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Robert "Evel" Knievel

Testimony of Faith at the Crystal Cathedral



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I grew up in Butte, Montana. I worked in the mines there a mile underground. And I had a tough life growing up. I was raised by grandparents and they just loved me to death. But I don't know how I got on the wrong tracks. I always started off just being a wild person and doing things that weren't right against society. I never wanted to be told what to do.

Anyway, I went on through different businesses in my life and I finally ended up in Los Angeles. Started my motorcycle show. And as time went on I earned a lot of money and my name got to be known. I was kind of ashamed of the "Evel Knievel." I did the Joey Bishop show one night and he said, "You gotta have the greatest name in show business." And I thought if it was good enough for Joe it was good enough for me, so.

I was empty. I was just empty. The god I was praying to was a god that I thought, maybe, could answer my prayers. But I didn't realize that I needed to go through a living God. And I had. I did. And I'm just beginning to really get the feeling of Jesus Christ inside of my body. And it's grown and grown and grown. It's become such a wonderful thing since then -- and the time we spent together, I just can't believe it. I'm so complete now that I'm not even afraid to get on an airplane and fly back to Tampa. That's how I feel.

I never thought that I would be here -- ever. I just was a person who always believed in God - - there was a God Power. But I always had trouble believing in the Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I don't know why I fought it so hard. I just did. But I think maybe it was the power of prayer. Maybe God just got sick and tired of me fighting it so much. He reach out and grabbed me and said, "Look, I just want you. You've got to stop this nonsense. You just come with Me."



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Anyway, before the Daytona Bike Week this year, I started thinking about God more and more. And I called people and talked to them. I don't know why. I just did. I called a friend I hadn't talked to in 30 years. His name is Eldon Wright and he belongs to the New Hope Community Church in Portland, Oregon. I talked to him and he called me back a week later. He said, "I've had my whole church praying for you. The whole church is praying for you."

And I said, "Well, that's not the first time that this has happened. My daughter's had her entire church praying for me in Bozeman, Montana. And my ex-wife, Linda, she's had her whole church praying for me in Butte, Montana" -- and she's has prayed for me for 25 or 30 years that I would become a Christian. I get letters from people, hundreds of letters from people saying we read an article about you where you don't believe in organized religion. You've got to believe in Jesus Christ.

So, I don't know what in the world happened. I don't know if it was the power of the prayer or God himself, but it just reached out, either while I was driving or walking down the sidewalk or sleeping. And the power of God in Jesus just grabbed me. It just took a hold of me. So strong. I can't tell you how strong it was. And I became a persona who was filled, was just filled with Christianity.

All of a sudden, I just believed in Jesus Christ. I did. I believed in him! I just -- I don't know what happened to me! I rose up in bed in Daytona, the second night I was there. I rose up in bed and, I was by myself, and I said, "Devil, devil, you bastard! You, get away from me! I cast you out of my life." I went to the balcony of my hotel room. I said, "I will take you and throw you on the beach. You will be dead. You will be gone. I don't want you around me anymore."

I did everything I could. I just got on my knees and prayed that God would put his arms around me and never, ever, ever let me go. I just all of a sudden was overcome by the Spirit of God, Almighty.

And my wife, Crystal, she had been trying to help me with things I wanted, even though she didn't believe at the time. She doesn't believe like I do. She went out and got me a Bible I could read that had passages underneath the verses so you could better understand them. She went and got me a videotape called *Jesus of Nazareth*, which is a wonderful videotape. She got me a book called *The Case for Christ*, which is a wonderful book to read. And I've had so much help from my whole family.

I know that there's more to life than what I've had. I wrote a book called, *Evel Ways*. I said I've had a life better than any king, any president, or any prince. Hogwash. I didn't have Jesus Christ in my life. I was talking about the Rolls Royces I had -- 5 of them. The Ferraris I've had -- 5 of them. The Stetsons. The Lamborghinis. The jet airplanes -- 2 of them. I flew one alongside of the other so I could read my name on the side. Yeah, "Evel Knievel."



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My dad said, "Who are you going to impress at 40,000 feet, at 600 miles an hour? Why don't you go down and buy a truck, drive along the freeway." The diamonds, and the gold, and the race horses, and the women, and the booze.

I want to tell you something: I've been a sinner. You're looking at a real sinner. But not any more. You're not looking at a sinner any more. And I've had everybody -- I've had everybody in my family trying to help me. My son and my wife came here today from Montana and Las Vegas, and friends that came to see and be with me. I just -- I'm so happy.

This is the biggest step that I have ever taken in my life -- Dr. Schuller is right.

I'll tell you the difference between a Christian and an atheist. A Christian wants to believe. They want to believe everything about Christianity and Jesus. An atheist does not believe in God because he doesn't want to. He stays away from it. He gets mad. He doesn't want to hear about it. That's what an atheist is.

Do not let us come with any patronizing thoughts in our minds and say, "Oh, yes, Jesus was a minister of his time" or a- a "biblical person," a "person who believed in God who taught us." "He was a teacher," "a great human being." Jesus did not offer us that. He didn't offer us that. He was the Son of God. He is the Son of God. And if you don't believe that Jesus Christ is what He says He is, you will surely die. You'll die in your sins, believe me. You've got to believe. Oh, you've got to believe in Jesus Christ.

I don't know how many of you here have felt what I have felt. Let me see a raise of hands of how many of you have the feeling that I am telling you that I feel? Oh, God bless you. Isn't it a wonderful feeling to say I have a God that I can believe in -- a real God that I can believe in? Isn't it a wonderful feeling to wake up in the middle of the night and say well, I'm glad I woke up? I can go back to bed in a few minutes, but in the meantime I'm going to think about Jesus Christ. It's such a warm, wonderful feeling to me.

Dr. Schuller, I don't know how to thank you for asking me to come here. I know that I called you and told you that I wanted to be on your show because I'd seen your show. I watch it every once in awhile. And I saw Andy Griffith and Randy Travis on a few weeks ago, and Andy said that that he'd given his heart to Jesus Christ. And when I began to believe like I did, I thought to myself, "Why don't you call Robert Schuller and see if you can be on his show." So I did and you said to me, "Well, that's wonderful news. It's good news to me -- the best news I've had in a long time. Of course you can be on the show." So, we talked about it. So, we agreed that I'd be here today.

And then a couple of days later you called me and you said, "Would you mind if I flew to Florida to meet you?" And I said, "Well, it's a five hour flight. You're 80 years old. Are you sure you want to come down here to have dinner with me?"



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And he said, "Yes, I do." Well, I knew why. He wanted to see if the real me was telling the truth, that's why. He wanted to investigate me.

Anyway, when he got off of the airplane, I was there to meet him and I took him to his hotel and he said, "You know, the only reason I came here was to see you. I have no other business here." I said, "I know why you came. You came here to see if I was for real. You came here to see for yourself with your own eyes. You wanted to take my hand and hold it, and give me a hug and bless me. I know that you did that.

And I want you to know something. I picked you. I picked you, too, Robert. I picked you because I think that you have a message to give to everyone in the world, and I think you're doing such a wonderful way.

I wanted to scream to the world that I am a born-again Christian, and I'm so proud of it.

I'm just so proud.