

K-517 Tv Show Part 1 Testimony

by Art Katz

Art Katz and Paul Gordon share their personal testimonies of faith, emphasizing the transformative power of a relationship with God through Jesus.

Duration: 25:43

Scripture: Genesis 12:7, Psalm 103:1, Isaiah 6:1-5, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Interview"

Description

In this video, Paul shares his personal journey of coming to God and the transformation he has experienced in the past year and a half. He explains how he used to worry about everything and pursued worldly pursuits, but realized that without God, life was frustrating and empty. He acknowledges the necessity of having a genuine relationship with God, rather than just invoking His name. Paul and his companion, who are both Jewish, share their belief in Jesus as the Messiah and their joy in acknowledging Him as Lord. They invite viewers to join them in their spiritual walk and introduce a simple verse from the 103rd Psalm as a theme song for their program.

Transcript

Ben Israel with Art Katz and Paul Gordon. Welcome to Ben Israel. My name is Art Katz.

And I'm Paul Gordon. We invite you to share with us for a half hour of lively discussion and commentary along special and unusual lines. Paul, how would you introduce our new program to our guests? What's our purpose? I think maybe our purpose is to show people that God can take ordinary earthen vessels like you and I and speak through them.

I would say Jewish earthen vessels. That's right. Perhaps your viewers have heard something about a Jews for Jesus movement and Jewish men and women all over the land who are coming to a belief, a commitment to Jesus as the Messiah of Israel.

We're two such Jewish men. We come from different backgrounds and circumstances. The Lord has brought us together and has given us this opportunity to share with you about the place of understanding and life to which he's brought us.

And our purpose, I suppose, is to show forth this new quality of life and the enhanced Jewishness which has been ours since the discovery of the Lord. Paul, I guess I could say in almost humorous vein, what's a

nice Jewish boy like you doing in a situation like this? How did you get here? It's kind of interesting you'd ask that. It seems that when you're with the Lord, life takes on a new excitement.

There's an anticipation about it and you find yourself in the strangest places. I know a phrase like being with the Lord may strike some of our listeners rather peculiarly. What do you mean being with the Lord? I mean having an actual relationship, personal relationship with the Lord, where we know him, and we know he knows us, and we can feel his presence in us, and we react as he leads us.

How long has this been for you? Well, it's been about a year and a half. Maybe you'd like to share with our viewers something of this experience, and I'll do the same, and in this way perhaps we can introduce ourselves to you, and little by little and week by week, you'll come to know us and what we represent, and we hope that this is going to be very spiritually rich and profitable for you. So what happened a year and a half ago, Paul, that turned you this way? Well, I actually knew the Lord as far as calling upon his name about five years ago.

But when I did, I fell into the trap of leading kind of a nominal life. I assented to him. I acknowledged him as far as head knowledge was concerned, but I hadn't really committed myself to him.

And about a year and a half ago, I'm sharing this with our audience now, because you will know that when you came to Costa Mesa, California, where I and my family were living, I was at a very low point in my life. I was at a point where life was meaningless to me. I had not walked with the Lord.

I knew him. I knew that he was looking at me with disdain. I knew that there was something in my life that was very amiss and very wrong.

Many things were going badly for me. My marriage was on the rocks. We were almost finished as a husband-wife team.

I'd fallen into compulsive gambling. In fact, I was living, I'd say, half my life in the poker parlors around Gardena, which was near Los Angeles. And I was just generally in very bad shape.

And about the time you came into our area, you were giving a series of talks. I heard one of the talks, and at the same time God started working with me. He showed me what I was like inside, what kind of a life I was leading.

I saw the need for truly repenting before the Lord and asking his forgiveness, which I did. And miracle of miracles, he just brought my marriage together like that. He just completely healed everything in my life.

The compulsive gambling went, the drinking, everything else. I'm just a new person, absolutely a new creature. We praise God for that, and this has, of course, a 20th century ring.

But we want to assure our viewers that what happened to you and what happened to me is essentially what's been happening to men through the thousands of years, through the time that God has always sought men. So turning away from our position in the world and in ourselves, a hearing of a word that challenges our hearts, it's a turning to him, it's the finding of a new quality of life. I know that this has had great repercussion for your life as it has for mine, and that we're more the Jews for the experience of coming to the Lord.

And we're going to discuss from week to week what this means. I think one of the things which we got to assure our viewers right away is that it means that we're men who praise God, we're grateful for his presence in our lives and for his direction, for his leading. And we sing to him, we bless his name.

And viewers, we just ask you to put on your seatbelts, because we're not professional singers, but we think that God is delighted when Jewish men and women and all people acknowledge him and praise him and raise their voices to him. We're going to sing on this program. We're going to pray on this program.

