

Kali's Story

Admin's note: This is the testimony of my fiance, Kali. She is also former UPC, and we actually met through this Web site. God truly does work in mysterious ways!

Preface: This is my testimony. I am a completely fulfilled and God-loving individual who has found so much joy after leaving the UPC. It has been a tough journey but I am thankful for the pastors (in the UPC) I had and still admire them and have no hard feelings towards them. I believe they are wonderful people. I also believe people in the UPC are saved and have a truly wonderful relationship with God. I ask that you read this testimony and find either hope or understanding in what I have gone through. This is my personal life story and I hope it speaks to those who are seeking to renew their faith or identify with someone who has been through something similar. (That is what I needed more than anything when I left. I needed to know others felt or had felt the way I did.) I pray you never lose sight of God and what He has in store for you. He will NEVER leave you or forsake you. You are His child forever.

My story with the UPC lasted about four years. But before we get to that let me give you some back story about me. My name is Kali Rasmussen. I was born and raised in Renton, WA, by my wonderful mother Lisa Rasmussen. She supported our family by living out her passion of painting beautiful pictures of animals. (designsbylisa.com) My family was not your conventional family. (Take that back, pretty conventional, with 50% + parents divorcing these days). Anywho, my parents divorced when I was about 3. My younger brother and I had mediated visits with my father up until I was about 6. I told my mother I no longer wanted to have the visits because they caused me a great amount of stress. I think this was one of the best decisions I made in my younger years. Now my dad, my brother and I have dinner on occasion and have a good

relationship. I am happy to say everything worked out, but obviously it took time.

My mom remarried when I was seven to a man I thought was the best thing since sliced bread. Turns out the illusion he portrayed was just that and about 2 months into their marriage it all crumbled. I was in shock at the kind of man he was and the kind of strain he put on my family. My mom eventually divorced him when I was about 16.

Now a little bit more about me. I had to grow up quickly, like any oldest child in a divorce. I was the adult my mom leaned on, the one who relayed messages, the one who told the truth, the one who lied, the one who protected her younger brother, the one who tried to make things go as smoothly as possible. I'm no martyr but I sure as heck can identify with children of divorce. It is tough and heartbreaking, but most importantly it made me the strong God loving person I am today. I consider it a testimony to how God works in mysterious ways. I was an outgoing and energetic child. I played sports, had friends, and did really well in school despite all the hardships in my family life. (I thank my mom and grandma for this. They kept me positive and supported me.) Hated math though, loathed it!

I stayed extremely busy when I was able to get a job, get a car and participate in EVERY extracurricular activity possible in high school. I did this to avoid my home life. Looking back it was those positive decisions to do something with my time that kept me out of trouble. I always tell my mom that my brother and I could have made a turn for the worst but we didn't because of how much she loved us and how proud she was of us. We used our time to our advantage and always strived to make ourselves better.

And onto where this story collides with the UPC. Here we go! I was raised Catholic but didn't practice much except Easter and Christmas. You know those crazy C&E Christians. (I think there is nothing wrong with them, just a little humor) On weekends

when I was with my grandmother when I was very young she took my brother and I to mass and I played with that thing that you kneel on to pray. I was always bored out of my mind. My mom took us to a non-denominational church through elementary school off and on. Eventually we stopped going. In high school I visited friends' youth group meetings during the week but never really got involved. I have always believed in God. I even read the Bible cover to cover a few times in my middle school and high school years. I read Christian books and always considered myself a good Christian. I never really thought I had to be defined by a church. God knew my heart and that was the most important thing to me.

