

# Pointing the Way to Jesus

If you asked Erin Olson whether she was a Christian, she would have absolutely said, “Yes!” However, up until the age of 34, she never considered herself “one of those Christians.” Erin was most comfortable in the way in which she was brought up.

“I was always taught that it wasn’t polite to speak about religion or politics. I never felt particularly called to share about anything related to God,” says Erin, the host of *The Depot Podcast with Erin Olson* on the Charisma Podcast Network.

Everything changed, however, during a very trying time personally during the summer of 2008. Erin found herself struggling with fear and a lack of peace. She was searching for answers to some things she began to question. She came under attack in her sleep and at times, felt as if something was literally attempting to choke the life out of her. One night, she was screaming so loudly and gasping for air, her husband awoke and thought an intruder was in their home.

“It was such a horrible time for me. I hated to go to sleep because I was being tormented in the night,” she says. “It was as if God had given permission to Satan to torment me because God in His goodness knew exactly what was going to happen next.”

## **Becoming That Kind of Believer**

During that season, a series of events occurred which allowed Erin to meet with a group of those kind of Christians, as she calls them. Erin had never had the opportunity to spend any time with people who prayed and cared about people the way this group of people did.

“They were completely sold out for Jesus and you could just tell there was a peace that surrounded them,” she says. “I

wanted that kind of peace.”

As their conversations went on late into the night, one of the men, Albie Pearson, said to Erin, “What happened to you when you were three years old?” Erin remembers looking at her husband with a look of surprise. “I had no idea at the time that words of knowledge were a thing, but I knew in that moment his statement was no mere coincidence,” she says.

As they spoke more, Erin sensed that something was shifting. When Albie asked her whether she was ready to surrender her life to Christ, Erin was ready.

“I still didn’t know exactly what I was getting into or signing up for, but Jesus didn’t need me to have all of the answers; He just needed my faith.” The Lord was gracious to quicken a verse to her that has become her life verse, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God,” (Eph. 2:8, NIV).

In bed that night processing what had taken place and pouring her heart out to God, she was filled with the Holy Spirit. Even though Erin grew up attending church, she was, as she says, “biblically illiterate.” In an odd way, she was thankful for the lack of understanding at the time because what happened regarding the Holy Spirit was not forced or planned.

“It was as if power surged through my body. I had never experienced anything like it in my life and had no idea what actually happened.” The next morning when Albie saw her, he told her he saw light in her eyes for the first time. Adding to the complete God-timing of events, Erin’s new life in Christ began on her only daughter’s third birthday, the daughter whose name is Grace.

“There is no way I am ever going to deny that God was involved in every single detail of getting my attention and leading me to salvation in Christ. Where I once had been filled with fear and inner chaos, I received peace. I was forever changed.”

As Erin began to walk out her new life in Christ, she began to consume the Bible. Before her salvation experience, Erin had attempted at times to read the Bible, but it seemed like a foreign language to her. It wasn't until she read the Bible for herself that she discovered why she had been unable to understand the Bible. First Corinthians 2:12 says, "What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us" (NIV). It was in her newfound love of Scripture and biblical reading that she discovered her calling. After graduating from seminary, Erin knew she wanted to serve people through her gifts. As a full-time mom and homemaker, she had no idea early on what that meant for her, but she knew she would be obedient to whatever God asked her to do. Erin participated in Bible studies at her church and felt a stirring to teach. She also felt called to write and share what the Holy Spirit laid on her heart.

In January 2012, Erin launched her first blog through her ministry, Sandalfeet Ministries ([Sandalfeet Ministries](#)). Erin chose the name Sandalfeet as well as the verse Isaiah 52:7 because it reminded her of Jesus and the disciples walking along the dusty roads to share the Good News.

"It was the hearing of the gospel that changed everything for me," she says. "It wasn't a self-help book or a self-help group, it was being told 'Jesus loves you' and hearing the complete gospel that changed me."

The gospel message is at the core of everything she does. In all things, she wants to point people to hope in Jesus because even if our momentary issues here on earth are not all perfect, He is perfect and one day all believers will live in His kingdom.

"Shortly after I accepted Christ, things fell apart around me. If I hadn't been filled with hope that summer night in 2008, things would have turned out much differently for my family.

In October of that same year, God revealed to me through a dream that the enemy was trying to dump a lot of junk back into our lives and create havoc. It is odd to say it, but I was at peace about everything because I knew the Lord was with us and He was going to help fix things.”

