

For this class, we were instructed to interview three different people on a topic of our choice. I chose faith and religion as my subject, as I am interested in learning about other religions, faiths, and belief systems. I also chose faith as my research topic because I am currently going through the process of discovering spirituality myself. Throughout this research and interview process, I aim to become more educated on different religious perspectives and apply the newfound knowledge to my life. This interview was conducted with Nancy Gail Gartner, a 68-year-old homemaker who follows the teachings of the Mormon Church.

Nancy Gartner is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, informally known as the Mormon Church or the LDS Church. They believe that God sent his son, Jesus Christ, to save mankind from their sins. Their teachings were carried out by their prophet, Joseph Smith, who preached about the beliefs of the Church and about God's will. Nancy found her faith at the age of 27, where she took missionary lessons in Peson, Arizona. She was originally raised in the Christian Science Church, but converted after a man installing her telephone invited her to church.

One of the things I want to know is why faith is important to people - what does it bring to them? Nancy's response to the question was "It guides everything I do all the time. I follow my savior and his example and throughout my life I've seen blessings from following my faith and following my savior. I guess you could say I tested it, I tested my testimony; I've seen too many things to know where the blessings are coming from. I have no doubt." I asked her to elaborate on what else faith had brought to her, and she believes all that she has been given has been given to her through God. Through tears, she mentioned her husband, the importance of family, and the opportunity to be lifted up every day. "To know there is something more after this life, and that I want to live my life on earth so that I can be blessed forever with my family. It's a whole paradigm shift." I can relate to feeling blessed for having a great family, but I haven't subscribed to the concept of eternal life with your loved ones. It's an idea that a lot of religions have - life after death - and to people with faith in God, it seems as if they live their lives for the eternal life promised to them.

Throughout my life, I've heard stories and seen people change due to a shift in mindset, a newfound sense of direction and purpose, or having a new belief system. I wanted to know how faith had changed Nancy as a person - she is loving, warm, and welcoming, and she says part of who she is is because of her faith. "I remember one time my daughter Becky remembers one time seeing a change. So maybe I was kind of more loving - I don't know. I just know I like myself better, and I try." Tears were shed here, too. Faith brought out the best version of herself that she could be, and God is constantly inspiring her to do so.

The last thing I wanted to know about was how faith brought hope, direction, and purpose to a person's life. For Nancy, the promise of life after death is what drives her. "Because I know this life is not the end, because I know that there is life eternal, this is just - life on earth is just a trial; it's just a test, that I know it's my only and only change at this test so I want to do my best so I can be with my family in eternity. I can see that if I live the best I can here, the Savior

makes up the difference, but it says in the Scripture, after all I can do - I need to make my best effort here so that I can enjoy being with them and my Savior in eternity.”

Nancy Gartner provided me with information on the LDS Church, but the most valuable information came from her personal beliefs and perspective on faith. To see a strong woman cry when speaking about the impact God and the Church has left on her made me see that faith is an indescribable treasure that some people have. Her story has inspired me to continue my journey into faith and religion, and to see what the unknown holds.