

MY JOURNEY STORY

I grew up going to church, but I always felt like an outsider. Our church functioned more as a social gathering. My wardrobe was less than lack-luster, and I never fit in. I came to Journey for the first time last year. It was amazing. It was an open forum of smiles and warmth and general caring. No one looked at us as “THE NEW PEOPLE” or assessed our clothing. We weren’t in a fish bowl of criticism.

The message was REAL. It made you ACTIVELY think about your own life and your own person. It was a concise, to the core, thought- provoking message. It was a breath of fresh air and a chance to really pursue God away from the social pressures of life: “what is she wearing” “she isn’t on time” “she isn’t a very good singer” “she doesn’t know the books of the Bible in order.”

I feel like at Journey you can actually praise and worship. Sing your heart out for God, even if you’re tone-deaf. Journey to me has been my chance to truly pursue and know God. We talk a lot more, and He shows me a lot more, when I’m alone, in Bible study, or on Sunday mornings.

Another huge part of Journey for me was how easily

you can get plugged into a group, an activity, a service, and really start your own journey. And the people that you meet are tremendous. They always are quick with a smile and a word of encouragement inside OR OUTSIDE the church building.

The sense of community and caring Journey provides are amazing and such a building block in being a Christ follower. Honestly, the best way to describe my thoughts and experiences with this church is by just saying: “It makes my heart smile and my soul glow.”

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To me, Journey Church is a place where I can celebrate, worship, and express my love and gratitude to Jesus Christ. Journey provides a casual, comfortable atmosphere where I don't have to worry about the dogma you sometimes get at other churches. For me, I feel Journey accepts me the way I am, and it allows me to relax and focus on Christ and his gift of salvation.

I attended a church but never made a connection with it or the people. I felt lost. I knew I didn't want to go to an old school church like the one I grew up in. Those churches are fine, but I feel as if I can't relate to the music (old hymns written in a style of English I can't understand . . . I mean, honestly, it took me years to

decipher what “bringing in the sheaves” meant) and often the atmosphere is stiff.

I like the fact that at Journey I can wear jeans and no one thinks I’m disrespecting God as a result. I am free to be myself and lay myself bare before my Lord without judgment from my fellow church goers. The end result of this comfortable atmosphere is that I now feel relaxed enough to actively pursue a relationship with God.

For the first time in my life I am earnestly excited every Sunday to get up and go to church. In fact, I actually find myself wishing Sunday would hurry so I can go to church. I have NEVER felt that way before. In the past I went to church because I knew it was the right thing or because I felt obligated. But honestly, most of the time I came home feeling as empty as I did before I went. For whatever reason I just couldn’t allow the Holy Spirit to enter into my heart. Journey has changed that.

As a result, my relationship with God has grown tremendously, and I can honestly say that I feel God’s love surrounding me in a way I never felt before. I’ve never been closer to the Lord than I am now. In fact, I now wake up with songs (the ones we sing at Journey) in my head!

I've grown closer to my friends, my family, and I've grown more confident in my faith, and that has allowed me to witness and share the love of Jesus and what He has done for me in my life with non-believing friends and loved ones.

I am more patient, kinder, and more loving. The messages I hear each week at Journey have real life applications. Instead of hearing messages of hellfire and brimstone, I'm hearing how God wants to love me and how I should love others as well. I'm learning how to be more Christ-like.

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Journey is a place where I can worship and grow in ways that I have not been able to in the churches that I have been at in the past. The environment is so comfortable, and everyone is so friendly. The messages at Journey never cease to challenge me and inspire me to have a stronger relationship with Jesus.

Journey has changed the ways that I think about Christianity in that I focus more on my relationship with God rather than on legalistic rules. The messages at Journey hold me accountable throughout the week, and I always look forward to coming back on Sunday.

Journey has changed the ways that I interact with many

people in my life. I want richer relationships. Being a part of a Journey Group has been a great way that I have been able to connect with some great people who challenge me in my beliefs. Also, I have become hungry for the Word, and I want an honest relationship with God.

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My husband and I moved to Roanoke and began visiting local churches. I wanted sound teaching in small groups and feeling connected with others in worship and Bible study. My husband was especially interested in meaningful worship and music, and try as we may, we could not seem to find a church that had it all.

