

# RIGHTEOUS WAY OF THINKING

by THE SILENT ANGEL



# Righteous Way of Thinking

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# Chapter 1:

## Born Into Faith

The very first time I was baptized, I was a kid. Not a baby. I actually got baptized much later for a Catholic church. I think I was about 3 or 4. Pretty young, but most people get baptized when they were infants. That was my first introduction to my faith.

However, back then, because I was small, I was too young to understand who Jesus was, or what faith is, and as a kid I just assumed everybody had the same faith and believed in this one God. Until I got a little bit older.

I went to a catholic school. As a kid, because of my disability I felt like I was different. Obviously, I felt like I didn't have many friends. I always thought I was odd. This was the beginning of the growth of my faith.

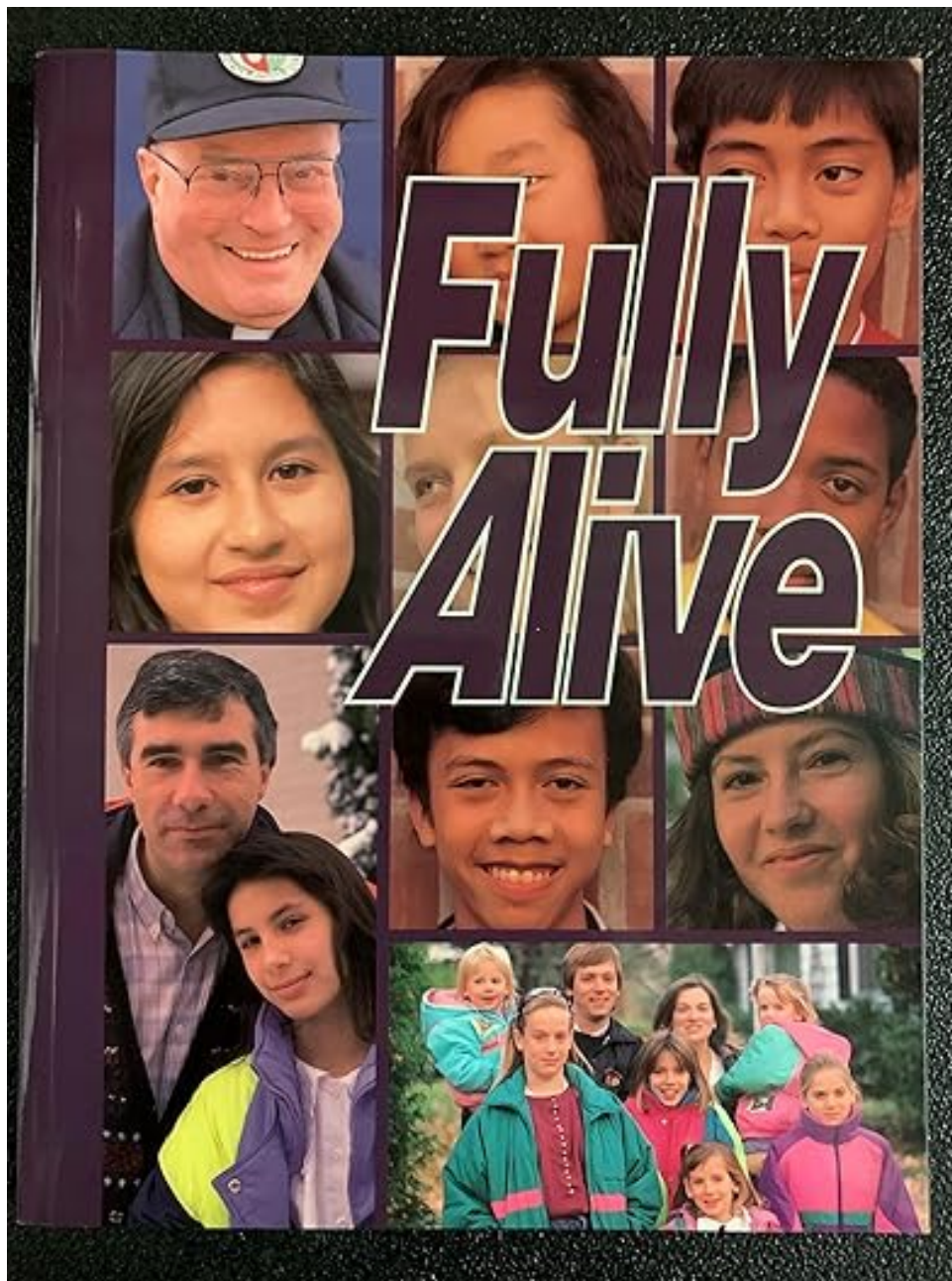
At school, being an extremely shy kid, there were books about the bible in the classroom. And I remember reading about this one guy.

