**Krystal:** [00:00:00] Today on the podcast. I am joined by Garrett Kell. Garrett is a pastor at Delray Baptist church in Alexandria, Virginia. He is married to Carrie and together they have six children. Garrett has authored several books, including Pure In Heart and the Promises of God. I loved this conversation with Garrett, as he shared his testimony about how God intervened all throughout his life to eventually bring him to saving faith in Christ.

This has impacted how he ministers to those that God has placed in his life. And his story is an incredible testimony to God's goodness and faithfulness. If you want to be encouraged by how our gospel witness impacts those around us, then this conversation is for you. Join us as we discuss how we can love others. As we share our faith.

Hey everybody. Thank you so much for joining us today on the Daily Grace Podcast. This is crystal and today I am joined by a very special guest Garrett [00:01:00] Kell. Garrett is here today to share his incredible testimony of God's grace. And through hearing his story, I hope that we will find the courage to share our own faith with others.

When you hear Garrett's testimony, you'll hear his story as someone who is far from the Lord, but by God's grace was surrounded by believers who are faithful to love him and share God's truth with him. And then Garrett also has a lot to share about evangelism because ever since he came to know the Lord, he has been passionate about sharing his faith with others.

We're really excited to have this conversation with you today, Garrett. Thank you so much for being here.

**Garrett:** Yeah, Krystal, thanks for having me. And on behalf of my wife, want to say hello and thank you. She loves Daily Grace stuff. Actually just started a Bible study, she and another sister from our church, using the gospel of John material Come and See. And, there's yeah, it's, it's sweet number of people who don't know the Lord they're coming and see, and Jesus. So thank you for the way y'all are putting out good, trustworthy material.

**Krystal:** Oh, that's [00:02:00] amazing. Thank you so much for sharing that. Well, just to get us started, Garrett, do you want to tell us a little bit about yourself, about your family and your ministry?

**Garrett:** Yeah. Sure. So, hi, my name is Garrett. I have amazing wife. Her name is Carrie. We've been married for almost 15 years, coming up in August. We have 6 children from 13 down to nine months. just about to be 10 months and, uh, three boys, three girls. We live in Alexandria, Virginia, where I'm serving as one of the pastors at Del Ray Baptist church.

The September old come up on 10 years. We've been here, to watch the Lord work in some remarkable way. Super, super thankful for that. I grew up in West Virginia, went to Virginia Tech. That's where I came to the Lord middle of my Junior year. I was in Texas for 10 years, pastored there for awhile. I was in Denton for about three years at, Denton Bible Church. That's where I was discipled for a little bit was evangelism pastor there went to DTS and then helped plant a church in west Texas, out near it's called Graham, , out past Possum Kingdom. So kind of Wichita falls out that way, kind of go [00:03:00] to nowhere and kind of out there where the Armadillo roam and, uh, yeah, so love that the my time there. And I've been here in the DC area after that

**Krystal:** Oh, that's awesome. I think too, you are probably one of my favorite Twitter follows because I think you have the spiritual gift of finding just the funniest videos and laying gospel truth over it. And I know that you're on a break from Twitter right now, but by the time this airs, I hope you'll be back on. I think you'll be back. So we will link to your Twitter. And one of my favorite tweets of yours in the show notes below.

**Garrett:** Well, praise God. I aimed to be a, uh, you know, edification and entertainment, a little bit of both. And, uh, I, I appreciate your encouragement. Thanks sis.

**Krystal:** Garrett. I've heard you share your testimony before, and God has really given you an incredible story to share and to steward. And we're really excited for you to share it with us today. I think my hope is that. It would remind us all that God is always at work. He is always drawing [00:04:00] people to himself. So let's just start at the beginning. Did you grow up in a home where you learned about the Lord as a child?

**Garrett:** Yeah. Great. Great question. And, I'm so thankful just to get the opportunity to share. It's funny yesterday, I was getting my haircut. I was sitting there with a guy named Greg who grew up in New York, like in Brooklyn and another girl named Brittany who works there. And the three of us sitting there talking about Jesus, where there's the most unlikely crew. I mean, they had some crazy background. The Lord had saved them. And here I am talking about Jesus off to kind of pinch myself, you know, cause God, God got a man who was far from him. answer your question though, yeah I grew up in West Virginia. I had wonderful family. You know, my, family is a loving family. We were religious in the sense that we went to church because that's what we were kind of we're supposed to do is kind of a moderate Methodist church. You know, I heard about Jesus. I would have said I was a Christian because I knew it wasn't an atheist or a Buddhist or Hindu or whatever, but it was very much not a spiritual kind of upbringing. We were moral, as far as it was, you know, suitable, but, yeah, we went to church most Sundays, but for [00:05:00] me it was very much a kind of show up endure show up, put up and, kind of just put it on a different mask whenever I, I went out. So I, I learned throughout high school really to, to wear the different masks and the different social settings that I was, I was kind of a social chameleon, played sports, and that kind of got me into the party world. So sports and, every kind of thing that comes with the, after parties and everything and drinking, drugs, relationships, all that kind of stuff.