Here is the low down. When I was 16 my mom was going through her second divorce, which I was thankful for, but it caused a great amount of stress. My step-dad was controlling, manipulative, emotionally and verbally abusive. I never wanted to be home. Instead, I worked, was on the drill team, was in a business club and was getting A's on top of that. One day I was approached by a classmate to get some help with an assignment in history class. He proceeded to ask me to church and eventually I went and we began dating. As you can guess it was a UPC church and I cried my eyes on the first service and thought every song and everything the pastor said was straight to me. I was hooked. I was in an extremely vulnerable state, with my home life in chaos and living a busy, busy life. Church was one more thing that I could throw myself into, so I did. I was in the choir and I went to prayer at every service. I felt so connected and loved by everyone there. I didn't want to ever leave. I was getting support and appreciation. I felt so satisfied with all the attention I got and I loved when people would tell me: "Good for you coming to God and being saved even without your family. Just keep praying your family will eventually be 'saved' too." Thank the Lord God almighty this never came to pass. I was in the UPC for four years and I prayed for my family daily thinking they were going to hell. Even though I knew they were Christians and loved God, they

weren't saved like "the rest of us." They didn't have what I had.

After high school I went off to college at Western Washington University. This was another God intervention because I prayed to hard to get into University of Washington to be close to my boyfriend and still be able to attend church. After I went to college we broke up and I attended a home mission church 30 minutes away from my campus. I attended every Tuesday night, Sunday morning and Sunday night. I even attended an all night prayer one time. I was still devoted to God and all the UPC stood for. Even though it took a great deal of time away from school and caused me great amounts of stress I did it all for the 'love' of the Lord.

I left that church 30 minutes away when I started to question doctrine. I also started to step back and figure out why I was feeling so depressed and miserable. I talked to my pastor back home and explained my need for a new church. Every sermon was so negative and made me feel like a filthy sinner when I wasn't. I left the church in peace but was told that "it may not be the church that has a problem, just you." I drove home in tears and for the next few weeks couldn't muster up the courage to try another church. Eventually I decided to go to an independent apostolic church which again was a home missions church. I enjoyed it but started noticing the same trends. I felt my confidence slowly ripping away the longer I stayed in the UPC and I stayed until it was completely gone. Down to the core I wanted so badly to please God and live up to all the expectations of being a girl in the UPC that people looked up to. I wanted to meet that mark of what they expected when they put every single women on a pedestal. I wanted to be perfect in their eyes, in my pastor's eyes, his family, the congregation, my friends outside of church. This was so demanding it sent my into a severe depression and I started questioning everything. That's when I left. I was in my Junior year of college. I had just declared my major in Human

Services, hoping to live out a dream of helping others in a field of social work. I started my first course and was asked to expose who I was. This is where everything changed and I found that I was not who I wanted to be. I was miserable. Much of my misery came from being in the UPC. I felt I couldn't measure up. I didn't have family in the UPC, I didn't have close friends around me, I didn't have anyone to turn to, and I found no solid foundation in many of the "key" scriptures in the UPC. I wanted to be Christ-like and love people but instead I found myself judging and condemning people for not being like me. I was sick of myself and the person I had become. I left.

For a month I was a wreck. I had left my identity with the UPC and had now nothing to stand on except the faith that God was still with me no matter what. I started praying more and seeking clarity in scripture. I wrote letters to God in a journal everyday to help me find closure after leaving. It was one of the toughest months of my life. After that I started visiting various churches and learning about how others loved God and those around them. It was eye opening and painful too. I normally came home crying, feeling like I was still missing the mark. Old feelings would bubble up quickly of things I felt in the UPC. The urge to cry uncontrollably at music and the sermon. I am still so thankful for a close friend who went to different services with me. We were accountable to each other about going to a new church each Sunday. It was an amazing experience and I wouldn't trade it.

Today, I am now a happy 22 year old woman majoring in Human Services and graduating this Spring. God brought me together with my future husband, Joshua Spiers. Which I prayed about by the way when I was in the UPC. Overall I am doing wonderfully. We are now members of a church in Kirkland, WA, and happy as can be. God really did a number on me. We will be posting our sweet love story soon. (I bet some of you can guess how it went!) lol

Please, please don't hesitate to send me an e-mail at kalirasmussen@yahoo.com with any questions you have. I am going to try to keep up on posting on here on some issues that I feel really impact women after they leave the UPC. I pray daily for those looking for clarity after leaving the UPC.

Thank you for reading my testimony!