

In early 2006, our VP-44 Squadron Chaplain, emailed a personal letter of testimony to Val. During the cruise in June 2006, Dick spoke privately with Val. Dick states, *"I personally believe that Val understood the Gospel as I spoke with him. He had no hesitation when I asked him if he wanted me to lead him in a prayer for salvation. And in fact, he told his family as they filed into the room."* Dick Nevala's personal letter of testimony to Val follows:

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Hi Val,

Trust you are doing fine. Susan and I are planning on going on the cruise in 2006. We hope to see you there. I was truly honored when you asked me to write something in your Bible. Since then I have been wanting to write to you for some time, simply to give you a better understanding of the spiritual side of my life.



Let me begin by giving you a little background on my life. My early years as a young lad were spent growing up on a farm in northern Minnesota. I had 4 sisters and a brother so there were 8 of us in the family. My father struggled to make provision for the family. I sensed this struggle and it made for a constant sense of insecurity in my life as well as the rest of the family. This cloud of insecurity was the same in my concept of God and I often wondered if I would go to heaven if I should die. But then I thought, I was just as good as any one else and had done no really bad things. I had not murdered any one and had not robbed anyone. So, based on that thinking, I should go to heaven. But I could never really be sure.

My world was really shattered when my father realized that our farm was lost. In spite of working the farm and working another job, he had been unable to pay the taxes and lost our home and 240 acres. We had to uproot and move north as my father sought employment.

My sense of insecurity was further compounded as we continued to struggle through rough times. I decided to fend for myself and left home while a sophomore in high school. I worked on a farm and was provided with a small salary, 3 meals a day, and

provision to continue with schooling. While in high school, I decided to fulfill my obligations concerning the military draft. Thus; directly after graduation, I enlisted in the Navy and was ultimately assigned to Patrol Squadron 44, Patuxent River, Md.

It was in this Squadron that a mutual friend shared some Good News with me. And that Good News is that God had provided eternal life for me. I was skeptical, so I observed to see if what he said about the Bible was evident in his life. Sure enough, he was living proof of biblical truth.

He shared with me from the scriptures that eternal life was a free gift from God provided through His Son Jesus. In other words, there are no works or good things we do that will get us to heaven. Even going to church does not get us into heaven. The scriptures say that "*we are saved through faith as a gift of God, not of works*" (Ephesians 2:8,9.) Heaven cannot be purchased with any amount of money. If we paid even one penny for heaven, it would no longer be a gift. The scriptures clearly say that heaven is a gift from God.

The first thing he shared with me was that I must realize and confess that I am a sinner. Scripture says that "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23). Thus,

every single one of us is a sinner and separated from God.

I then learned that Jesus Christ is the only answer to this problem of separation from God. When Jesus died on the Cross and rose from the grave, He paid the penalty for our sin and bridged the gap from God to man.

We must trust Jesus Christ and receive Him by personal invitation. The Bible says, "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock (Christ is speaking): if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him*" (Revelation 3:20). The scriptures, here are talking about the door of our heart.

I Prayed to God, asked for and received the gift of eternal life. The sense of insecurity from my growing years and particularly as it relates to eternal life disappeared completely. I now had something solid that would hang on to me and that was Jesus.

As you, I too have gone through some of life's less favorable experiences. However; God has given me complete peace as I now know that whatever happens, God is in complete control. I no longer feel insecure about things on earth, but more important, I am secure about the fact that God has provided me a place in heaven and provided me with eternal life with Him.

Val, you too can have the eternal life in heaven that God offers.

The prayer I prayed and one you too can pray is this:

**Dear Father, I know that I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I believe that Christ died for my sins. I now invite Jesus Christ to come into my heart and life as my personal savior. I am willing by God's Grace, to follow and obey Christ as the Lord of my life.**

If you pray that prayer from your heart, The Bible promises that  
*"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"*  
*(Romans 10:13).*

Val, if all of this makes any sense to you and you pray, as suggested above, for the eternal life in heaven that God offers, let me know so that I might recommit myself to continue to pray for you.

Thank You for allowing me to open up a bit on what is my real passion in this life. And that is to share this Good News of free salvation that God offers.

Your Friend,

Dick Nevala