We're going to interview believers on this program. We're going to do the things on this program that God has done in our lives and give you a taste of the kind of freedom and joy in life which he's made manifest in us and through us. So right now we're just going to bless his name, and then we're going to call upon him in prayer to ask him to bless in your sight, and you're hearing this telecast and this series of telecasts, because we know this is rather unusual.

And if you're a Jewish person, perhaps you're not quite sure what to make of this. You see that we're recognizably Jewish, and yet here we profess a belief in Jesus, yet we're not skulking in the shadows with our tail between our legs, and we acknowledge him as Lord with joy. So we just ask your patience and an open heart and understanding, and wherever you are in your own spiritual walk with God, we ask you to join us and link your hearts with ours.

We're going to teach you this very simple verse. It's the first verse of the 103rd Psalm, and we hope to make it a kind of a theme song for our program. And every week we're going to sing it, and you'll be familiar with it, and we ask you to join us.

Before we start, why don't we tell our viewers that this is a song that we sing quite often as we're driving in a car, or sometimes in our own home. We just sing this, and it just blesses us, and it lifts our spirits. Amen.

We truly love it. The scripture says that God inhabits the praises of his people. Right.

And precious folk out there, we need the presence of the living God. There's a wonderful redeeming effect by that presence. Our speech has changed, our perspective, our tastes, our attitude, our conduct.

We need the reality of God in our lives, and we pray that as we sing and speak and pray today, something of that reality is going to come right through that set of yours and flood your living room, touch your heart, and draw you to him, even as we ourselves were drawn to come to know him. Let's sing, shall we? Okay. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. And all that is within me, bless his holy name. That's the first verse of the 103rd Psalm.

We pray that it'll become as familiar and as dear to you as it is to us. And now, Paul, I think we ought to call upon the name of the Lord. And invite his blessing upon our talk and upon the show, because we frankly confess, people, we're not professionals, we're not slick, and we're not skilled.

We're Jewish men. We love our God. He's given us this opportunity, and we want him to redeem this time and make it rich for you.

So, precious God, now, in the name of the Holy One of Israel, Yeshua HaMashiach, Jesus the Christ, we ask your blessing upon this half hour. O gracious God, that you'd fill our mouths with your words, touch us

by your Spirit, give precious anointing and unction, and open the hearts and understanding of those who are watching. Bless them, Lord, let your Spirit be rich and manifest in their homes, and all together have your perfect way.

You be glorified, you be lifted up, you be made manifest to both Jews and Gentiles, whom you'll induce, Lord God, to watch this program. Make it your own. Have your perfect way with us now.

We'll thank you and praise you for it. Thank you. In the wonderful name of the Messiah of Israel, Jesus the Christ, thank you.

Praise your name. You know, Paul, as you were speaking, I thought that what you were laying out is really a very classic pattern and I really believe it's God's essential pattern for every man. To know God is everything and to know him by his presence.

And isn't it wonderful that in the book of Genesis, this pattern is established in the life of him who is called the Father of Faith, Abraham. In the 12th chapter, this remarkable story is described of how a man was called out of a pagan civilization that abounded in the glories of the things of men and relished gods of every description and made room in their galaxy of gods for just about every kind. But this man heard a certain voice that called him from convenience, from circumstance, from family ties, from all the things that were familiar and dear, to follow this God into a land that he would show him.

And I don't want to begin with that verse. I just felt led to begin with the 7th verse of that 12th chapter. For we read there, And the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land.

And there builded he an altar unto the Lord who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west and I on the east. And there he builded an altar unto the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord.

And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south. There's a wonderful pattern given of a man who calls on the name of the Lord. You know, there are a lot of people who invoke religious terms and have religious vocabularies and catechisms and church doctrines and the rest.

But calling on the name of the Lord is something more than that kind of superficial and nominal exercise. It's something, as we Jews say, comes from the kishkas. It's a deep calling.

It's a God whom we know and we know hears us. And we're more than just throwing him some cheap aside. We want him.

We call upon him and we invoke his name. But you know that there was no calling upon the name of the Lord for Abram until it says that God appeared unto him. And then it says there Abram builded he an altar unto the Lord and worshiped him there.

And people, I have to confess that I was not a man given to worship for the first 35 years of my life, even as my brother Paul. We were given rather to investing our energy and time in things that profit little. There was not a God to worship.

That's exactly the point. There was not a presence that had been made known and made real to us. There's a lot of things called worship that's flat, mechanical, and that does not profit the person who is invoking it, let alone the God who has wearily to hear it, because God has not yet appeared unto them.

There's got to be a lively demonstration, a reality, a presence of God in the life of a person before that kind of worship is made possible. We see that tensile type of worship all the time, don't we? And Paul, it came for you when you turn from poker, from striving after your own success and fortune, and repenting. Right.

