

My Faith Story

I am Randy and I would like to share the importance of attending church and how it helps us heal.

I grew up in a Christian home and attended church on most Sundays. Our family was active in church programs and events.

In my early teenage years (*Grades 7-10*), I was a very unattractive young man who was extremely overweight and wore what I considered “geeky” glasses. Throughout those years, I had very few friends and was constantly **bullied** by other classmates, even to the point of earning an unpleasant name or two. But during the summer, between my 10th & 11th grades, I lost a considerable amount of weight and traded my “geeky” glasses for a set of contacts. I had transformed myself from an ugly duckling to an attractive young man. I returned to school in my 11th year unrecognizable to many. Throughout the 11th grade I made many friends, including many of those who a short time ago bullied me.

Everything was fine now, or at least so I thought but being bullied scars you for life. Even though many of those who bullied me became my friends, I still, in the back of my mind, remembered what these new friends of mine had put me through and **found it hard to forgive**.

Throughout my entire life, I attended church regularly; participated in church retreats; went on mission trips both in the States and abroad; mentored youth; taught Sunday School; and remained active in many other ways in my church life.

Because of the strong faith I have built from the many teachings within my church life and with the support and love of my church family, I have overcome those feelings of being bullied and **I have learned to forgive** those who, many years ago, had scarred my life. I now teach others the importance of forgiveness.

Today, I am actually very thankful for my scars. They have taught me to be compassionate and kind to others, especially those who struggle with their weight, the way they look, or struggle just to fit in. Through my brokenness, my scars have brought me closer to Jesus. They have taught me to rely on and trust in Him. It is from His scars that I have learned the **true meaning of love**, and for that I am very thankful.

We should never look at our scars, physically, emotionally, or spiritually, as something ugly and unsightly and decide that it is too late, because it says in *Psalm 37:24 (ESV)*: “.. **though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand.**” God doesn’t give us scars to remind us that we have been hurt. **God gives us scars, to remind us that we have been healed.** We’ve been delivered and we have been set free.