk time before the class started, I went to the podium to ask everyone, “Does God exist?” I talked about my research and thoughts, and then stated that I was inclined to believe that God exists. My classmates discussed the topic, and at the end of the discussion, the teacher gave a summary. She was a very responsible teacher, and she said she couldn’t say for sure whether God existed or not, and that Marxist philosophy was only a theory. During the following days, I did a lot more research, and discovered that all things are designed in an amazing way, and that their fine tuning implied a creator, a God, behind this amazing world.

After overcoming those rational obstacles, I needed to experience God personally. God is so magnificent, but he may not necessarily have anything to do with me. Therefore, during that time, I often prayed, “God, if you really exist, please do one thing for me. Then I will know you are real, and that you love me.” I often said those childish prayers, and God still had mercy on me and helped me in special ways.

Sometimes, I couldn’t feel anything when praying, and then I would say to God, “God, aren’t you listening to my prayer?” Every time I prayed like this, I would feel strongly moved, even to the point of tears. In the end, I set aside my pride, and came to God sobbing and in tears. I confessed my sins and started to enjoy the love and peace that God gives us when he forgives our sins. Thanks be to God; he didn’t rebuke my ignorance. Rather, he was like a kind father, helping me and guiding me step by step.

## **Tremendous Transformation**

During my junior year in college, I started to look back and think about the college life that I dreamed of having before I began. I discovered that my emotions and my state of life were going through cycles: I would be crazy busy for a period of time, and then for no reason, I would be very annoyed and anxious. At one time, I even thought about picking up my backpack and leaving this familiar environment for a place where no one knows me. This place could be in the mountains, or in the grasslands, or in a strange city. I just needed a quiet place for my soul. I needed to find a home for my heart.

In general, during the first few years of college, I was depressed. I remembered Bai Yansong<sup>iii</sup> once said that if he could relive a part of his life, it would be the four years of college. College years are considered to

be the most wonderful years of life. But if I couldn't even be happy in these "most wonderful years," then how could I expect to have a happy life?

Sometimes, I felt that I was strong, to a point that I could withstand any difficulties in life. Although I sometimes had empty and lonely feelings in my heart, yet I had a thick and tough shell as my cover, and nothing could destroy it. I told myself that I had to be a fighter, because one can only destroy a hero but not bring him to his knees. However, sometimes, I felt that I was very fragile, fragile to the point that a look from another person would wound me beyond healing, and that a few irrelevant words would cause me great anxiety. Therefore, I would seize any opportunity to show off in front of people, putting on a mask, afraid of being separated or forgotten by others. When people laughed, I would laugh, too; whatever activities people participated in, I would participate, too; whatever awards people got, I wanted to get them, too.

I did all of these things so others around me would think that I am a good and proactive person. I wanted to show my value and worth through comparison with others. But I didn't have the true heart-felt happiness and satisfaction that I longed for. I was busy throughout the day, and was exhausted physically and emotionally. To use a popular saying, I was "A person wearing a mask day and night, and totally worn out." This saying probably applies to most students. They endure hardships, work hard, are prideful, and yet at the same time they have low self-esteem. To cover up this lack of self-esteem, students usually put on a front. Before I knew God, I didn't know that pride was also a sin. I even thought that pride was a motivation, a meaning of life. I thought a person should live proudly. Of course, I didn't realize the bondage that came from pride, or as the Bible says, the bondage of sin. This was the root of my depressed feelings.

After coming to the Lord, I realized that I was a prideful sinner. Because of my sin I was separated from God, but God was willing to accept me and forgive my sins. When I was willing to give up my pride, confess my sins and come to God, he showed his grace to me.

At that time, when I was studying the Bible, I would feel happiness for no reason. I was no longer depressed like before. The happiness that I felt was different from normal happiness. Later, I began to understand that the proper way to call this happiness is joy. For example, every semester my classmates would go out one time for fun, and very often

my dormmates and I would go out to sing karaoke or have a nice meal together. We also told jokes and did other fun things. However, all such happiness came from the outside. After the laughter, people would still feel unspeakably lonely when they were by themselves. But, when I was attending the small group, although we simply studied together, I had a joy that flowed out from the inside. I felt that my life was nurtured, and I knew those feelings were the peace and joy from God.

As I became certain that there was a God in this world, my worldview underwent fundamental changes. All those questions that I had disappeared. Since there is a God who loves us, what is impossible?

When I graduated from college, I realized that my happiest time in college was at church. The peace and joy that came from God was something that I had never experienced. I just regret that I came to the Lord during the second semester of my junior year. If only I had come to him earlier!

Today, I am still grateful that I came to know God. Faith brought tremendous changes in my life, and I give thanks to God for all those changes.

### **More about the Author**

Zilang Wang (pseudonym) started studying thermal engineering at Tsinghua University in 2015. After coming to the Lord, Wang served in several ministries in the church, such as the choir, preparing meals for the church, and Bible study. In the future, he hopes to serve young people in areas of dating and marriage.

*This testimony is found on pages 22–27 of 《无问西东 因为有你》(The Reason for You II: Tsinghua Testimonies) available from [ReFrame Ministries](#).*

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<sup>i</sup> Editor's note: In the Chinese version the quote reads: “宗教是精神的鸦片” (“Religion is mental opium.”).

<sup>ii</sup> Editor's note: A popular instant messaging software in China.

<sup>iii</sup> Editor's note: a Chinese news commentator, anchor and journalist for China Central Television (CCTV).