And when I went to, when I went to college, It was all of that, but now there was no accountability. Nobody was going to check me when I got home and all that kind of stuff. So, you know, in one sense, I really got to just be who I wanted to be, kind of followed my heart if you will, if the mantra, and for me, that was, it was one big party. I almost failed out my first, semester, but really I just started just diving in. To all sorts of drinking and drugs and, everything. And it kind of progressed every year. It got increasingly, darker. and you know, I can, I can look back on it now where I think I was trying to find life. I was trying to find something [00:06:00] that was exciting, something that was meaningful. And I did have fun. I mean, I loved my sin. It was, it was a lot of fun, but there was, it was also tied to a lot of, pain and regret. But even in the midst of that, I can see how the Lord along the way. It was basically giving me what I thought I wanted so that I could see that it wasn't the answer. And it was like he was priming the pump of my heart to prepare me for the different ways that he would be bringing people across my path so that I would be able to see the distinction of the gospel life. Yeah.

**Krystal:** So who were some of the people that you saw God placed in your life all throughout college that eventually led you to come to know the lord.

**Garrett:** Yeah, it's interesting. After I became a Christian, the Lord gave me a time of sobriety, where I looked back and I saw about 17 people that the Lord have brought in my life up to that point to kind of give different little glimmers of God's grace and the gospel. One was I went on a study abroad, which was not much study. It was definitely abroad though. So we went and did a tour of Europe and we [00:07:00] went everywhere. You know, we went to Paris and Rome. We went to Amsterdam. We went to every everywhere that, And I did not study and now I look back and see, I really missed a lot of opportunity for some incredible things, but because I was either drunk or high the whole time. But on that trip, there was a guy, his name's Jason, and he was, he was a different guy in the sense that he didn't, he was kind of with us, but he was, he was always off kind of doing his thing. And he was always super happy, but he would never go out and party with us and we always thought, it'd be cool to try and get him drunk and to see what he would be like drunk. Cause he was always so happy anyway. And I remember one time we were on a, we want to train going somewhere and I was, I was high on something and I came, walking through and happened to come upon him, sitting at his table, just smiling and just like, he was always smiling and it irritated me a little bit. Cause I was feeling kind of the weight of darkness in me and I was just like, all right man. I said, why are you so happy? You're always smiling. And he just smiled real big. And he said, well because I'm a Christian. And said, well, I'm a Christian. [00:08:00] And he said, well, you don't want anybody to say, whenever you tell them you're a Christian, he goes, you are? And I was like, well, yeah, I'm a Christian. I was like, I believe in God. And then he said, well the devil believes in God. And just kind of paused. And at the time it ticked me off. Right? You know, I was like, who are you? You know, whatever. But leaving that it, haunted me. Because I really started to wonder, am I any different than the devil? Like, I mean, I would say I believe in God, but it's evident by my life that it has no impact on my life. The only time I would cry out to God is whenever I got in trouble, and I just needed some help to get out of a situation that I'd make some promises. And then when the time passed, I'd break that promise and just go back to doing whatever. Well, that was in between my sophomore and junior year. Junior year I went to back to school, moved in with these had three girl roommates. They were all into raves and everything. And that live in girlfriend at the time. And it was just, it was, it was a mess.

And I threw this Halloween party. We threw this Halloween party and I invited a buddy named Dave to come down to party I told him it was gonna be the most [00:09:00] epic night ever, you know, come on down. He comes down and I welcome him and bring him back to my room. I was like, Hey man, I got something for you. Came in, he sat on the bed. I had a sixer of his favorite beer. I had a bag of weed, I had a girl for him to get to know over the weekend. And, he pushed the door too. And he sat back down on the bed and he looked at me and he goes, Hey man. Thanks. Thanks for that. I really appreciate it. It's thoughtful. I just need you to know I don't, I don't do any of that stuff anymore. I was like, okay, are you like, you're all right. And he's like, he's like, yeah. He said, I love Jesus. And I, I came down here to tell you that Jesus loves you too. And, I know this may be strange or weird, but I just, I want you to know that Jesus loves you. And I was like, okay, to me, it was, it was kind of strange. And I was like, all right, whatever, man, more for me, you're welcome to stay. We're happy to still have you. And you know, he, he did, he stayed and, we had a couple of buddies were over here and Dave is just sitting there on the couch and he's trying to talk to people. We can tell he doesn't fit in with everything is going on. And people were like, Hey, what's up with dude on the couch? I was like, he was a Christian. And they're all like, oh, you [00:10:00] know, cause he's this loser over here missing out on everything. At least that's the way we viewed it. But the fact was that his presence. It haunted me because I saw this guy that I did used to party with and he was just different .And only was he different, but there was. He had the same thing that, that other guy Jason had. He had a piece that was not tied to a drink or a drug or a relationship or money or anything else that I was chasing after. He had a peace that truly past understanding. It didn't make sense, but it was all over him. He had a joy that was radiated from him, even in a very uncomfortable situation. I could tell it was uncomfortable for him, but there was something. And the Lord really used that to, to haunt me a bit and to, later on, use that to unsettle something.

