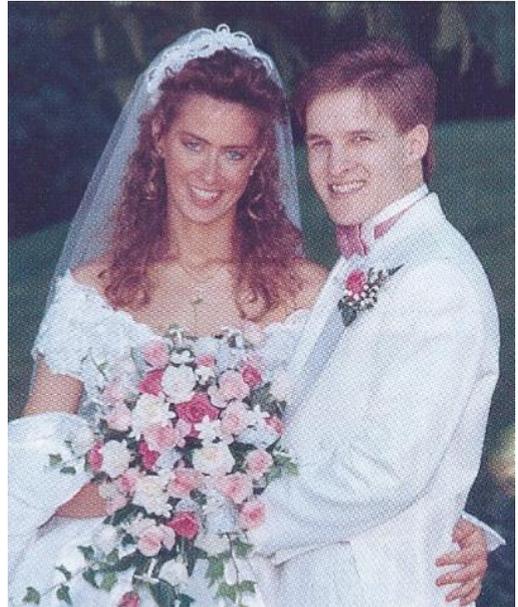


Testimony of Tamara Brockschmidt – The most important decision of my life

Until I was thirteen I lived with my loving, but very busy, single mother. Then with hopes of improving my grades and going to college, I went to live with my father and stepmother for my high school years. They gave me the restrictions I needed and my grades quickly soared. I joined track and cross country running teams and worked my way up to most valuable player in my sophomore and junior years. My dad and I became very close, and it seemed I finally had a real family and friends.

While I was a freshman at Washington State University, like other freshmen, I expressed my newfound independence through attending a gamut of parties. The nonchalant attitudes of the young adults around me was discouraging. I wanted something more than an attitude of self-interest that seemed to permeate young adults at that stage of life. I dreamed and hoped that someday I would have a family of my own and that I would know the true meaning of love.

One day about three months after entering college, something changed. As I walked to my dorm, I met a man standing on Stadium Way. With a smile, he handed me a small Bible.



As I sat on my bed that evening, my dream of true love seemed very far away as I heard doors slamming and voices raised in anticipation of more Friday night parties. I didn't want to go. Two or three times I had gone to be with my friends, even though I had little or nothing alcoholic to drink. I would always come home early, feeling empty. My friends' lives seemed to be empty, too. I didn't think I was any better than they were, but I knew I didn't want to get pulled down any farther with them.

With those thoughts in mind, I lay down on my bed, propped myself up on my elbows and looked over the Testament the man down the street had given me. I came upon a section that listed emotions and Christian character traits and the references in the Bible where they could be found. It took a little while to choose which emotion to look up because I was feeling most of them at the time. I spent the evening reading the Bible. For the first time I actually understood in a personal way what I was reading.

After a while I simply closed my eyes and asked Jesus Christ into my heart and life. It was such a simple and natural thing that years later I had to think back carefully to remember just when I made that most important decision of my life. From that first day my life began to change dramatically.

God touched my life, and in turn other lives were changed. Because of my new faith in Christ, my mother, my best friend from high school, and a patient dying from cancer all became Christians, too.

God was working in my life. While on a church ski trip I met a man named Kevin and we began to date. Kevin was the leader of a rock band and enjoyed an occasional party, but was getting tired of it all. I broke up with him three times out of concern for his temper and some of his less-than-godly habits. I had decided I wanted to be a missionary, but Kevin was not

interested at all. That became a major concern for our relationship. However, when Kevin took steps to change, I admired his determination and we began to date again.

Because of his willingness to be honest about his faults and his desire to change, I felt he would probably be close to God someday. I decided to marry him although he was not yet a Christian.

A year after we were married, Kevin shared that he had thought he was a Christian for many years because he had been raised in a Christian home. He had just realized he had never asked Jesus into his heart. He shared that he knew the theology and he had read the Bible, but it was not until that morning that he understood that knowing Christ personally was what the Christian life is all about. Kevin wanted his life to reflect that he was truly a Christian.

I was overjoyed to hear him speak of his desire to outwardly show the inward changes. But his next statement took me off guard. "In thinking about all these things, I've decided I want to be a short-term missionary in Japan!" Just that morning missionaries from Japan had visited our church asking for English teachers to assist them in their work. I was surprised at his interest, but remembered my own call to missions a few years earlier. God's will was being worked out in our lives.

Six months later, Kevin gave up his growing illustration business and we found ourselves on a plane to Japan. In those six months Kevin had decided he wanted to be a pastor someday after our short-term assignment was over.

Now Kevin and I are completing our second year as short-term missionaries and are expecting our first child. Our marriage and walk with God have been blessed a great deal by our experiences. We have had opportunity to share God's love and have seen several people come to Christ.

I wish I could thank that man who gave me my Testament. Our lives were touched in a powerful way when a Gideon servant of God handed a small New Testament to a nervous freshman walking down Stadium Way. We're looking forward to seeing what God has in store for us in the future.