

# OUR GOD SAVES

## Sample Chapter

### The Old Brown Car

*Valerie Howard*

My story began before I was born, or even thought of, for that matter.

My parents started attending church together when they were dating in high school. They attended the same church when they got engaged, when they got married, and when they had me three years later. I first attended this church (outside the womb) when I was two weeks old, and I've attended almost every Sunday since. Because of their faith and commitment to God, my parents were an open book about religion and the Bible and Jesus. I always asked them whatever questions I could think of, and they would always find the answers for me one way or another.

I remember one day, when I was three or four years old, I was riding in our old brown car while my mother was driving. I talked to her about Heaven and Jesus dying on the cross and I remember burying my face in the crook of my arm to breathe some sort of prayer to God. I don't remember the words I whispered, or if I merely thought them, but it's the first time that I remember praying anything at all.

Looking back on that day now, I don't think I understood the crucial details of salvation at that age. I don't think I understood that I was a sinner who had rebelled against God even as a toddler. I didn't realize that every stern "no" I had spoken to my parents was disobedience against God, every tantrum I'd thrown when I hadn't gotten my own way had earned me the status of "sinner", and everything I had done out of sheer self-worship had separated me from God as a criminal in His court.

I don't think I completely grasped the fact then that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh and that He had lived a perfect life before He went to the cross to die in my place. I'm sure I hadn't understood that Jesus had been my substitution—that He had borne God's wrath for every sin I had already committed or would ever commit, and I'm not even sure I knew that He rose from the dead three days after His sin absorption.

I don't think God saved me on that day in the old brown car when I was too young to be in kindergarten, but I know that gradually during my childhood, I came to believe and understand the good news of the gospel.

Though things were far from perfect in my life thanks to some "mean girl" problems at school and many medical issues (which included being strapped in a hard plastic back brace 23 hours each day for over a year), Jesus began to change me from the inside out.

I remember one day at recess I tried to invent a version of Freeze Tag called "Bible Verse Tag" so my friends would be motivated to memorize some of the Bible verses I had memorized from AWANA. Another time, we had to make a clay project in third grade art class and I made Jesus' empty tomb. My public school art teacher gave me a confused smile when I explained to her what I had created. I'd invite my friends to AWANA, Vacation Bible School, and youth group activities as much as I could. In high school, I proudly wore my Christian-themed T-shirts, my "What Would Jesus Do?"

bracelet, and carried my car keys on my “Christians aren’t perfect, only forgiven” key ring. I peppered my bedroom walls with Christian posters and got involved in almost every ministry I could at my church from watching babies in the nursery to singing in the choir and teaching Sunday school.

It’s not because of my taste in T-shirts, bracelets, and extra-curricular activities that I know I trusted Christ at some point while I was growing up. It’s not because of my old bedroom plastered with colorful posters that I know I’m on my way to Heaven when I leave this world someday. I may not be able to pinpoint the exact moment (or even the exact year) that I trusted Christ as my Savior from the penalty of my sins, but I know that at some time along the way, that is exactly what I did.

I know because I still trust in Him today.

If you want to read more personal salvation testimonies, grab “Our God Saves” at [www.amazon.com/author/valeriehoward](http://www.amazon.com/author/valeriehoward) today!