It was encouraging that this one guy who did nothing wrong was willing to die for all the wrongs we've ever done.

I'm pretty sure you can guess who this person is.

It was enlightening to me. Here's a person who wasn't rich, who didn't come from a wealthy or important family, but is willing to die for our sin...

There was this one book called "Fully Alive," it was like a textbook, and there was a story about this kid who got bullied.



This resonated with me and since then I started to have sympathy for people who are less because I feel like I am one of those people.





## Chapter 2: Losing My Religion

Even as a young kid, I was known for being someone who is really spiritual. I was in a Catholic school and I thought everyone was supposed to act a certain way. But I had many problems with classmates.



One of them stole my Mortal Combat cassette tape—after I let him borrow it, he never gave it back.

I was naive and I was a floor mat. I had this belief that everyone is good. This was my first life lesson that I could not trust everyone. Ever since, I have had a problem trusting people.

This became my Achilles heel. I trust people but I don't truly trust them. I am always cautious that a person I trust could wrong me. This is where I developed my trust issue.

And I remember the first time I felt suspicious about the Catholic Church. During elementary school, I always heard about the Pope and I knew what the Pope was.

On Youth Day, it was a big event that the Pope was actually coming to Toronto. I remember watching on TV about this great event. I was surprised that the Pope was this old person who could barely speak or walk. I know he was speaking a different language,



but still I could tell that he wasn't speaking well. I know he's an old person. I guess that's the issue I have. I don't have a problem with the Pope as a person, but I do have a problem with the idea of the Pope. People treat him like a king or like he was God himself.



People who touched him were in tears. Like he could perform miracles, like he has some kind of healing power by touching him. In my heart, I knew there was

something wrong. Something suspicious about how people treat him.

In the bible, at least in the Old Testament, God is a jealous God who hates idols and other Gods. As you may know, one of the commandments is not to worship any other God but him. But it seems people are doing this with the Pope.

So back then, I thought that was kind of odd. A contradiction of what the Pope is teaching. The reason why he doesn't want idols is more towards how we put faith in something that does not love us back.

For example, think about a guy who is obsessed with a girl, but the girl doesn't want anything to do with him, so he's wasting his energy on someone who does not love him back.

So, who does it harm? It harms the guy, because he's the one wasting his energy on something that doesn't care for him back.

So, the idea of the Pope feels hypocritical because even Paul himself did not receive praise, he thought only Jesus should be praised. But this is the Catholic Church, you would think they would know better. The Pope makes himself out to be a King to be worshipped, but we should only be worshipping God himself.

I had those thoughts as a kid and ever since then I always felt something suspicious about the Catholic church.

So ever since then, I guess I became a "religious person," but I don't want to use the word religious because I have problems with worldly churches. Worldly churches are churches that are influenced by

the way of the world— money, fame, greed, and selfishness.

I feel some churches are hiding something and that they're not being truthful. In some cases, it's not the church's fault, I think they believe they're doing right. But because of how the world is, they tend to hide certain things. Especially my experience with other churches I've been into.

The churches that the bible talks about are about loving and taking care of each other. They're places where everybody is welcome and they can come as they are, they don't need to be worried about their sinful nature. Which is pretty much the whole point of Jesus' death. So, even though technically I have been Catholic most of my life, I have personally thought of myself as a Christian more than as a Catholic. I still celebrate Christmas and Easter, although Christmas Day was not actually the day Jesus was

born, biblically, and I don't read the Catholic version of the bible when I read the bible.

However, even though I'd heard the stories, I didn't start intentionally reading the bible until much later in my life. Mainly because of my disability. Fortunately, as technology developed over time and audiobooks became a thing, I was able to read the bible with their help.



