

Autobiography by Jasmine Kim

About 8 years ago, I accepted Jesus as my Savior. I have been blessed by God who has been my provider and my shield throughout those years. When I first accepted Christ, I felt accepted, but there was still a part of me that felt lonely inside and struggled to know in my heart that God is always there for me. My spiritual journey has started around the death of one of the few followers of Christ that is in my family's inner circle of friends. I have always had a shaking thought about this root and the foundation of my faith. It's been clear that He has been there, waiting for me and telling me to jump so He could catch me. Since I have met God and have been surrounded by Him, I have reflected the growth and change in me over the years in various areas of my life.

Social

I view myself more of an introvert. I look forward to spending time alone. There are times when I wish I could meet new people but having to maintain these friendships can feel like a burden. It feels like there are too many things to keep track of and it can get overwhelming. I started to close my circle of friends more and have begun to distinguish my friends from my acquaintances. My social interactions with other people can deeply affect what I think about myself at times. It can work the other way around, how I think about myself can deeply affect my social interactions with other people. I tend to notice this connection when I experience negative thoughts or view certain social interactions as a negative experience. If I haven't been in contact with my friends for a considerable amount of time, I will start to think that I did something wrong and they are upset with me. I feel socially at ease when I am around my close friends more than with my family. After developing close relationships with my friends, I am comfortable with my current relationships and intend to build trust with them.

As a way to build my comfort and embrace my growing relationships with my close friends, I would like to share my life story with at least one of my friends by the end of 2020. In addition to that, I would like to keep track of this progress with an intentional conversation about my life story and record their responses after I share (prayers and words of encouragement). Reading Into Abba's Arms has helped me realize the importance of sharing my brokenness in order to work towards a healthier communication. I do believe the people around me are blessings by God and I trust my circle of friends to embrace my whole self. The more I put myself in the light, the more accessible I become for God.

Physical (Appearances and Health)

My thoughts on my physical appearance and health are easier to define. I am an overthinker or I tend to be deep in my thoughts but I never deeply dive on my appearances or really feel a burden about it. When I had issues with my wisdom teeth removal and root canals, I was deeply bothered by these procedures. However, I was disturbed at the time not because I had to experience them (although, they're not my cup of tea), but because I felt burdened that my mom had to pay a lot of money for this. I remember I went to a free counseling chat website just to tell a random stranger how burdensome I felt at the time. Currently, I can get worried about my health or my appearance, but I am at ease knowing that these physical parts of myself can be fixed. I am comfortable with the way I am and can enjoy indulgences in moderation. I can always accept and look forward to being physically better or being more active. I used to be an avid runner back in high school and participated in varsity level cross country and track. In college and my current young adult life, I play flag football as often as I can. I definitely do not want to run as much as I used to, but I appreciate that I can use it as a way to stay healthy. As I get older, I am more sensitive about my body and want to feel as comfortable as I can.

Since there is always room for improvement, I would like to challenge myself to lose 15 pounds in 1.5 years. I currently follow an intermittent fasting schedule but I want to take it to the next level by adding the balance of caloric intake and exercise. On days that I have less activity, I want to set the goal of 1,200 calories. On days that I run or exercise, I want to raise my limit to 2,000. I will keep track of my progress through a monthly weight check. When Ron shared his health journey, it brought some motivation for myself and showed me that I am never too old to build a better figure. I want to approach this challenge as a way to celebrate my life and to spend time with God and His gift for my physically healthy body. Especially with quarantine and social distancing, this would be a great way to challenge myself in the comfort of my home.

Cognitively

I tend to be deep in my own thoughts. My mind races hundreds of thoughts a minute which might physically hold me at a standstill. I consider myself to be a dreamer that is stuck because of hesitations. I have a lot of hopes and desires but I never seem to initiate because I overthink the struggles and stress of achieving my goal. There are times when I think to myself, 'Do I even know myself? Do I even have a personality?'. Whenever these thoughts come to mind, I take a step back from what I believe are my passions. I realized that my overthinking stems from my wish that I knew myself better. I love to take different personality tests because it gives me a sense of peace that someone else is telling me what I am like. Since I am a flawed person, I realized that I might have a front towards other people. If I ask other people about my personality, they might provide honest responses, but it's from false actions from myself.

