

Ed Hoffman's Spiritual Journey

Ed has been an Elder since 1998. He grew up on the western side of Cincinnati and moved to Harrison with his wife Marsha in 1973. Ed and his family were introduced to First Christian by his son Brian in 1995. His family includes wife Marsha, son Brian Hoffman, daughter Andrea Bishop, their spouses Kori Hoffman and Matt Bishop, and five grandchildren (Cameron and Alexandra Hoffman, Kayla Hampton, Parker and Madison Bishop). Ed is employed by Dualite Inc. (a national manufacturer of outdoor illuminated signs) as Director/Engineering. Interests include music, watching sports (especially football and hockey), and action and science fiction movies. Ed has served in various ministries including Life Group leader and coach, ALPHA team, Adopt-A-Block, Matthew 25, Vacation Bible School and Emmaus Team. He currently serves on the SE Indiana Emmaus board.



Favorite Scripture: Isaiah 55: 8 & 9.

I was born and raised in the Catholic Church and was the third of seven children in my family. I was particularly close to my sister Judy. She was 18 months older than me and we had a lot in common. When I was 18, Judy was killed in an auto accident. It had a profound effect on my life. I dropped out of college, joined the Navy and spent the next two years between California and Vietnam, where I did all the things sailors do.

One Friday when I was stationed in San Francisco, I took the bus into town. I had the weekend off and was determined to make the most of it. As I walked out of the bus terminal, I saw two good-looking girls standing in front of a bus. They asked me if I wanted to go to a party. I said, "Yeah!" I got on their bus with some other sailors. We headed out across the Bay towards Oakland. At one point a guy stood up and told us the party was at a church and they expected our best behavior. There were a lot of good-looking girls at the party, and we played silly games for an hour or so. Then somebody got up told how Jesus had made a real difference in his life. I ended up spending the entire weekend there and returned for several weekends. On one occasion I felt the person giving his testimony was telling my life story. I surrendered to Christ.

Unfortunately, there was no discipleship or follow-up. I really didn't have much of a clue what I had done. Then I was transferred to another ship in San Diego. I returned to my former ways and forgot all about my surrender to Christ.

Shortly after getting out of the Navy, I met my Marsha. She was a "pearl of great price." She was a good, moral person, and I was spiritually and morally bankrupt. We were married in the Catholic Church, and we raised our two children there.

When I was thirty, Marsha came home from a Bible study and told me she had accepted Jesus as the Lord and Savior of her life. Several weeks later, I recommitted my life as well and found a new perspective on life; I found peace and purpose.

Several years later, in 1987, I lost my job. As I drove home that day, I told God that if there was something coming between Him and me, that He should take it away. All I asked was that our family stay together and we have a roof over our heads. Two days later, a Christian friend stopped by and handed Marsha an envelope. He said God told him to give it to us. Inside was a check equal to two weeks' take-home pay. A few days after that, I got a phone call from one of my former competitors. One week after losing my old job, I accepted a job offer from them.

After several more years in the Catholic Church, we decided to find a church that was more suited to our needs. We visited several churches in the area. Then my son said he was going to FCC, the church where he attended Young Life in high school. We decided to go as a family. We found FCC to be friendly and inviting, but more importantly, I heard truth and a message that I could apply to my life.

A few weeks later, my son suffered a severely broken leg that required surgery. Back at home, Bill McConnell, Pastor of FCC, stopped by to pray with him. My wife and I were so impressed by his caring that we became regular attendees at FCC and eventually became members. Bill encouraged everyone to join a small group Bible study and read the Bible daily. We did both.

The following year, we discovered our daughter was suffering with anorexia. I decided I would pray daily for my daughter. Like the persistent widow in Luke 18, I would wear God out if I had to. After a year of therapy and heartbreak, Bill McConnell told us he thought Andrea should go on a Chrysalis. So that Thanksgiving weekend she left with people we didn't know for a campground somewhere in Indiana. Praise God! He did more in one weekend than doctors and therapists had done in a year!

The following spring, I went on the walk to Emmaus. The weekend opened my eyes to just how much God loved me.

Three years later that knowledge proved invaluable. I suffered a heart attack and needed a triple bypass. As I lay in the hospital bed thinking of what was before me, I realized that I might not survive. I have always found that I am most teachable in times of crisis. As I prayed to God, Isaiah 55: 8-9 came to my mind:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Pondering on that verse caused me to realize that since God loved me, He wanted the best for me. So I told God that no matter what the outcome of this operation, whether I made a full recovery, became on invalid or even if I died; I accepted His plan for my life. At that instant I was filled with a peace and joy that I had never known before. I actually looked forward to the surgery, because I wanted to see what God had in store for me. I didn't know what that was, but I was sure that it would be great!

It is now seven years since that surgery, and my life has never been the same. Becoming an elder, serving as Board Chair, working on different ministry teams—every time I say yes to God, the blessings just seem to multiply.

I have discovered that one of the most important things I have to offer God is my obedience. I have been involved in things that I know I could never do on my own. But if I do what He asks, even though it may not make sense, He is responsible for the outcome.

Zechariah. 4:6 reads, "'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty."

What could be greater than seeing God at work firsthand? Life has become an adventure! So, to God be the glory forever and ever! Amen.