# Chapter 3:

## My New Sanctuary

Throughout my high school years and my college years, I was not really going to any churches.

However, I always had my faith in God. It's not because I didn't want to go to church, it's just during elementary and high school, you're kind of forced to go to church because it's Catholic school, so there's church within it.





Also, my parents don't go to church every Sunday—at least not anymore.

It was actually after college when I started attending church again. This was because my friend called me out of the blue and he was inviting me to a church he was attending. At the time, this blew my mind, because I didn't think of him as a church-going person.

So, I end up visiting him at church, and I found myself returning quite often. However, this church had its problems, though at the time I didn't care. Also, in that time, it was something I needed in my life.

During this time, I had very few friends, like one or two, and it was a lonely time for me. I'm finished with college and I don't know where to go next. It was a stage of unknowing and a time of developing my version of myself and who I was. I felt like everybody

around me was successful, they had great jobs and were getting married. This church has a lot of community, which is something I needed at that time. People are in your life constantly. And when it comes to my identity crisis, I felt like this was a place where I fit in. Here, I could use my faith, which was a big part of my identity, in a way that makes sense.



# Chapter 4:

## A Quagmire Church

The church evangelized to an extreme extent. They're very strict about it, and they put a lot of importance on people getting baptized into their church— more than anything else, I feel. They focus on *Matthew 28:18-20* too much:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Don't get me wrong, this is very important scripture, and I do believe evangelism is essential for our faith.

But the way the church uses this scripture is a misuse of the good word, I personally feel.

Now I'm not a theologian or anything, but what I notice with this church, and many preachers, is they like to convince people that they are sinners and that they need God. But for me that does not express the love that Jesus has for all of us and wants to show.

I believe that we need to preach that we are sinners, but that's okay, because Jesus saved us from our sin (not the other way around). I think that is the good news. That there is a way out from our sin because of Jesus.

So, it seems to me that people like to preach that "if you don't repent you will go to hell." But people really don't want to hear "you will go to hell." So it makes more sense to talk about the good side of the good news. What they really should be preaching is that

you don't have to be a slave to your sin because Jesus died for your sin. That's much more welcoming than telling people they're going to hell. It's almost like they have it backwards. You attract more bees with honey than vinegar.

That church had a thing called Bible Study, where someone comes up and asks you to study the bible. I explained that I had a learning disability so studying is quite difficult. But they misuse the word "study"—it's mostly just talking.



This is the set-up: usually in a coffee shop or library, one guy reads the bible to you and talks about it while another guy takes notes, and I, who the study is for, do nothing. It sounds innocent enough, but there was a hidden agenda... it's really a way to get you to become a member of their church.

They have these “Lessons” you go through. First, you talk about the Kingdom of God, and then about Discipleship, and then about Sin. They use these lessons to explain what they do and believe. For example, Kingdom of God is about Fellowship, which is why they have a Disciple to look after you. But, when it gets to Sin Studies, they start to be aggressive with your sin towards God.

Looking at it now, it's a manipulation for you to get baptized to their church. They guilt you to get baptized. This is the part of the church that, even back then, I found ridiculous or cult-like. It's weird



because they couldn't find any sin that I'd done. They noticed I was a shy person and I didn't talk to people much, so they used that as my sin. I don't think that's a sin that's mentioned in the bible.



But they gathered me with some other guys I didn't really know at some guy's house. It was me, the two other guys from my bible study, a Leader and his partner. And they all started telling me I was sinful and wrong for not trying to talk to people. They used the word "Repent" a lot, trying to get me to repent,

because once I repent, I'm allowed to get baptized, according to their belief. Even back then I didn't feel like this church understood correctly.

# Chapter 5:

## The Second Baptism

That night, in my head, I thought this was an odd thing that they'd done and it actually made me feel anger. But I thought I could at least try to be more outgoing. They couldn't find any sin about me because I wasn't open to it. I took their advice. Not because I was guilty, but because I'd often been lonely.

I used that meeting in a way that they weren't intending, and decided I could grow and become more social, but not because I took their guilt seriously. It's like someone giving you advice that you already knew you needed to change about yourself. So it's not a huge epiphany, but it's still something you need to hear someone else say to you. They used it as a sin of mine, but I knew it was just something I needed to change about myself.

