



Plate no.: One

Year range: 1955–1967

Title: Getting Started

Summary sentence:

Grade School (1960–67): Secular environment. Though not popular, I had an “identity.” Often in trouble and in fights because of lack of self-control. “Demoted” in 2nd grade to less-gifted students and from then on felt less intelligent than others.

Went to “Travel Logs” at MSU; sparked interest in history & geography.

First clear social consciousness: Kennedy’s assassination

California Trip

Start Date: 1924

1955

1960

1962

1965

End Date: 1967

Grandfather Papin’s Vision of Christ and Conversion

Born into middle, blue-collar working class

- Father Ernest (welder)
- Mother Ethel (homemaker)
- Simple Christian family (Baptist)
- Socially unsophisticated
- Large extended family (father oldest of 12 during Depression)
- Two older sisters
 - Karen (3 years older)
 - Joyce (15 years older)

Strong male role models:

Father: love/respect for people, stability, goodness, classical music.

Grandfather Papin (and mother):

faith, love for God, and spiritual life.

Dave G: practical Christianity, “cool guy” can be a Christian.

Pastor Sugden: Preached the greatness of God, eloquence at pulpit, love for books and learning; preached that God can do great things through ordinary people.

NOTE: Joyce, a “beauty queen” at Taylor College, married Dave G., a football player. I idolized them as personification of the “1950s gaiety”—the beautiful, the popular.

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Plate no.: Two

Year range: 1967–1970

Title: Depression: Identity Crisis

Summary sentence: Junior high years marked with crushed spirit, wounded pride; filled with anger & envy.

Arm accident left right arm & hand deformed, changed to left hand, limited ability in basketball.

Hated church activities and youth groups, but respected P. Sugden & preaching.

Baptized April 10, 1968.

Worked paper route for 6 years (1967–73). Played “pick-up” basketball, wasted time, aimless, not cool, unpopular.

Summer school for math to get into high school; with many angry inner-city kids; pushed around.



This is a dark time socially in America (shift from optimism of early 60s to the violence of the late 60s); nation undergoing a huge cultural shift from being self-consciously a “Christian” nation to a Post-Christian nation. I remember Walter Cronkite and the 6:30 news with Vietnam dead posted every evening. There were riots and much racial tension in school.

My room a “sanctuary” (upstairs and secluded) and my house a safe place in all of the chaos of drugs and rebellion. I knew my father loved me, but I had a difficult relationship with him. I would never do anything that would disappoint my father. My parents did not have the ability to discern what was happening in society and to adjust parenting to the fast-changing society. Spent many hours with my non-Christian friend Tom listening to rock songs. I am a child of the 60s, although kept from alcohol, dope, sex, and never embraced the pop culture as my own.

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Plate no.: Three

Year range: 1970–1973

Title: High School Years

Summary sentence: Depression continues, but first encounter.

Youth Pastor Jim Emery big influence; began to like high school youth group at church.

Summer 1972: First encounter at American Wilderness Institute in Colorado Rockies. Alone in valley. Grace of God: Began to sing songs in youth group & church.

Bill Gothard Seminar in spring of 1973; inspired with idea of memorization.

Start Date: 1970

1971

1972

End Date: 1973

Liked to read but had no direction and didn't reach much: Doyle's *White Company*, *Hound of the Baskervilles*; Hugo's *Hunchback*; Nordhoff/Hall's *Mutiny on the Bounty*; Melville's *Moby Dick*; Stoddard's *Lectures* (Vol. 9, English History).

Wasted time with friends; continued paper route.

After encounter, began to read. Initially, Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth*. Began to read the Bible and speak with fire and passion about God and spiritual things. Began to witness to my friend Tom; friends began to see a difference in my life. Depression of my early and mid-teens begins to lift.

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Plate no.: Four

Year range: 1973–1977

Title: College Years

Summary sentence:

Fall 1973, failed to make basketball team (bid to be popular with identity). Asked God, "What can I do/be?"

2nd Encounter—Promise: God would "favor" me.

Spring of 1974, 3rd Encounter—Promise: "Lord, let me never, never outlive my love for Thee."

Spring of 1976, 5th Encounter—Promise: That God would always be more to me than knowledge.

Summer of 1976, 2nd trip to France.

Start Date: 1973

1974

1975

1976

End Date: 1977

Sophomore year, low point in college: Girl problem, aimless, not motivated in studies.
Positive: Male Chorus.

Summer 1975, 4th Encounter: "Be to me like you were to the patriarchs of old."

Teacher: Dr. John Piper had deep and wonderful influence on me; became "reformed" and, for the first time in my life, deeply motivated to study. Read Edwards' *Religious Affections*, Calvin's *Institutes*, J.R.R. Tolkien, and C.S. Lewis.

NOTE: From the spring of 1976 to the spring of 1977, I was on a spiritual "high." The encounters I had over the last 4 years had the cumulative effect of bonding me deeply to God. He was my single passion and desire. Spent hours outside by the lake and woods alone with God in prayer. These were foundational times that set my life on the course it would take.