**Krystal:** So take us from there. What were some of the steps that you felt like the Lord was leading you down to come face to face with Jesus? Because you said there were what [00:11:00] 17 people.

**Garrett:** Yeah. Some 17 people along the way. And a lot of other things. So, I'll tell you a story that happened before those two stories, that kind of primed the pump for, I think the Lord did with bringing those, those two brothers into my life. Before I went on a study abroad trip, I, met up with an old girlfriend and, you know, we hung out and then, went away, did the study abroad where that guy Jason had kind of shared Christ with me. And then I came back and was feeling kind of empty. So I thought, Hey, let's call up the old girlfriends. So went out, we went out to dinner, movie or something like that. And afterwards I could just tell something was off. I was like, are you okay? And she said, uh, she said, I, I need you to know that I'm pregnant and that it's yours. And I was like, okay. I was like, well, I was like, I, you know, w we'll figure out a way forward. I've got, I've got some money. We'll take care of the kiddo. We'll, we'll, we'll figure stuff out, you know? Um, and she said, no, no. She goes, I want to know, are you going to be with me [00:12:00] or will you, will you marry me? And, you know, I was, I was 19 or so at the time, And I was, I didn't want to marry her. And I knew I was not ready to be a dad and we chose to, to have an abortion.

**Krystal:** Yeah.

**Garrett:** And, um, you know, it was, it was, I still remember it. I remember being there with her, after she she took a pill and stayed there with her for the evening and the whole process and it was a, it was a hard process. And, I remember we both cried and we didn't know why. You know, I think at the time we probably thought it was something's wrong with the relationship or whatever, but we looking back, I think I know why we cried, you know, what, what was happening there was, it was a dark time, and deep down, I knew that something wrong had happened. And I look now and say, wow, I was at the place where I love my own life so much, and I loved my own kind of plan for my life so much that I was [00:13:00] willing to take the life of my own child in order to, to keep going down that path to which, you know, if somebody is listening right now and you're like, that's your story. I just want you to even don't tune out yet, because I want you to know this there's grace, no matter where you've been or what you've done, that the Lord Jesus came for sinners like me and like you. And want you to not give up. 'cause the Lord comes for people like us, no matter where we've been or what we've done. And I saw that in the pursuit of the Lord, through those other people that he brought in with Jason and with Dave and with many others, even before that had kind of paved the way. So, you know, I, I think that that was something that the Lord really used to show me the depth of my own sinfulness. And then so after Dave and he came and had that, we did the, the party and he headed what I now call the stand. He made a stand for Christ at night. And then about two weeks later thrown another party at my house. And all of a sudden I [00:14:00] felt super dark in my, it just felt like a weight. I remember, I went back to the bathroom and I was staring in the mirror and I'm like, who are you? Like I had been, I was doing drugs at this time that I never thought I would do. And I was just like, who are you? And I went in my room, closed the door. I said, all right, God, if you're real, show me something. And I looked down and peeking out from underneath the bed was a Bible. My parents had given me a Bible when I went off to college. And I'd always kind of hid it under my bed cause it would cramp my style, but somehow in God's providence. The corner of it was sticking out. And so I sat down at the table at the desk and played Bible roulette and I just opened up randomly, if you will. And the pages open Ezekial 18 . Which says in the New Living Translation, the one who sins is the one who dies. A father will not be judged for the son's sins, nor will a son be judged for the father's sins, but each man will be judged according to what they've done. And then it goes on to say, but do you think I delight in the death of the wicked? No, but that they would turn and live says the Lord. And that freaked me out. So I closed the Bible and I was like, okay, that sounded very like at me. [00:15:00] And I was like, okay, Lord, anything else? So I relented again, came to the new Testament and it fell open to Romans. And I started reading through Romans and I got to chapter two in the New Living Translation, which says, don't you realize how kind tolerant and patient God is with you? Or don't you care. Can't you see how kind he's been giving you time to turn from your sin, but no, you're storing up wrath for yourself from the day of wrath when God will judge all people, according to my Gospel. And you know, Krystal, what happened in that moment was I realized that me and God weren't cool. My whole life was a social chameleon about trying to like fit in, not offend people, be the peacemaker, be the funny guy. And I felt like I had just kind of made my way through life like that. And I did that with all my relationships, and I thought I was doing that with God. And I thought that he was just, he was fine with the way I was living, because I wasn't as bad as this or that. And in, that moment, in the days after that, when I came to realize is that God does not compare us with anybody else. That we're were compared with, [00:16:00] with Jesus and that everybody sins and falls far short of his glory. And that really wrecked me. And I was a little hopeless. I began to feel the weight of my sin, kind of like John Bunyan Pilgrim's progress. If you've read it familiar with that. Christian is, he's got this burden on his back and he doesn't know what to do with it. And that's how I, felt very aware of my sin, but I didn't know what to do with it. And I went back home a couple of weeks later and was doing a drug and started just talking to my sister, who's a couple of years younger. And I started just confessing all these things that I had ever done. And she was looking at me like you are going to die. She's like, what are you doing? And then somehow in the middle of it, I just got this moment of sobriety and I thought, I need to call Dave. And I picked up the phone called Dave. And he came up was about two in the morning. He was carrying his Bible, he's crying, and I said, man, I need to know more about Jesus. And he said through tears, he said, you know what I was doing when you called me, I was like, no, [00:17:00] he said the same thing I've been doing for the past month. Every single night after I left Virginia tech, I was on my knees praying for you. And, um, I'm not sure if that's when I got born again. I'm not sure when it was, there's a six month window in there, but the Lord had been chasing me. And in his mercy arrested me and I'm forever thankful.