About a week after, they came up to me and told me I was ready to get baptized, even though I didn't feel I'd changed at all. I was still just attempting to be more social, but I hadn't had the chance to change yet. So I knew the sin didn't matter to the church and it was more about getting people in the church more than anything else. I still took their advice and began to be more social, even though it didn't matter anymore for the church.

I said OK and agreed to get baptized because, when I was baptized as a kid, I didn't make the decision for myself. It was a decision I feel my parents made for me. And then confirmation- which is a Catholic thing- is something you do in school when you're a little bit older. I felt like it was more of a school thing— the school decided for me, not really me. So that's why I didn't feel like confirmation was really up to me.

When I was a baby it was my parents, and when I was

confirmed it was my school. This time, it was me choosing to be baptized for myself.



I was baptized at someone's condo in their jacuzzi.



# Chapter 6:

## Deception Behind the Curtains

Shortly after the baptism, a Pastor from another country sent a letter criticizing the church leaders.





The letter criticized the church for the things they led our Christian community to do. Mostly rebuking people in a vicious way. This letter changed the church. Many leaders left, also some members who were close to them. The church was in a weird transition. A lot of people asked me why I stayed. I thought the letter was a good thing because I never agreed with what they were teaching in the first place.

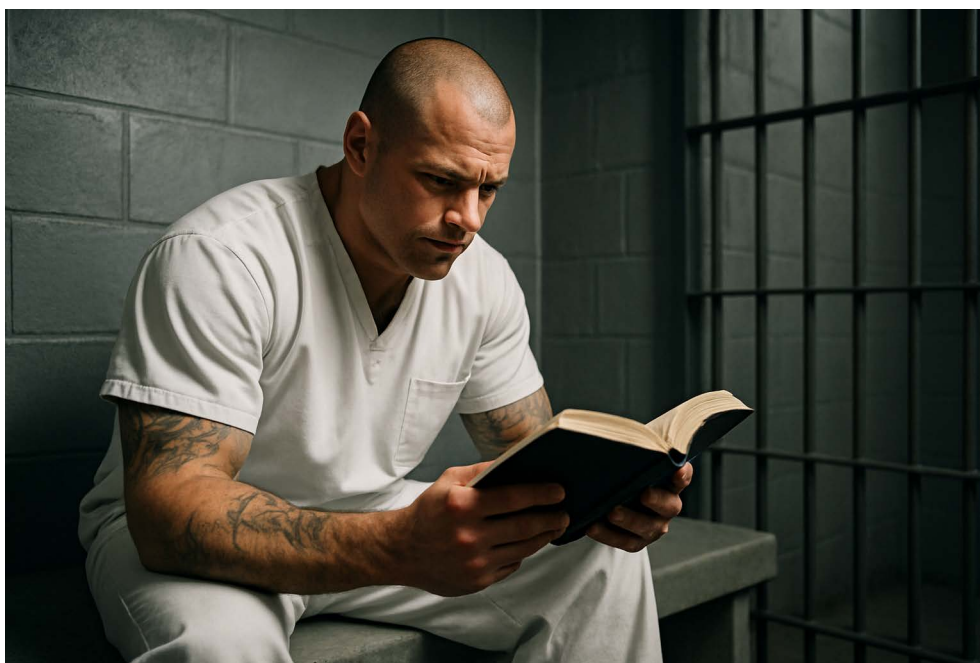
Secondly, I was always there for God. But in the years following the letter, I saw cracks forming and the old ways coming back into the church.

For one, there was always this feeling that there were favorites among the different cliques in that church. I feel the church prefers people who are married and people who are in college and university that might

become future leaders of the church. I think there's a big favoritism about what kind of clique you're a part of.

I still have many memories of the church. Most are good. For example, this church helped me learn about the bible. At that time, I don't think I would've ever learned as much at any church. I also learned about other beliefs, including reading the whole Quran. This church also helped me not to be shy and to open up to more people. This is something I never would've accomplished without the help of a church.

I also met one man who encouraged me in my faith. He was someone who I look up to as a Christian. He was a big, muscular former gang member who was imprisoned for reasons I can't say, but he read a lot about the bible in prison, and that's where he found his faith. Then, he ended up in this church.



