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Foreword

When I started reading *Faith on a Sticky Note*, I thought, “Here is another book on how losing a loved one turned someone’s life around, and how after dealing with the guilt and anger over missing so many opportunities to tell the deceased how much he was loved, he realizes that Jesus is the hope for peace and salvation and a second chance to tell that loved one everything he wanted to say.” I was right. Well, at least partially. What I realized as I read Mark’s book was that I was reading words generated by someone who struggled and still struggles with his faith. Losing a loved one was merely the seed from which a great oak of faith has emerged. Mark not only got to tell his father everything he wanted to, he got to see his father saved. That is what makes this book different from any other inspirational book I have read. Even though intellectually Mark knew and knows his father is in heaven, he did not viscerally feel it. The book explains how the greatest faith springs from doubt. Mark also shares with the reader a modern perspective of Christianity and how to lead a modern Christian life that will resonate with the reader for a long time. I have not heard a sermon, nor have I read a book that so clearly outlines what we can do as Christians to strengthen our relationship

with Christ while living in today's world. This is not a 'feel-good-about-yourself-because-you-can-do-anything-as-long-as-you-are-saved' kind of book. This book is an honest and genuine account of how today's Christian can be just that - a Christian - imperfect, sinful, human - and still develop a relationship with Christ."

*Randy Smith, personal friend and fellow member of
Lincolnton Baptist Church*

Introduction

I am sitting in church thinking, *“You are broken. Something is wrong with your inner workings if everyone sitting around you has had the “event” and seen the light, felt the shuddering, been overcome with joy, peace, or heard a voice...”* This inner dialogue (*talking to myself*) is all about the moment “it” happens ... being saved. Asking Christ to come into your life to lead you. My dilemma? I never saw, felt, or heard any of that stuff people talk about, even though I had asked Christ into my life. I had heard testimonies about it in Bible studies and sermons and got the idea that you should ‘feel’ the event, that you will know when it happens, and recognize it as a defining moment in your life – a true Damascus road experience. So, I immediately thought, *“I must not be saved, and I am sitting here amongst a bunch of haves, when I am a have-not. Surely, I cannot speak up and say anything lest I be judged for not being on the team, or worse yet, unworthy of being saved.”*

I struggled with that for quite some time in my recent years – afraid to ask in fear of being exposed. Always nodding and saying, “Oh, yeeeeeaaah,” when someone asked if I were saved, even though I did not have the ticket stub, so to speak, in the way of a story to tell about my moment of salvation.

I soon came to realize, though, with unquestionable clarity, that I am on the team, and that I am not the lone ranger when it comes to questioning one's own salvation.

This epiphany came about through a series of events and circumstances that I share in this book. It is one man's testimony, mine, paved with pieces of God's puzzle, including an alcoholic father, a career in sales, defining what "one in twenty" and "DNR" really mean, learning when to draw to an inside straight, Ronnie Milsap, banjos and a stand-up bass, flight attendant call bells, recruiters, freaks and weirdos, red corvettes, and a legendary football coach. My purpose in writing this book is to put forth what I have learned from all of the above and the theme that ties them all together, which I believe will resonate with you long after you turn the last page. My goal is to have an impact on your faith and your Christian walk. Even more so, it is to share with you my "Sticky note of faith" - what I believe is the single most important piece of paper that you can reference each day of your spiritual walk.

I am not a pastor, preacher, or reverend and have never been to the seminary. I am an individual living life just like you. In my everyday life, I am a software salesman traveling about 30,000 air-miles a year (*rookie stuff to you million-milers out there – my hat's off to you*) and getting the opportunity to meet many people and see many great places. I am the husband of one, father of two, and blessed to be a friend of many.

In addition to being a quota-carrying salesman, I am someone who is excited about what I have come to understand about Christ and my salvation. I feel strongly that this message can have a positive impact on anyone who is concerned about his salvation and can provide the clarity which I have come to appreciate. This book will not teach you how to interpret carbon dating samples, how to

be a better singer of hymns, or even the difference between Methodists and Baptists; what it will do is provide you with a foundation to understand your faith, to embrace that faith, and to utilize it to impact every single aspect of your life and the lives around you, period.

My prayer is that this true story - this testimony - will impact you as much as it has impacted me in living it. I have cried, laughed, and learned countless things in this process, and if even one person starts or strengthens a relationship with Christ as a result of this effort, it is all worth it.

God bless and enjoy!

Mark McKinney



Chapter 1

CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF

“Lord, I thank you for all my many blessings, and thank you for this day that you have given me. I pray now for the safety all of us on board this flight from Atlanta to Philadelphia. I pray that you will bless the pilots and the crew and help them to make knowledgeable decisions on our flight today. I pray that you will bless this plane mechanically to ensure that all systems operate as they should function. And Lord, I pray that you would reach your hands down and wrap them around our plane and pick us up safely from Atlanta and carry us as safely and smoothly as possible to Philadelphia. I am going to place my life and trust in my hands and throw them out the window on take-off and ask that they be in your hands, and that you would have your will with my life and with the lives of my family. It is in your name that I ask your blessing upon everyone on board including myself and those that we are flying away from or home to see – Amen.”

This is my prayer *EVERY* time I fly somewhere. I change the “to” and “from” cities, of course, but the rest remains the same. And if you ever happen to be sitting beside me, you will see me ball my fist, and after 15 seconds of rumbling

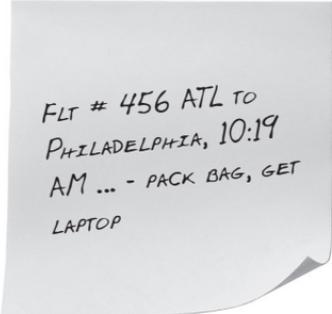
Faith on a Sticky Note

down the runway, toss my hand towards the window, placing my life and trust in His hands. (*Why 15 seconds? I do not know ... I just started with that, and it has worked for over 500,000 miles so far, so not likely to change it*)

I have said that prayer for about 14 years now, since I joined the ranks of the airborne warriors, and I would say that only in recent years has it become as sincere as it needed to be. When I first started traveling, I would say it, and after the plane landed, go off in whatever city I was in to do my duty, then after work party as hard as I could until it was time to fly back home ... then “Lord, I thank you ...” Obviously, I was a hypocrite, but did not know it or recognize it. If when traveling we encountered bad turbulence, which seems to follow me like the plague, I would offer up more prayers “...if you just get me on the ground and away from the lightning, I promise I will x, y, or z...” After touching down safely, all was forgotten – back to living life for myself – chasing the dollar, no relationship with Christ, and no idea what life was really about. I believed in God, but did not have time for Him at this point in my life - unless I needed something of course.

It really became a meaningful prayer and conversation with God after the events in this book unfolded, my life to date, and I realized with such clarity what I was asking for and how I had been asking it. Before, it was simply a shout on the way out the door ...“Hey, big guy, could you take care of this for me ... and I will get back to you on it later to pay my way.”

Today, I understand the magnitude of what I am asking and what He wants from me in return for delivering me



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PHILADELPHIA, 10:19
AM ... - PACK BAG, GET
LAPTOP

safely. I also realize that His will may one day be for me not to land safely, and I have come to realize that is ok as well (*although I still am not a big fan of thinking about the 'how' part*). In the words of Paul Harvey, the *Rest of the Story* will explain how I came to this place of trust and acceptance and my being ok with His will – whether that is I live to be a hundred and twenty or go tomorrow.