It's a word that's not used much in our time, but we believe that there's a pattern of God, and that's deeply a part of it. I thought I could walk that never-never land, the land between the world and with God, and I was compromising everything I was doing. I finally came to realize that.

You know what I'm waiting for you to do? I said, well, Art, how was it for you? Well, listen, Art, how was it for you? You see, people, just how professional we are. We don't have any script written, and we're truly trusting in God to unfold the course of these programs. I've already alluded to the fact that I was an atheist for the initial part of my life, right through my 35th year.

Not just a casual atheist, rather a vehement, angry one, who never did have any evidence for God that would justify my seeking him. And it's so often the case God has got to wait for men to come to the end of themselves before they can hear a voice that calls them from the Ur of the Chaldees, away from polka, from culture, from radical causes, as was my case, to following him into the land that he will show us. You know, that breaking away, Paul, came in my 34th year as a result of a disillusionment which finally possessed my life.

I was a man who'd been seeking from adolescence on for a deep kind of cause to which I could give myself as a Jewish man an allegiance that was worthy of my Jewish life. I'd gone through a conventional and traditional Jewish upbringing, bar mitzvahed at the age of 13, came early to atheistic convictions, never having seen any evidence for God, and began to embrace causes and ideologies and philosophies, left high school at an early age, and came finally to a time in my 34th year where I was a high school teacher, really believing that education was the answer. And after four years of real back-breaking labor, really persuaded that this was the hope of mankind, I came finally to see the evidence that was before me, that not only could it not change the lives of my students, but that I who professed being an educated man needed myself most desperately to be changed.

I think that there's a certain kind of conviction that has to creep into our lives, an awareness that somehow as finite and limited men who even speak about the salvation of the world and have all kinds of handy phrases and slogans at our beck and call, that we're hardly capable of saving ourselves and that we need the power of a transcendent God to save us from ourselves. Now, I was a left-wing radical, but that wasn't your background, was it? I was just the opposite. How is that? Well, I went the right-wing route, and we, of course, thought that we could save the world too.

But I've come to realize, as we both have, that isms are man-made things, and there really are only two possibilities in the final analysis. There's man's way and there's God's way, whether it's called liberalism, conservatism, communism, capitalism, it's all man's way. It's man's way of doing things.

And it was quite a thing for me to realize that this was the case because everything that I pushed myself into, I dove into it whole hog. I went into the world of bridge, I went into the world of politics, I went into the world of causes, and I finally came to realize that they were all for naught, that life was frustrating any way that it happened. If God was not part of it, then it just wasn't.

I think that many of our viewers would acknowledge what you've said and give a hearty amen. They would acknowledge the necessity for God. But there are many people who would make such acknowledgments

who do not in fact have him.

It's not enough to invoke a name or to make allusions to God. That's right. We want to establish how that reality comes into the life of a person, what it means to be a believer, and what expectation a believer can have, what he can expect to see as a result of reality in that life.

What's happened to you, Paul, in the past year and a half since you came to God in a way of deep commitment, faith, and trust? Well, one thing that's happened is I've learned to relax and just let God lead my life. I used to worry about everything. I'd worry about paying the rent.

When I was making really good money, I was worried about how we were going to spend it. When we weren't making the same kind of money, I was worrying about why we didn't. And it was just a life of worry.

It's a life of what are we going to do next, and how are we going to do this? How are we going to do that? But when God comes into one's life, as he did mine, God takes over, and you learn to relax, and there's a rest that one can enter into with the Lord where God just does things. And it's him. It's not us.

How would you answer people who would say, well, you've just found a convenient crutch? This is the thing that's ordinarily said to believers. Are you less the man for having come to God in this real way? No, I've been asked that same question, but I've come to realize that we're really more of a man. That when we're God's people, we're more of what God would have for us.

We can hold our heads up. Life takes on an anticipation and excitement. And I think following God's way is a much more, let's say, the life of a mensch than it would be for a person who doesn't.

It takes a mensch to follow God. Maybe we had better explain to an audience what the word mensch means, because we're given to using it frequently. To be a mensch is something greatly to be desired.

And in Jewish parlance, that means being a man, recognizing what the realities of the world and life are, and responding to them in an adult and responsible way. It takes God, frankly, to be a mensch. I sought to be a man on my own strength for the early part of my life.

I believed in self-realization, the pursuit of truth. I would leave no stone unturned. But you know that we can't even accurately perceive ourselves or even see our need, recognize our own condition, until first we begin to glimpse the magnitude of who God is.

That's right. That's right. I'd like to suggest to our viewers an experience that can be theirs if they would turn to the book of Isaiah.

In the sixth chapter, this choice, prophet of God, had a most extraordinary experience. It says that he saw God high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. He saw something of the effulgence and the magnitude, the glory of God.