I could tell he wasn't like any other leader in that church, he was very humble and understanding and didn't care about power or pride or how many people he could get baptized. This is why I respected him so much. To me, he was not only my "Discipler," but he was a great mentor.

But still, in the back of my head, I felt there was something lingering at this church that I couldn't put my finger on. Something hidden behind the curtains

of the church. For many years, it did not bug me, but slowly it started to reveal itself, the more I talked to the leaders and the people who had relationships with the leaders. For many years it did not effect me, until I started to notice these cliques that were forming.

I have problems with this church. But I'm grateful for getting what I got from it. But I personally think this church isn't great, at least for me at that time. I guess it depends on what kind of person you are. You would have a great time if you're part of the clique that they like, but it's worrying how they treat different cliques.



## Chapter 7: Church-hopping

I was at that specific church for 18 years and only recently left. I left during COVID. The church was not meeting in person and because of that space I was able to get a good evaluation over the years in that church.

Although most of it was good, the real problem was more towards the leaders than anything else. COVID led me to experience other possibilities when it comes to other churches. For a little while, I was visiting other churches. One specifically changed the way how I always felt, but didn't actually know there was a church like this. Which is the church I'm a member of now.

When I left the old church, it was a perfect time in my life to change things up. I felt like I got everything I needed from them. I learned a lot about the bible and led a bible talk at a small home church. A bible talk is like a bible study with a whole group of people. One person shares and goes deep with a scripture. I led one. The home church is the host, where the bible talk takes place, which I led through Zoom during the pandemic for a little bit.





Church has many potentials, but some are too focused on being “the right church” instead of being a loving church. So, I felt my old church has good intention, but gets some things wrong in my opinion. They believe that they save people, but in reality, Jesus saved people and people come to church for Jesus. So instead of tricking people into joining their church, they should have faith that Jesus’ love will bring people to church. Not only Jesus himself, but his example of his love.

What I’m learning now, as I go to different churches, is that Jesus shows us how to love. It’s really that simple. A church just needs to learn how to love its members instead of rebuking each other when somebody does something wrong, which I feel my old church was wrong in doing. We’re human, there will be arguments and stuff like that, but that’s why it’s so important to learn how to forgive each other.

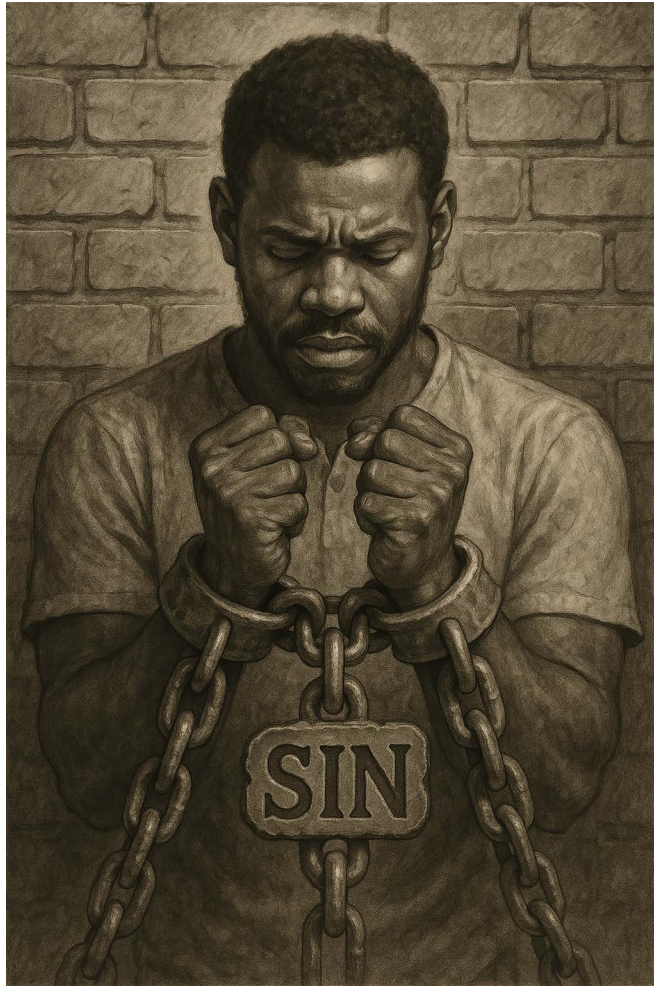
One time at church, there was a guy that was a little bit older, but not too old. I could tell that he has a certain disability. Overall, he was not a close friend, he was just someone I'd see at church. I'd always say hi to him and have small conversations, but nothing too deep. At church, we are supposed to share our sins with each other. We do this in order to get help or be prayed for, but I don't think people actually put much into this because it's hard to share your deepest sins with someone you don't really know that much. Usually, you'd share this with a leader of a home church.