**Krystal:** That's amazing. So how old were you at this point?

**Garrett:** I was 21 when that happened, kinda middle of my junior year of college. And, yeah, I was, 21 and, had just kind of had a birthday. And I was like, the Lord was just like, we're going to have a new, a new path and yeah, ever greatful.

**Krystal:** Hm. So what did the rest of college look like for you? Cause you had one year left right?.

**Garrett:** Yeah. So all of a sudden I'm in trouble because my major was, it was something with marketing. And, but my plan was after we graduated, me and a buddy were going to move to the islands and start a nightclub. Cause we liked the beach, we liked girls, we like drinking, we like parties. So we were going to start [00:18:00] a nightclub. So now all of a sudden I'm like, well that plan's not gonna work. I'm doomed. all of a sudden I cared about stuff in a whole new way. So my roommates, all of a sudden, I feel really burdened for them. Like these girls, they were chasing the same sort of stuff that I was, and there was nothing there for them. The poor girl that I was living with, oh my goodness, she saw me go from the craziest part of my life to where now she's, you know, she's living with a guy who's like, I don't think we can do any of the things we were doing anymore. And she's like, what's wrong with you? I was like, I don't know what's happening to me. I didn't know. And I wasn't really plugged into relationships with Christians at this point. It was very much me and Jesus and my Bible. And for, basically that semester, I used to, I mean I remember right after this, I went back and I still, I smoked weed like two more times. One time I smoked it and I felt bad and I tried it one more time and I was like reading through the Bible with a highlighter and everything seemed amazing. But then I was like, I don't remember anything that [00:19:00] I'm reading. So I was like, I just can't do drugs anymore because I can't remember God's word. And so the spirit was convicting me. He's convicted me about what was happening in my relationship. Ended up having to, broke that relationship off. Started to just change me and then started to, meet some other Christians started going to church that became really helpful that same year junior year, comes spring break and a buddy named Adam who, we used to party together too. He's like, dude, let's go Panama City Beach. And I'm like, ah, I don't know. He's like, yeah, let's go. Let's go. Like, okay, deal. So we're going and I'm like Hey, we're driving down. but I'm very aware that I can't go down and do what I used to do. And I was like, bro, I feel like God's following me around everywhere. And he's like, you just needed some time away. And I was like, nah, I think God's following me around, and we're talking about it. So anyway, we pull it to Panama City Beach. And as we pull in one of those planes flies by over by with a big banner behind it's like, God loves you. And I'm like, look, dude, God's following me around. And then he's like, nah, that's no, you're just imagining that. So I go to the hotel. Then we go out to the beach, we're drinking, I'm drinking a little bit, too much. I start feeling convicted. [00:20:00] And now all of a sudden, this herd of people walk up, handing out Bible tracks, and this guy walks right up to me. He was with a crew and he said, Hey, God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life, can I tell you about it? And I was like, of course he does. And they started talking to me, shared the gospel with me and. He walks away, and I looked at that and I was like, dude, God's following me around. And he's like, no, no, no. So we got to the club that night, do our thing, close the place down. It's like 3:00 AM we leave, I'd had too much to drink. I was feeling guilty again. And we're trying to figure out how are we gonna get home. And all of a sudden, these three vans pull up with like John 3:16 ,turn of burn burn, rapture ready? They're like, Hey, we want to give people who've had too much to drink a ride home, because we love Jesus. And I was like, look, God's following me around. And he's like, no, we'll walk, thanks. We went back to the hotel room, smoked some weed. I felt so guilty. I knew I shouldn't have done it. But we got hungry. So we went to the Waffle House, so we go down to the Waffle House and we're sitting there at the waffle house and I am just, I am wrecked. I feel so bad. And I start talking to him about how bad I feel about all this. He's like, dude, I think you just need to [00:21:00] stop doing drugs. He's like, that's a problem, you do too many drugs. And then the door to the Waffle House opens up and all these people come in carrying Bibles. And this guy walks over to me, not just kind of beelined, but he, I could tell he was sitting there for a little bit and he, recognized me. He walked up to me and says, Hey, do you go to Virginia Tech? I was like, I do. He goes, yeah, hey me too. Have you ever been to this Baptist church he mentioned? I was like, I have. He goes, yeah, I think I saw you there before. He said, well my name's Shelby, and I'm wondering if maybe when you get back, we can meet up and talk about God. Maybe read the Bible together, see if you'd be interested. And I exchanged numbers with him, and he went and sat down. And Adam looked at me he goes, dude, God is following you around. You know, because he was a front row seat to like, the Lord was pursuing me. And this is, I was a believer at this point, but I was, I was struggling and that. That was really the trip that the Lord drew a line in the sand for me. That you're either going to be for me or you're going to be against me. And he was using encounters like that, I think to awaken me, to the fact that you couldn't ride [00:22:00] the fence. And to this day, Shelby Abbott's a good friend. He does stuff with Family Life, he had been with crew for a long time, and he's a wonderful brother and still consider him a mentor and a friend. So God, in his kind providence arranges those sorts of meetings.