Eventually I attended a local church on my own, but I dreaded going to worship. I left every service feeling exhausted. Many visits and three years later we found Journey. A local businessman told us about the wonderful church he had found and recommended we visit.

The very first service we attended we felt a strong sense of satisfaction and belonging and felt hopeful that we had found our church home at last. We especially loved the way every detail of the experience

fit together: the music, videos, and sermon, all fit together with meaning and purpose. And we both loved the amazing way the sermons could be understood by a seeker and yet had so much for long-term Christians like us. Each message is so balanced with scripture, warmth and humor, relevant illustrations.

I love the warmth of the people of Journey. We are a wonderful mix of ages, backgrounds, abilities, gifts, and needs, but the Lord is the common denominator that makes it work so well. Every church has people, and people sin, but I don't sense or hear of bickering, malice, and gossip at Journey. At least it has not permeated and poisoned our congregation as some I have experienced.

Unlike the many churches we visited before, Journey feels fresh and alive every Sunday. And I come away spiritually and emotionally renewed and rejuvenated. May the Lord bless Journey Church.

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I was seeking a church where people didn't dress to prove prosperity and where they didn't rush past, ignoring newcomers or those on the fringes to get to those they already knew. I wanted a message for my life, not a sermon for the ages. I wanted music that

touched me — where I could clap, move and sing, or cry with quiet joy, sorrow, or something in between. I found these things and more at Journey.

At Journey I found people who question life but find answers and comfort in faith. I found service that uses my skills, but stretches me just a little more. I found people with real needs and problems who've begun to teach me that it's safe and right to share some of my own. I've found a church that is not satisfied with the status quo but strives for relevance and to know the next challenge from God.

At Journey I'm learning who God really is. That discovery has brought me peace, hope, contentment and joy. I'd made my way through various denominations, and for years I did the "I'm spiritual, but not religious" routine so as to excuse the absence of God in my life. He brought me back to Him in a most dynamic way! Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Journey.

MY JOURNEY STORY

Journey Church means to me having the chance to get to know others that want to be better people through an active faith in Christ. Journey Church means a place where people are equal. It means a place where people are valued for their God-given gifts and where we have

an opportunity to use those gifts to benefit His church. Journey Church and the people there make me love to go to church.

When my husband and I married we got involved in a church where I'd grown up. The environment felt fake and condemning. We tried another church but were blown away at how two-faced people seemed who claimed they loved one another in Jesus' name. Thankfully friends invited us to Journey Church, and we've never looked back.

My husband and I have learned who the other is while attending Journey. Because of Journey Church and the people here I've chosen to be better, to be happy, to believe that God is good and trustworthy. I've chosen to be forgiving and a servant. I am trying to be generous, and I am trying to be a leader. I am trying to become more like Christ everyday.

Journey Church trusts us with so much knowing we are not perfect but that we were created in Christ's image and have purpose and gifts that will benefit the church. I feel like I can be a person in progress while still working for Christ's church. I like that I didn't have to "arrive" as the perfect Christian before I could be used for His church. Journey Church has impacted my relationship with other people because I am free to be

me while trying to be like Christ.

MY JOURNEY STORY

I started going to Journey because I was at a time in my life when I was searching. I have attended church most of my life, but things were going on that I did not understand. God used Journey to help me understand more of what and why these things were going on in my life.

The music and the message seemed to be directed solely at me at the times I needed them the most. I often wondered why the other people were even there. But part of my learning was that there are a lot of people that were dealing with the same things I do everyday. I often find myself reflecting on a song or part of message that helps me to remain more focused.

One of the most important factors of Journey for our house is the youth group. Our daughters LOVE the group and get up looking forward to going on Sunday morning rather than being drug to church.

When I came to Journey, I was lost and searching for answers. Today I am rewarded by God's blessings in countless ways. God used the awesome people at Journey to help me love myself so that others could also.

Journey has helped me build a true, loving relationship with my wife. Having God at the center of our relationship has built a commitment level like I have never felt before. And having God at the center of our relationship has helped both of us to love and respect each other in ways that did not happen in our previous marriages.

I understand that God is truly the one at work. But He is using Journey to touch lives in ways that I have never experienced before. Journey is able to help people understand that God loves everyone, and if we allow Him into our life, others will love