So what people end up doing is sharing minor sins. Things like swearing and small stuff like that. One day, this man came up to me and told me one of his sins. His sin was extremely bad. Something very sexual. Which I will not go into very much detail. I fell into a trap of being judgmental and found myself rebuking him. The thing I remember him saying is that "I know

this is wrong and other members of the church have already rebuked me about this, but rebuking me would not help me. What I need now is not to be rebuked. What I need now is love."

Since then, I learned how rebuking is wrong and does not really help with sin. I wish I could have handled that better but it also taught me how to be more loving and less judgmental. This is an example that even I can fall into this church culture and become judgmental and less loving.

So, as you can see, even I could be cruel and unforgiving. But now I learned to be more understanding and gentle with others. Especially one who shares their deepest sins.



When it comes to rebuking, it's only good when someone is really destroying their own life. I can only think of situations like when someone is taking too much drugs. If somebody complains about their life but isn't doing anything about it, that's when rebuking is necessary.

For example, think of someone who is drinking every day, and every day he passes out, and he can't even remember what he did the last day. Of course, the drinking is costing him his job, his relationships with wife and kids, and he constantly complains about his life but refuses to give up drinking. This is where rebuking is necessary. However, you still need to understand that it's not easy for the other person to go cold turkey, which is why it is important to have people to help you in your life, which the church provides. This is where you need to be patient and rebuke in a loving way, and to not be quick to judge.

Churches are going through some problems, but the good ones get it. While my old church is so obsessed with trying to get people in and harshly rebuking people for their sin, the church I'm in right now has some problems but is humble enough to know it needs help from other churches. And it understands

that its focus is to love its community like God loves.  
The focus is on Jesus.

# Chapter 8:

## It's Not About You

I remember reading somewhere that “it's not about you.” In this world we're surrounded by people and advertising and everything is all about your career and your success and your money. It's all about you. What I've learned through my experience in my life so far, through the many different churches I've been a part of, is I need to focus on others and then I can find true purpose. As long as I have this mindset and focus on others before me, it really doesn't matter what church I go to.

If I focus to love my friends, volunteer at church, take care of my family, true purpose lies in this. Not in greed, money, power, your own pride, or anything that's selfish.

Think about it.

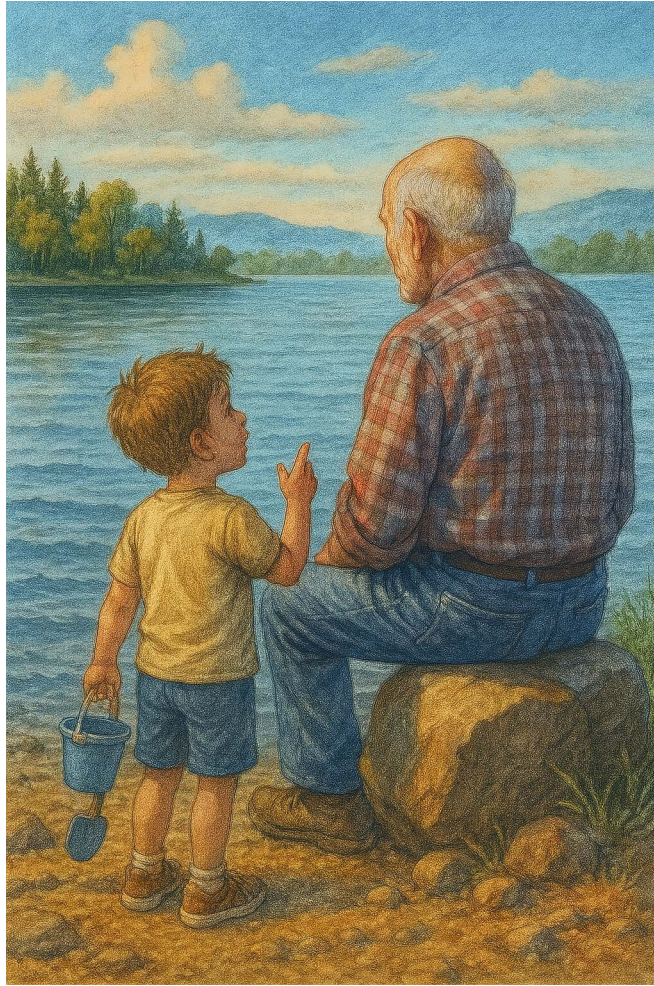
When we have children, your whole life is all about them and you put everything that you wanted for yourself- your desires, all that- to the side, while you make sure your children get the best of this world.