**Krystal:** So, what was your involvement like in the local church? Did you end up going to that church and doing Bible study or what were the, just the next steps for you at that point?

**Garrett:** Yeah. So again, I, I was learning, about the church, and I would say my Ecclesiology really didn't form until much later. I would say early on, I wouldn't quite say a free agent Christian, but the para-church organization crew, particularly, and some kind of campus church, which was very nondenominational mostly more charismatic, it was just my vibe. That's what I was into. Those were the people I was hanging out with. But I saw it very individualistically, I didn't see myself as being part of the body in that sense. It was, very kind of more universal church was what was important to me. And then the Lord really used some good relationships in that time, to help me along. But as I grew, [00:23:00] I began to become more aware of how much I needed other people to help me follow Jesus. And that I was not strong enough to walk by myself, whether it be to fight sin, or whether it be just to have wisdom of what to do. And so I did attend a church, I wasn't a member there. I got baptized in a church. Actually I got baptized multiple times, which I would not recommend, but I was just, that was pumped up and didn't know what else to do. So I just kept getting baptized. Cause I wanted everybody to know about Jesus and, uh, um. Which is another part of what the Lord did after that. So I, I had a stewardship of relationships from my life before, Jesus, and I didn't know what to do with it. I used to throw pretty significant parties with like hundreds of people when I was in high school. And college, when I'd come home, we'd have these enormous parties. And I remember being burdened that I was like, I need to tell all my friends. About what Jesus has done, because they're all going to hell. Like I was keenly aware that everybody around me was going to hell. I mean, when I was at college, there was a guy named Deboz, we called him the white devil cause he was a cocaine dealer. And I remember one night I was reading through Revelation and I was like [00:24:00] Deboz, I need to witness to Deboz. So I like printed out all these Revelation, like hell verses. I went over and nailed them to his door and went full Martin Luther. I had no idea, I mean, I just, I was like, this guy has got to know. And I get back home, and I hear one of my, the other roommate, one of the girls gets a call, and she's like, oh, calm down, calm down. Somebody, somebody did what?

