



God called me several times. The first time was more than 15 years ago when I was 10 or 11. Not too many people knew Christianity at that time, and none of my family members or friends were Christian either. However, my parents gave me a book of Bible stories as a present. Reading that book, I was amazed by God's miracles especially the love and sacrifice Jesus gave to the world. I remember standing on my knees every night, praying for God to bless me and make the next day a happy one for me. God planted a little seed in my heart at that time.

It wasn't until my freshmen year in college that I heard God's calling again. A girl stopped me on the street and asked me if I ever knew God. This reminded me my earlier contact with God, and for a brief moment I was tempted. But then I remembered there were so much I needed to take care of in my life — I struggled a lot with my studies — so I told the girl that I was simply too busy to do so and walked away. My heart was hard and I was skeptical. I turned my back to the Lord and the seed He planted in me in the earlier years didn't grow.

God called me the third time through my Mom. My Mom was converted by her friend during her sickness. At first, like many others, she only went to God because she desperately needed God's help to cure her disease. However, after practicing Christianity for a while, she found the benefit wasn't limited to physical. She also felt more confident about life. She became more patient. Her mind was getting stronger and more peaceful. I could see her full with joy. She urged me many times: "Lihong, you gotta read Bible sometimes! You'll never learn enough from that!"

Soon I left home and came to the US. God sent out His message once more through the Hospitality Center for Chinese. They helped me to find furniture for my new apartment. If any of you have ever tried to make a life in a different country speaking another language, you would know how much that meant to me: *It's precious enough even to have someone talk to you patiently, let alone getting help from strangers.* I quickly developed

a friendship with the Hospitality Center, I have to say that *I had never been surrounded by so many Christians before. It felt different. Differently good.*

Then I met one of the most important people in my life, who was from HCC. It was a canoe trip on the Cannon River. I remember that at one part when the river wasn't fast, we started talking about life and our thoughts and faith. And then she asked me if I would like to know more about Jesus. That was a nice peaceful summer afternoon. The sun was shining gently at us, covering everything with a layer of glory. I knew from my heart that this was the moment God designed for me.

I got a new testament from HCC and read on, and discussed it with my HCC friend. That winter I accepted Jesus Christ as my only Savior. However, in my mind, I have been one of Jesus' followers ever since the night I stood on my knees praying for God 15 years ago. I know I have come a long way and I walked slowly, but Jesus has always been there waiting and reaching for me.

Now I'm stronger and more confident in Jesus, and I don't feel that lonely anymore because I can feel that God is always with me. For those of you who were born in a Christian family, having Jesus Christ as your lifelong friend probably is very natural, but for people from a different background, such as me, it may take much more efforts than that. *Please be patient as Jesus is for us. Your efforts will be paid off. Even you may not see it, the Lord sees.*

There are many other Chinese students on campus like me that need to hear about Jesus. Thank you for caring about us and providing HCC with the ability to be there for the Chinese.

Lihong Sheng (name changed to protect her identity)