And people, he didn't say, Hi, Lord. Look, this is me, your number one servant, your mouthpiece and oracle. He beat his chest and he cried out in the characteristic Jewish way, Oy vey, woe is me, for I'm a man of unclean lips.

And I live in the midst of a people of unclean lips. I believe that that is the kind of consciousness that's required in the coming to God. We have to catch some sense of who he is.

We've lost, I think in modern times, something of the fear of God, the awesomeness, the reality, the holiness of who our God is. And by that same loss, our every calculation has suffered. Because we've not truly perceived who he is.

We've not truly perceived ourselves and have given ourselves a loftier acknowledgement than is really our due. Because isn't it true, Paul, that the scripture says that there's no man good, no, not one. We've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and if God were to mark iniquity, who could stand? Every man.

That's right. And speaking for myself, I had no consciousness of this. Although my life was as marked and as stained by sin as anyone in the world.

An unbridled egotist, full of my own chutzpah and arrogance, self-assured, conceited, doing my thing as is characteristic of modern men. It wasn't until I began to perceive something of the glory and character of God that I saw myself by contrast and began to be made conscious for the need of God's salvation. You know, it's interesting.

As you know, I married a girl who was raised in a typical Protestant church and I started attending that church. I was looking for reality. I'd been looking for reality for some time and I found that after attending that particular church for a couple of years, I still had found nothing.

The real dividing point is having the personal relationship with the living God, not just acknowledging, not just knowing that he's there someplace, but having him living within us. Well, I suppose there are many people who are sitting in their living rooms now saying, yes, but why must it be through Jesus? You know what a bone in the throat that name so often is for Jewish people. We've been persecuted in that name.

We've been sought. We've been converted forcibly in that name. We've been cast into exile in that name.

We've suffered a history of persecution and oppression in that name. And many Jewish people will, as we already have, staggered when that name is first brought to our attention. Why can't we come to the knowledge of God, independent of that name? Why can't every man seek God in his own way and find him in the way that's most amenable to his own culture and background and so forth? Well, of course, God tells us all through the Old Testament that he was going to send a Messiah and the Messiah would be the deliverer for God's people.

And when the Messiah came, that all would adhere to him. And Jesus was the fulfillment of that messianic promise. And Jesus tells us, the Messiah himself tells us that no one can come unto the Father except by the Son.

And Jesus said that, if you hateth me, you hateth the Father. So he tells us that the only way to God the Father is through Jesus, the Messiah. You know, those are strong words, formidable words and dogmatic words.

They're singular words that insist upon one way. Right. And I would say that when I first read these words, as you know, Paul, about the deck of that tram steamer on my way from Italy to Greece nine years ago in the course of a spiritual odyssey seeking for the deepest answers to my very perplexed Jewish life.

And a little book came into my hands for the first time, which I had long scorned, the New Testament, which I believed was solely the property of Gentiles only. As I turned through those pages and began to read the utterances of this Jesus, I was staggered by this kind of singular insistence that he was the way,

the life and the truth, and no man cometh to the Father but by him. My whole life had been schooled in a relativistic culture that claims that there are many paths to truth.

And yet here's this one with unusual chutzpah insisting that he's the way. He demands on no compromise whatsoever. And I know that perhaps many of our viewers who come also from that same culture and many Gentiles, if they caught the sharp edge of these words, would feel also the offense of them.

But you know that there's really a common sense way to perceive the need to come to God in the way which he himself establishes. There's not a one of us who would ever dare to fly in a plane and would leave to the pilot the choice of the multitude of ways in which he would seek to land that plane. There's a way to bring that plane right down on that landing strip.

That's unbelievable. Being a pilot, I know exactly what you're talking about. Well, what would happen if by impulse we choose to come this way or that way or 100 yards before, 100 yards after? It'd be a little problem.

In fact, we probably wouldn't make it at all. I would say that the end thereof is death. That's right.

You know, people, that the scriptures are very plain. It says, there's a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is death. Right.

Jesus said, whosoever believeth the words that I speak shall never see death. I guess that Paul and I could say that in the moment that we believe these words and call upon this name, there's a life that came into us, a spirit, the Ruach HaKodesh, the Holy Spirit of the living God. Amen.

And that spirit is life. He who hath that son hath life, and he who hath not the son hath not life. We trust that we haven't greatly bewildered you in this first telecast.

We've tried to suggest certain things. We hope that you'll turn to the scriptures in the days that will follow and be with us next week when we continue to explore the things of God, the claims of the Messiah of Israel and share out of our life and testimony of other Jewish guests to express also the life that has been made available to them. Thank you for being with us today.

We pray blessing of the God of Israel upon your life and look forward to your joining us next week as we continue by the leading of his spirit to bring blessing into your home. God bless you and thank you. Thank you.

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