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Plate no.: Five

Year range: 1977–1983

Title: The Dark Night of the Soul

Summary sentence:

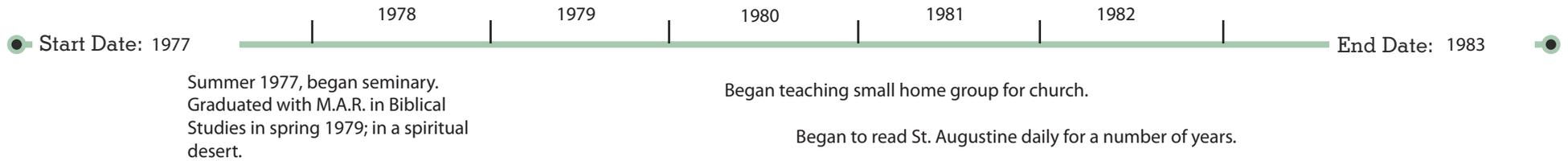
Spring 1979 met "Judy."

Spring of 1980 engaged to Judy.

Spring of 1981 married to Judy.

"Dark night" began on graduation week at botched "Reflections Talk" at Senior Banquet; began journal that night.

Married 9 years to Judy (1981–1990); the first 2 years the most harmonious, started drifting apart spiritually in 1984, and intensified in 1988 when I began teaching in seminary full time.



1978–1979 reading:

- John of the Cross' *Dark Night of the Soul*
- Hengstenberg's *Ecclesiastes*
- Dickens' *David Copperfield*
- F. Nietzsche
- T. Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain*

Began doctoral studies at the Dropsie College in fall of 1980. Advisor Dr. Stephen Geller taught me:

- critical thinking
- humanities
- language skills
- research
- poetry and literary criticism

Important reading:

- Mannix' *Those About to Die* introduced me to the Greco-Roman world.
- Durant's *History of Civilization*
- Taine's *English Literature*
- Sir James Frazer's *Golden Bough*

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Summary sentence:

Winter of 1984, 6th encounter—Reading Spurgeon's autobiography when sick with flu; glory opened and God "returned."

Taught at Manna; began to put together ideas for my biblical theology teaching.

May 1990: Judy left me; divorced me in January 1991. I lost "innocence" and boyhood immaturity, started to become a man.
Met "Lucy" in weakness; she = "feminine archetype," death of "beautiful woman" motif. Understood Deut. 6:4-5 for the first time.

May 1987, finished Graduate Program.



With 7th encounter, 3 things resulted:

1. Deeper desire to preach/teach. Began teaching Sunday school as well as home Bible study.
2. Judy resented this, and we began to drift apart.
3. Read the Puritans deeply (esp. Sibbes).

Summer of 1986, began to teach Greek at SOE.

Winter 1987, began to teach OT at SOE.

Fall of 1987, began to teach full time at SOE.

Began reading intensely:

- T. Merton (esp., *No Man Is an Island*, *The Sign of Jonas*)
- D. Bonhoeffer

Peer mentoring on SOE staff. G. Renner: "Thinking outside of the box"

Read R. Otto's *The Idea of the Holy*.

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Plate no.: Seven

Year range: 1992–1999

Title: Starting a Family

Summary sentence:

Met Kathy in April 1992 and married in Dec. of 1992.

Lived in Lansdowne, PA, from 1995 to 2000.

Father-in-law Ray and I become very close; both of us by experience and reading moving toward a sacramental worldview.

Jeremy born June 10, 1996.

Summer of 1999, experience with the Jesus Prayer; Read *The Way of the Pilgrim*.

Abigail born Dec. 10, 1994.



Important Reading:

- John of the Cross' *Ascent of Mount Carmel* (1993)
- Aquinas (1994)
- E. Underhill's *Mysticism* (1996)
- John of Ruysbrueck's *Spiritual Espousals* (1995–96)

Sept. 1995, began attending St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.

Fall of 1999, sold house to move to religious community.

Journal of 11/17/98:
"I do not belong to Athens; I belong to Jerualem."

Read Carl Jung on archetypes and dreams (1998).

Continuing to teach at SOE ----->

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Plate no.: Eight

Year range: 2000–2008

Title: Life in Community

Summary sentence:

March 2000, came to community to “test a call.”

Began to home-school children ----->

Feb. 2001, ordained.

Oct. 2002, became “professed” members.



Nov. 16, 2001, Father died.

Spring of 2002, left SOE and became Dean of Holy Trinity Seminary operating out of the community. At community, entered deeply into pastoral work of all kinds. Overcame fear of being in front of people; became a pastor.

Crisis in denomination; began to take on more responsibility at community.

2008, community falls apart. We leave in Feb. 2009.

Critical reading during this time:

- Von Balthasar's *Cosmic Liturgy*
- Aquinas (cont.)
- *The Philokalia* (esp., St. Maximus the Confessor)

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Plate no.: Nine

Year range: 2009–2011

Title: My Latest Phase

Summary sentence:

Feb. 2009, moved with in-laws to Westminster, MD.

We transfer to Christ the King Church.

Kathy gets full-time employment;
I home-school children;
Work part-time at church;
Work adjunct for (Bethel) SOE.

Summer 2011, begin to work for CUGN.

Spring 2011, finish home-schooling children.

2010

Start Date: 2009

End Date: 2011

Economic difficulties:
On food stamps and state medical.

Fall 2009, enlightenment into my lifelong problem with envy and healing process.

Important reading:

- Reread T. Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain* in preparation for retreat (Summer 2010)
- Iain Mathew's *The Impact of God: Soundings from St. John of the Cross*
- Gordon Mursell's *English Spirituality*

August 2010, retreat at Gethsemane Abbey in Kentucky. New phase of prayer in the *American Anglican Breviary*. Lord's Prayer comes alive for the first time.

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