So, instead of “religious person,” I would rather say a spiritual person. Or a faith-based person. But, honestly, these are just words and that’s all they are. I’d rather you look at me as a person and judge for yourself. I don’t care what you call me, what matters is what I do and how I do it. I have learned that people could say what they want, think about you what they want, but the reality is what you think of what you think you are.

There was once a kid who went to his grandpa and said “there are people that like me and people that hate me and people that despise me,” and he asked



his grandpa “how could people see so many different things of me?”



And the grandpa answered “People who don’t know you will create or see different versions of you and they will judge you by many different things. How you dress, how you act, or how you look. Even your

ethnicity. But the most important thing is the version you create for yourself. Focus on being good. Be kind. Be loving."

# Chapter 9:

## As Simple As Love

What I'm learning from all these churches is that they do have good intentions. But they seem to lack one thing that matters. And that is: just love each other. It seems so simple, but it isn't.

I notice these churches are too worldly and forget to simply focus on love. Somehow they seem to forget that one simple thing. It seems that they prioritize how many people attend church and are too focused on how they follow their own doctrine. Every church has its own doctrine, which is not bad, but they seem to prioritize that more than love.

This is where I feel most churches, if not all, fail.

Most churches do these things right: forgive people, serve the poor, and do great things for the community. All these things are great. However, I feel churches do this like they're making a checklist of good deeds that heaven will mark after they've died. In reality, that's not how it goes. If you do good with your own desire and heart, that's when you can really receive enlightenment. This is how to truly experience heaven.

Churches don't need to look glamorous or be huge. Music teams don't need to be great choirs or anything like that. Leaders don't need to be super intelligent theologians. Even members do not need to be perfect. In fact, that's preferable.

In an amazing church, everyone is willing to volunteer, help each other, and accept everyone, whether poor, rich, or of a different sexual identity— yes, even

they deserve to be there and have earned the right to be as loved as anybody else in the church.

Most churches are so consumed about getting the best, the most talented, the most suitable, they miss the simple things like letting people be themselves. Whoever wants to help should be welcome to help and whoever wants to be helped should be helped. No matter what talents or lack of talents, everyone should have a place to worship.



# Chapter 10:

## Righteous Way of Thinking

I don't see things from the ground level, but from all angles. Even when going through all these churches, one thing that's certain is that the human race is destructive. We go to war and hurt each other. And it can feel like there's no hope for us. For how things are going right now, it seems like we could end ourselves.

In this world, as far as I know, there's no aliens, and if there were aliens, they're probably laughing their head off at us humans destroying ourselves and destroying the earth.



So, that's the point of Jesus. Not only that his example shows us how to be good with each other, which should be enough, but he went further and took all of our shortcomings and he, as a perfect person, took it all for us. It's not about if Jesus is real or not, but for humanity to survive, he has to be real. And if not, then we're doomed. The universe is a big place, and Jesus fulfills the hope that we are not nothing. We're not just a speck over this big huge universe, because once we're gone, there's nothing.



I like to think of the big picture. People can think inside or outside of the box. But there's also a box outside of the box. Forget about the person. Even the story of Jesus is worth believing in.

The story of God is that he has all the powers in the world, he could do anything, but he chose to die for us. And that's the example of love that he teaches.

