

Can God Change an Atheist's Heart?

Elvis was once an atheist, an eager student of humanistic philosophy and firmly set against Christian faith.

"When my wife would return home from prayer meetings, I would mock her, asking her a series of philosophical questions," he remembers. "I aimed to persuade her that God didn't exist and that her faith was useless."

His remarks would often make her cry, but she was never dissuaded from praying for him.

After completing his studies and training as a teacher, Elvis' further academic plans were blocked by a lack of finances. In answer to his wife's prayers, this roadblock became a turning point in his life. He decided to look for opportunities to use his skills to benefit the local community. He even approached the pastor of a local church and offered to start literacy classes.

The pastor encouraged him to instead enroll in a translation training course under the direction of Christians with experience in translation. It was being offered to members of the community so that they could begin to translate the Bible into Gbeya, Elvis' own mother tongue, which is spoken by more than 200,000 people in the Bossangoa region of Central African Republic.

"I had no idea at the time that this was God's plan for me," Elvis said.

At first Elvis saw translation as just a challenging intellectual exercise. But as he sought the meaning of each passage of Scripture, and grappled with the best way to express it in Gbeya, he began to discover the God of the

Bible.

“As I became immersed in the Word of God, I began to understand the incredible love and grace which he freely gives each one of us,” Elvis recalls. “I couldn’t even imagine why God would want a relationship with me. My deep intimacy with God is one of the most amazing things I take from this ministry.”

Soon Elvis went from being one of the translators on the Gbeya translation team to being the coordinator for translation and literacy projects in the whole Bossangoa region.

“Ever since I accepted Jesus as my Savior,” he said, “my entire life has been such an adventure in faith.”

It has now been over a decade since Elvis first got involved in Bible translation, and today he oversees the translation and literacy projects for the whole country.

“God chose [Elvis] to work for him, studying the Bible,” said Michel Samedi, Elvis’ older brother. “My prayer is that his work will be a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God.”

See the Holy Spirit at work in lives just like Elvis’ through our #WhyBible campaign at

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