**Krystal:** Yeah.

**Garrett:** They what to your what? And then I heard her say, I bet it's Garrett. He's reading the Bible and losing his mind. And, uh, you know, he had called freaking out saying somebody nailed a bunch of Bible stuff to his door. But I felt that same burden for everybody who's around me. All of a sudden I was keenly aware that everybody around me is going to hell. Like they need Christ. So go back to my hometown over summer in between junior and senior year. And I reached out to my pastor at the time, the hometown pastor, Owen Womack, Methodist pastor. I was like, here's the deal, here's what I'm thinking Owen. I think I'm going to throw a kegger at my house and about an hour in, I'm going to have somebody turn on the lights, I'm going to get on the keg and I'm [00:25:00] going to preach Jesus. What do you think? And he's like, I like your zeal. I like what you're thinkin' How about, how about this. How about you can use the church for anything that you want and, let's just not do the keg and we'll see what God does. And I said, that's okay, we'll give it a try. So me and another buddy, who had come into the Lord, Dave and a couple other people. The Lord has started to pull some people out in our hometown. We started praying and we came up with this thing called Christ night. Now at the time, I, again, I hadn't, I didn't have a lot of discernment. I was a marketing major though, so I had that. So we can need to put this in the paper. So the only thing I could come up with, the only picture of Jesus that I knew was Jesus from South Park because that's, I used to watch South Park and I, there was a scene where Jesus fought Satan as a boxer and he had beaten him. So I got the picture of Jesus with his glove, the South Park picture of Jesus with his gloves up, and took out a full-page ad in the local newspaper, little West Virginia Town. And put this thing on Christ Night: The Fight for the Afterlife. It was funny. They put letters to the editor the next week. People were like, this guy must be crazy, don't trust him, he's probably a false teacher, all this kind of stuff. And I was just well-intended I just didn't know better. But we prayed, and prayed, and prayed. [00:26:00] And I had a legit, vision from the Lord when we were in there praying one night of every seat in there being filled, and the windows being open, and people hanging in the windows to hear the gospel. And I prayed that God would bring it to pass. And the night came and the place was packed, and the windows were open, and people were hanging in the windows. And there were hundreds of people who thought it was a joke that we were having a party at a church and they all showed up for this thing. And in God's Providence, I, and a couple of other people shared our testimonies of how God had changed our life, shared the gospel. I'm sure it was a mess of a sermon, but the Lord seemed to use it and sparked like a legit revival. Like I don't use that term lightly. Dozens upon dozens of people got saved. People who turned out to be missionaries and pastors and all kinds of stuff. There were marriages that were healed, it wasn't anything to do with me, it's just like the Lord sparked me, called me into something he was doing. And, one of the people who got saved during that time was a guy named Jason. He's currently one of our pastors here with me, we get to serve together, jason Seville, wonderful brother. He was a pastor in China for a number of years as well. And so the Lord really just, he [00:27:00] worked miraculously in that time. And I just had a real heart for wanting people to come to know the Lord. And I saw I had a stewardship of relationships and tried to have intentional conversations with the people that the Lord brought along the way. And then from there moved to Texas, and that's where I went to Denton Bible church and studied under a pastor there for a number of years. And went to seminary and then went off to be a pastor, probably a little too young. I'm not sure I would recommend it, but. I've got tons of stories and all that.

**Krystal:** So this might be a hard question to summarize, but if you could summarize in just a few points, how would you say your life is different now than it was before you came to know the Lord?

**Garrett:** I think the biggest thing is that I still striving to do it all the better, but I've learned to walk in the light. Krystal, I was so scared of the light. I was so insecure and afraid to be seen for who I was. I didn't know who I was. I didn't want other people to see who I was. And I just pretended, and I just chased after [00:28:00] all sorts of other idols, if you will. With drinking and drugs and all this, just to escape and to try and make the most of the moment and maximize all. And I just, I was a deceiver. I lied to everybody about everything. big lies or little lies. I just was, I was a fraud. I mean, really, and the light is so scary to come into. I mean, we could have a whole nother conversation about what I've learned in walking in the light now as a believer, which was not easy either. Because the gospel that called me out of my sin into the light into Christ to walk with him, that's not just for non-believers. And learning now to live in that it's been the most liberating, wonderful life-giving, call of God's grace that I could imagine. So I'd say the biggest difference is that I walk in the light now, not perfectly, but with a savior who goes every step of the way and helps in all the ways that we need them to, and, I'm also thankful now in a way that I think I was just super entitled and felt like life should work the way I wanted it to. And I'm thankful now. I'm just [00:29:00] so thankful he's done so much good to me and I've deserved none of it. And I think I go further in debt the longer I live, and I just become more and more aware of that. So yeah, I'd say thankfulness and the light.