The lesson on Spiritual Instincts and Spiritual Formation was very eye opening and brought to my attention about the opportunity to discover more about myself. God has created different ways for His people to engage in Him. This helps me feel more connected with God,

which leads me to connect to myself in God's eyes. With Wilson's notion of quiet times and trying the various spiritual temperaments that I have interest in, I hope to find three adjectives that I can confidently describe myself with. I hope to keep track of this through journaling and reflections every month over the course of 6 months (end of 2020).

Emotionally

My emotions and emotional journey have improved over the years. When I was younger, I really struggled to properly cope with my emotions and felt that there was something wrong with me because I cried so much. Even on my birthdays, I would cry because I felt so grateful to be able to celebrate with people and a cake. One of my primary emotions was sadness and it was to the point where I felt like my life will always be a sad life. Over the years, God has freed me from letting my emotions declare over my life. God really touched my heart and spoke the truth over my life and its value and how its praise and declaration of life over death. I struggle when I am unable to get a chance to express myself. If I ever get into an argument or even general discussions, I feel hurt when I think people put words in my mouth or do not give me a chance to speak my own thoughts. Being the youngest in the family, I experienced this often. Even when I experience these negative emotions, I have found a lot more hope and resilience to them with God's embrace and truth.

I realized that despite experiencing these negative emotions, I never really allowed myself to properly cry out to God. When I was younger, I would have moments where I just really let myself freely cry. These moments were before I met God and I want to properly grieve and let myself be in those moments again with God. I noticed that I am close to these moments when I started counseling and sharing more with my friends. However, being at home during quarantine makes it difficult for me to do this. As I shared before, I feel more comfortable with

my close friends than with my family. I do not have a specific time frame in mind for this, I hope to really seek God and these moments once the season of quarantine has ended. In the meantime, Wilson's novel, *Into Abba's Arms*, has helped me bring myself to run into God's arms even if I can't physically reach my goal yet. Constantly asking God to show me how He sees me has helped me feel known and loved even if I can't fully release the hurt yet.

Spiritually

Over the years, I have grown more confident in Christ and the fact that He uses me for His Kingdom. I still need to discover His calling for me. At times, it feels like God is calling me into the area of worship/praise. At other times, I wonder if God wants me to use my specific story about my family and myself for something greater. I do not deny the possibility that both of these thoughts could be His calling for me. As much as I dream and desire for His calling for me, I also can get easily distracted or overwhelmed by my life struggles. I live in a non-Christian household that does not understand my relationship with God. Since we have different priorities, I feel like I put a lot of my desires on hold. I become spiritually conflicted with discerning the opportunities to take for my callings and to show love for my broken family.

My journey of being able to audit this class has been a clear sign of God's powerful ways of making sure His Kingdom is achieved. Taking live classes and building connections with those who might have similar callings as me have paved new ways for me to spiritually flourish during these testing times at home. My personal goal over the next five years is to have a career transition. I am currently a school teacher but I know this is not God's calling for me. Unfortunately, I don't know what my calling is! Over the five years, I will maintain the progress of this long term goal by taking courses to explore different ministries in the Kingdom of God. I will enroll in interactive courses instead of just webinars with limited assignments or contact. By

the end of 2025, I hope to be in the transition or initiate transition of God's calling for me.

I truly love God. I want the Holy Spirit to dwell in me and flourish out of me for God's purpose and His Kingdom. I praise God for His firm love over me and healing because I can embrace myself being physically healthy. Since I am healthy and physically located in a place where I can seek Him, I can meet God-fearing friends who raise me up. God's work in my social area has started my growth for myself and my spiritual walk. God has begun to show me how He has made redemption over my past and how much of a blessing the gift of life is. The family friend, who has made a huge impact with my start with Christ, may not be with us on this earth today, but God wins over this death by gaining two in His Kingdom. As I reflect on the areas of growth in my life, I can see the roots originating to the seed God has planted in me. I cannot wait to see God turn my life around as I continue to live His life.