

Ted Cruz Shares Intimate Details of His Faith Journey

My faith journey began when I was a young child. When I was 3 years old, my father left my mother and me. At the time, we were living in Calgary, Canada, where my parents owned a small business. Neither of them were Christians, and both were drinking far too much.

My dad decided he didn't want to be married anymore and he didn't want to be a father to his toddler son. So he got on a plane and flew to Texas. I don't remember those lonely months without my dad in the home, but surely they were stressful on my mom, as she turned to drinking even more.

Thankfully, after living several months in Houston, a colleague from the oil and gas business invited my dad to come a Bible study. The Bible study met at the home of a local life insurance agent. And for whatever reason my father went to the Bible study and he sat and listened. And what struck him more than anything else was the peace that everyone there had. He said they all had challenges, they all had problems. He remembers one woman in particular who described how her son would beat her to try to get money for drugs, and yet she and the other people at that Bible study had what the Scripture calls "a peace that passes understanding." And my father couldn't understand it, couldn't understand where that came from, but he knew he wanted it.

So he kept asking questions and they said: "You know what, our pastor's coming tomorrow night to the house. Do you want to come back tomorrow night, and you can ask our pastor these questions?" So my Dad said, "Alright," and he came back the next night.

Now my father at that time was a young man. He was an atheist.

He was a scientist. And he was convinced he knew everything. He spent four hours arguing with the pastor. "What is this religion nonsense?" "Only the weak-minded would believe that." And he argued over and over and over until 11 that night. Finally my Dad said, "Alright what about the man in Tibet who's never heard of Jesus?"

Very wisely, the pastor didn't take the bait. He said, "Rafael, I don't know about the man in Tibet. But *you* have heard of Jesus. What's your excuse?" My Dad said that hit him like a sledgehammer, and he dropped to his knees in that living room and he gave his life to Jesus. He was baptized that next Sunday, and then he went and got in the car and drove to the airport and bought a ticket and flew back to Calgary.

He flew back to my mother and me. You know, a lot of people ask if faith is real. I can tell you, in my life, if it were not for the transformative love of Jesus Christ, I would have been raised by a single mom without my father in the house.

After my dad became a Christian, we all moved together to Houston. And seeing the amazing transformation in her husband, my mom became a Christian within a year as well. Thus, by age 4, I was blessed to be being raised in a Christian home with two strong (but new) believers as parents.

I was raised in the church. Each night, my dad would read with me from our children's Bible. We'd memorize Bible verses, and compete to see who could do the best. We'd act out scenes from the Old Testament. We attended Clay Road Baptist Church, pastored by the same Brother Gaylon Wiley who had led my father to the Lord.

When I was 8 years old, I went to our church's summer camp, along (with) my cousin Bibi. At the invitation, tears streaming down my face, Bibi and I both walked down and gave our lives to Jesus.

And it changed my life. To have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, to know that God's only Son died to pay for my sins, that I was fallen that I am redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, nothing is more important to me. I am a new creature in Christ, and it central to who I am today.

I couldn't run for president without relying heavily on my faith. When I have doubts, He comforts me. When I am weak, He gives me strength. From the day we launched the campaign, Heidi and I have prayed simply that His will would be done. Each day, we try not to seek His hand (asking for help winning the race), but rather to seek His face (praying that his love and glory would be seen every day in the campaign).

And it is the *agape* love of God that helps our two little girls (not to mention Heidi and me) endure the extended time with us on the road, away from the two of them. Sometimes Facetime on our iPhones is just not enough, and prayer helps us get through those struggles.

When I fight to defend religious liberty, it's not purely a constitutional matter; it's a lifelong passion and personal commitment. When I stand to defend life and marriage, it is a core tenet of my faith. And when I lead the fight for Israel, it both profoundly benefits our national security and also honors God's promise in Genesis 12:3.

One of the very best aspects about running for president is that you get to travel the country and meet amazing people, thousands of believers who are passionate and hungry to turn our nation around. A few months back, we did a really big rally in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Couple thousand people, it was a wonderful event.

Unbeknownst to me, Brother Gaylon Wiley—the pastor who had led my dad to the Lord and had baptized me as a Christian—was now retired and living in Tennessee. Much to my surprise, he came to our event.

I hadn't seen Brother Wiley in 34 years. I was 10 years old the last time I saw him. Now, not much rattles me, but I have to tell you, it choked me up something powerful. I had tears in my eyes, to see him after so many years. Afterward, I gave him a really long hug, and said, "Thank you, thank you for that night in 1975 sharing the gospel to my father." He simply pointed upward and said, "To God be the glory."

But I continued, trembling as spoke, "If you hadn't shared the gospel that night, my entire life would have been different. I would have been raised by a single mom. She likely would never have known Christ, which means, in all probability, I wouldn't either. Living without my father in the house, and without Jesus in my life, I would have been far more likely to make bad decisions, whether turning to drinking or drugs or even worse. And I never would have met my wife, Heidi, a beautiful Christian woman who was the daughter of missionaries, which means we never would have been able to raise our daughters Caroline and Catherine in a Christian home, where they are taught the Word of God each day."

"All from your sharing the gospel to my father at 11 at night on April 15, 1975. Ripples in a pond, lives changed for three generations. Thank you so very much for heeding the call. For spreading the Good News."

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