**Krystal:** I feel like I relate just a little bit to your story. Cause I came to know the Lord in college and I was given this box by a youth minister in high school. And I had it on my bookshelf in my dorm room. And on the side it said I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. And I went to school in Austin at UT and I had faithful believing neighbors on either side of me in my dorm and above me. And, you know, one day one of my neighbors came over and saw that box and it probably didn't line up with how I was living in my life. And so he said, Hey, what does that verse mean to you? And kind of like what you had said, like, it really kind of made me angry. I said, I don't know. It's just, it's just a thing. It's just a verse, I didn't write it. And so I think that clued them in to think, Hey, [00:30:00] I don't think she knows the Lord. And I thought that I did, you know, I wasn't at atheist. So I thought I was a believer. I was a good person. And so, you know, similar to you, there were just people in my life that I felt like were faithful to love me, to be patient with me, to share God's truth with me. And so I think for those that are listening that maybe either have friends in their life or family members that are far from the Lord, what encouragement would you give to them? How can they be faithful to witness to those friends and family to love them? Are there just some practical things that they could be doing to be faithful in that?

**Garrett:** Okay. Great. And thanks for sharing that that's super encouraging and I just think, what will eternity be like with all the stories of God's grace, just put together into one big symphony. I mean, we're going to be singing forever of his wisdom and creativity and the way he saves his people, right? And that's, that is one thing, one of my favorite things that pastor is sitting front row to hearing people's testimonies. When people are joining the church, we hear their testimonies. And just to hear the creative ways, God saves people right? Which is part of [00:31:00] the advice that I would give is just to remember that God is working in people's lives, even when you can't see it. And especially when they can't see it, like I had no idea that 17 people were sharing the gospel with me along the way. It just didn't hit me, but you've got to know that God saves people in his timing. And that our job is to faithfully share the gospel and the power of the holy spirit and leave the results up to God. That's the advice I heard early on. And I've tried to, just rest in that. And to know that God loves people more than we do. He about them more than we do as evidenced by the cross where Jesus came and laid down his perfect life for our imperfect lives and then rose from the dead, and now uses that authority not to crush us, but to forgive us. And how marvelous is that? So I would say, remember that God is, working in people's lives, even when you can't see it. I think you want to pray really plead for God to help you to see lost people like he does. To see people as, as really image bearers who are either going to spend eternity with him or apart from him. That God pray that God would set up divine [00:32:00] appointments. That's one of my favorite things to encourage people to do start praying regularly that God would set up divine appointments for you to meet people who want to hear about Jesus. And just to begin to see what happens because he'll answer that prayer. To pray for both courage and compassion in those conversations. Compassion to not just come at it, self righteously, but to be tender and love people, but then also courage to say something. I would encourage you, who are listening all of us, encourage myself as well to do all the better, make sure you have some sort of defining conversation with everyone that you can. So sometimes we just kind of want to keep going through and hoping they're going to catch it. I try to encourage, I encourage people to try to say, Hey, can we just sit down? I just would love to share with you some things about Jesus. And I'd like to hear what you think about it. And that way you can have like the conversation, get it all out there as best as you can, without being kind and like letting them, you know, they don't want to talk you don't want to like, no, you're gonna, I'm gonna lock the door and you're staying, like, don't, wouldn't encourage that. But, but I think to have courage to have that kind of conversation, is really [00:33:00] important. So yeah, perspective, prayer, perseverance, and Have the conversation. People were scared to share the gospel with me cause I had it so together, at least on the outside. People told me that later on, but I was so thankful that people were trusting God enough to share Christ. So do it.

**Krystal:** I think we can inadvertently believe a lie that people are just too far gone. And we know that that's not true, right? Because we've seen God do miraculous things. We see it in scripture we've seen it in our own lives. And yet we feel whether they have a certain kind of lifestyle or whether they project a certain kind of image. We feel like, well, there's just not going to listen to us, but God goes before us. There's, so much freedom to know that it is a Spirit's work. We cannot save them. And so it's a matter of us just trusting that he's got this, and sometimes it's easier said than done. But we just, we need to be brave. We need to step up. And it's a matter of just being bold and trusting the Lord and knowing that he is going to do it.

**Garrett:** [00:34:00] Yeah. if he can save me, he can save anybody. And I just want you to nobody's too far gone. And this, by the way, one of the things I love about the local church is ask one another, their testimonies, like tell me the long version. Like give me the 30 minute version of your story and listen to the way that God worked. And you're going to hear so many remarkable stories and that gives you encouragement to be like, you know what, if he can save them he could save anybody. And so I think you're right. If God can raise people from the dead, I mean, he can save people for sure.

**Krystal:** Yeah, hearing testimonies are like one of my favorite things. And so that's why I've just been looking so forward to this conversation just to hear how God has worked in your life. So what would you say to someone who might be listening that isn't yet a follower of Christ? And maybe they're curious about Jesus curious if, if he could really save them and maybe they just haven't trusted in him yet for salvation. What words of encouragement do you have for them?