The days, years, trials and triumphs ahead caused Erin to pursue Christ and persevere in prayer. “I can look back now some thirteen years later and see His hand in so many things. In that moment, if I am being honest, some days were really hard. I was discouraged and confused at times, but I had to push past those things and remain tethered to hope,” she says.

### With Us Every Moment

Several years ago, Erin had a sign made for her husband for Father’s Day. The sign reads, “We can do this. God has not brought us this far to let us down now.” It hangs in their living room and she walks by it several times per day. “It’s a constant reminder that God is with us. He is Emmanuel.”

In today’s fast-paced world filled with non-stop news and social media, Erin believes that people are so focused on what is happening around them and what could happen in the future, that they forget to reflect on the past. The Bible itself is a history book—a history about God and what He has done throughout time. It is a tool God gifted to people to reveal who He is. It is filled with promises and fulfillment of promises, stories of victory and defeat. It is filled with actions and consequences, and story after story of redemption and deliverance. The Bible is one big monument so we can remember His goodness.

“Sometimes in our everyday, hurried lives, people forget to reflect on His faithfulness,” Erin says. “In the Old Testament, God’s people made memorials of stone to remember how God came through for them. It was a way for them to take pause and remember, no matter what they were going through,

God is faithful,” she says. “We need to remember His past faithfulness in the same way today. It’s why I had that sign made. I did not want to go one day without remembering His faithfulness to us in the past and His promise to remain faithful throughout all time. Is life perfect? Not at all, but His peace surpasses all understanding and I rest in that peace every day.”

## Podcasting to Reach the Masses

Erin is currently doing what she loves most during her podcast episodes—teaching the Bible line by line. She notes there is a hunger for truth right now from people who may not know the real truth, and it is a time of amazing opportunity for the people of Christ to put the gospel and His Word into action, very much like the early church did.

Recently, Erin took her listeners through the book of Acts. “People around the world—whether believer or non-believer—can see themselves in the book of Acts. It was the beginning of the Christian movement and the full display of the Holy Spirit and His power and authority. It is the revelation of the gospel being available for all people and not just the chosen people of Israel. It illustrates the acceptance of the gospel and the complete rejection of the gospel. It shows both ministry highs and the very lowest of lows,” she says. In the middle of the book of Acts there is confirmation of where God has led her to her passion of teaching Scripture.

In Acts 18, Priscilla and Aquila heard the gifted Apollos speak, but what he was saying was not entirely correct. “Priscilla and Aquila didn’t call Apollos out publicly; they called him aside. They invited him into their home, sat around the table, shared a meal, and then they explained the fullness of Jesus to him,” Erin says. “They knew his intentions were good, but his theology was misinformed.”

She believes there are many in the body, including some that

are merely churchgoers as she once was, that have never had the fullness of Scripture explained to them. It is why she believes Christians are being called to a place where it is imperative to not only share the hope of the gospel, but also teach what the Bible says about many things. "Hope is critical during times of uneasiness," she says. "However, the practical things found in the Bible help people navigate life. In a time when 'love' is being presented in many different ways, the best way to love someone is to introduce them to Jesus and teach them His ways. It is called discipleship and we need more disciple makers in the church today,"

### The Hopeful Harvest of New Disciples

Erin sees a church without disciple makers like a home without parents. "If the church is not teaching people about the Bible, it is no different than a parent not teaching a child the basic things of life. If we see a parent failing to provide and nurture a child, we see that as a problem. We need to see it the same way within the church—and by the church I mean corporately and individually," she says.

The apostle Paul set an example of what it means to be a disciple maker. He poured his life into not only sharing about Jesus, but he also taught, encouraged and disciplined the disciples. We are fortunate that his words and actions are recorded for us to see today through the pages in the Bible.

As hopelessness continues to pervade society, Erin is confident the Holy Spirit is going to do a great work because He is faithful. As His bride slowly awakens from her slumber and His people begin to walk in the fullness of His ways and go out and "make disciples," the reach of the church will increase during these days and light will permeate in the darkest of places. The harvest is ripe and she hopes many will join her in taking both the Good News and His Word throughout the world.

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**Erin Olson** and her husband, Scott, live in Birmingham, Alabama, with their three children. Erin is the author of four books, *Forgiveness – Unforgiveness: Revealed Through Your Fruits*, *Sit At His Feet: Choose What is Better*, *Simplify the Season: Rediscovering Christ Through Advent* and *Spiritual Orphans: A Generation in Crisis*. She is the host of *The Depot Podcast with Erin Olson* on the Charisma Podcast Network.