**Garrett:** Yeah. Well, I think first, I would say for somebody who's [00:35:00] listening to a podcast like this, who would knowingly say, I haven't surrendered to Jesus. I'm not following him yet. First I just want to encourage you that you're seeking. And there's too many people who just kind of go through life thoughtlessly. I want to commend you for, for seeking and, I would encourage you to keep doing that because if there really is a God, he's worth knowing. And I also want to say, I think the very fact that you are seeking should reveal to you that God's working in your life. And there's so many ways that he's arranging situations and circumstances, and he's trying, he's pursuing you much. Like I've just shared in my own story, like God is following you around. And it's because he loves you. Like he loves you. And there's lots of different reasons that people think that God wouldn't save them. So some have the doubt, like, is he really there? Some is, does he really care? Others I'm too dirty. So I think, I would encourage you to figure out what is it that makes you think that Jesus isn't for you. And I think in all of it, watching his life read through the gospel of John. Daily Grace has a wonderful study called [00:36:00] Come and See, just grab that. See if there's a Christian or, just even read with yourself. If you don't know any Christians, read through and come and see Jesus. He seeks us out. Is there a God? Yeah, he's come to us. And is there anybody who's too dirty? No, he comes to the most outcast of people because of their sin and he speaks to them and he's tender with them and he's patient with him and he's kind to point out their sin. So I just want you to know that Jesus comes for people like you. If he came from me, he'll come for you. And I would just say to be honest about your questions about God. So if there's really hard things that have happened to you, maybe some sort of abuse or maybe a betrayal by some religious leaders, or you just seeing a lot of hypocrisy just be honest with God about that. The Lord can deal with honesty. You don't need to pretend with him. So come honestly with whatever it is that you feel like is hindering you from seeking him and plead with him to bring maybe a Christian or two into your life that you could talk honestly, and openly with. And then look to Jesus, read the gospel of John, ask him to help you to believe everything that it tells you to believe. [00:37:00] And you might be. You might be surprised and he's worth it. I want you to know, it's scary to say I'm going to forsake everything and follow Jesus, but it is worth it. Sin always promises and it under delivers, always hides the price tag, but Jesus, his promises are true and he's worth everything that it costs. To follow him.

**Krystal:** Yeah. That's great. So I have one last question for you. And this is a question that we ask every guest that comes on the podcast. So here at Daily Grace, we say that the gospel changes everything. So, Garrett, what has the gospel changed for you?

**Garrett:** Yeah, I love that question. I've recently in recent years, kind of reached the halfway mark where I'm now I've been a Christian longer than a non-Christian. And, much of our time together today has been my story of how I became a Christian and a couple of the days afterwards. But ever since I've just only gone more in debt to grace. So I think for me, grace, what has done is it, forgave all of my sins, [00:38:00] like the sins from before I was a Christian. And since I've been a Christian, the Lord says that they are paid in full. Micah, says he went mafia on our sins and threw it to the depths of the sea. You know, Psalm 1 0 3 from far as the East is from, from the West he remembers them no more. And, you know, Galatians is nailed to the cross paid in full. So I think grace has changed me because I'm forgiven. And I don't have to prove myself to God. Like there's nothing I could ever do to hold up the show myself of being worthy of God's love for me in Christ. And that has been, I've learned by God's grace to be the fuel also for my obedience, as a Christian, now. That his, he supplies every bit of help for every step of obedience and that he's with us. And when we fail and when we sin that we need to just run to him and that his grace is it's abundant that were sin, abounds, grace abounds all the more. And I am a debtor to his grace forevermore.

**Krystal:** Yeah. [00:39:00] Amen. Thank you so much for sharing that. And just everything that you have shared today has just been so encouraging, really challenging. And we're just so thankful that you joined us today to share your testimony and just bring us that encouragement as we seek to share our faith with others. So thank you so much for joining us today.

**Garrett:** Yeah. Thanks for, thanks for having me love what you guys are doing. Keep it up.

**Krystal:** If witnessing to those around you is something that you would like to grow in. And it's an area that we all should be consistently growing in. Be sure to check out the Sharing Our Faith study that just recently released from the Daily Grace Co. It is a five week study that will help you to feel confident and equipped to share your faith. Don't forget to subscribe to our weekly newsletter to receive free resources related to the podcast, straight to your inbox. Today, we will be sending you all the links so you can connect with Garrett, his ministry and his books because he has written several great books. So you can click on the link in the show notes to subscribe. Until next week come join us as we continue this [00:40:00] conversation over on Instagram at Daily Grace Podcast. We'll see you next time.