

Ken My Co-worker

From a time in around 1960 when I was a new Christian, One of My First Witness's for Christ

I was a new Christian and very naïve about people and their motives. I had become a Christian about a year earlier or, should I say, I had totally, and seriously, dedicated my life to Christ and in the process, I had begun systematically reading my Bible from Genesis to Revelation. I had found a friend in Jesus and was hungry to learn all that I could about Him. I suppose that there was never a time when I didn't have my King James Version of the Bible with me and every chance, I had, I read it prayerfully. I read it on the bus to and from work, I read it before work, on break, and during my lunch hour, I read it in the bath room, and when I was waiting for my food at a restaurant, and yes, I would at times, even dream about it. I must have made quite a spectacle of myself as a young Christian because I got a lot of comments from those around me and a few just watched, shook their heads, and said nothing. If you've been there, you'll understand it but if not, you probably think that I was a silly young man that was obsessive in my thinking and dealing with Christ in my life, and I was that too.



I had just begun a new job as a draftsman for the City of Dallas, Building Inspection Office. My main function was to draw and maintain the City's property plat books, assign addresses to property, approve & give names to new streets in new subdivisions and aid in Building Code violation cases as my boss gave me direction. I had been selected for the job because I was a very detail oriented person and also, I was an excellent draftsman. At the time, I loved my work and intended to go far in that vocation which as I look back now, was not really very far but it was a worthwhile goal at the time.

Most important in my life, however, was Jesus and what he had for me to do for him in my lifetime that I was beginning for him as, I had pledged to follow him all of the days of my life when I had finally gotten serious about living for him about a year earlier. Actually, I was a Christian early in my life as my grandmother had been a witness about Him to me when I was a child and I had understood salvation and asked to be saved at a very early age (4 years old) but as I grew, so did my questions, and the unanswered questions that I had, had caused me to stray a little, while I was waiting for some of the answers that I needed. Eventually, through a series of events, God had provided the answers, see my story: "My Early Conversion" in my stories, the details of this are in that story. When convinced of Christ's Deity and love for me, I had made my lifetime commitment to God and begun my new life. At the time, I was Biblically ignorant of much but with an intense desire to learn all that I could about my heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus, I prayed each time that I read my Bible for Holy Spirit revelation and had many wonderful happenings, below is one of them from my early Christian childhood days:



Ken was a Building Inspector for the City of Dallas and a fairly smart one too, he was in his early 20's and had attended college at a nearby university but had dropped out to earn a few dollars like many people do and then, continue on later, at least, this was his story at the time. Basically, Ken was a good man but a man with an axe to grind, especially with people of faith. By his snide, unkind remarks a person could tell that he wasn't really very fond of Christian people and felt that, they were a little beneath him. As a fellow employee, I had sensed this early-on, and really did not want any problems at work so, I simply had decided to leave him alone and prayed for God to put someone in his path that would be helpful to him in learning of the love of Christ. Little did I know that God would use me in this capacity. As I said earlier, I carried my Bible everywhere and one day on a coffee break while I was

reading, Ken walked into the break room, sat down beside me and began talking. I was trying to read and he was bothering me but I soon realized that, I needed to be polite and acknowledge his questions so I stopped and listened to him:

(Ken) "Do you believe what you're reading and that, the Bible is God's Word?"

(Me) "Yes"

(Ken) "Why?"

(Me) "That's a long and complicated answer for me to give you at this time but to put it as short and simply as possible, yes, the Bible is God's Word and that is something that everyone must prove and decide for themselves and I have. Why do you ask?"

(Ken) "I'm not sure that I believe that, do you believe that God will answer any question that you ask Him?"

(Me) Defensively, I said, "Ken, it's your privilege to believe anything you want, but I'm finding that out for myself right now, and I'm not going to be satisfied with just any old, "have faith," type of answer either. I want truth above all else. Any answer that I will accept will need to be practical, truthful, and be able to convince me that I am doing the right thing by serving Him. My question to anyone who is interested is, "why should I believe something just because some misguided non-religious or religious fool says it is so". So far, my God has answered any question that I've had, to my satisfaction and I believe that He will answer anything else that is important enough to ask. God has satisfied me that he is real. Like I said, everyone needs to do this for himself, I have and am quite satisfied that the Word of God is the truth and that, God is real".

(Ken) Probing me, he said, "Are you sure you believe that?"

(Me) "Yes, I believe that the Bible is God's Word, and He's answered difficult questions for me before and I am sure He can and will do it again. The Word of God is the total truth or it is a total bald face lie and I will not waste my time serving a lie, I believe that God loves me and is concerned enough about me to answer any important question that I may have, why do you ask?"

At the time, Ken just grunted, got up, and walked off mumbling something, I couldn't hear what he said and I never quite understood why he was asking what he was asking me. One of the other employees that was sitting nearby moved closer to me, sat down, and asked me, "if I really believed that God would give me the answer to any question that I wanted to know". "Yes," I said, I'm reading through the Bible now and I will study it through later and in one of my previous prayer sessions with God, I asked Him to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the answers to any relative question that I may come up with. Nothing foolish, mind you, but honest legitimate questions that have spiritual relevance and I believe that God loves me and wants me to know the answers to any question that I may have and I believe that He will build my faith by giving me those answers.



A couple of days later, Ken was at it again, I was sitting in the employee break room reading my Bible and he came into the break room and began asking me questions:

Ken: "Why God would allow wars to kill innocent people and their babies, and why did I think that Jesus Christ was the only way to heaven when there were numerous older religions that offered ways to heaven that probably were just as good as Christianity?" He asked in a demeaning way, "Why was religion important at all, what was it in my nature that made me think that God was a necessary part of my life anyhow." He did this so that all of the others in the break room could hear, trying to embarrass me. He would look around and wink and continue his critical remarks.

Me: Finally, I said, "Ken, I am trying to read and understand what this book is about for the first time, I'm not looking for problems nor do I want to argue with anyone in any way, I am looking for truth with the knowledge that it will be wherever I find it, whether it be here in the Bible or in a science book somewhere and quite frankly, I don't care where I find it, just as long as it is the truth and not

someone's speculation. You're not helping the cause and I would appreciate it that, unless you are sincere about your questions that, you would go away and leave me alone". I also told him that, "if he hadn't read my Bible all the way through, he was not qualified to criticize what it said anyhow, so please go away so I can read".

A couple of days later, Ken came over to my desk as our offices were fairly close together. He was very polite and seemed to be genuine in his attitude.

Ken: He ask, "if I was still studying the Bible through"?

Me: I said yes, "why did he ask?"

Ken: He told me that, "he was not there to argue but that he had a question for me that he wanted the answer to."

Me: I asked him, "what it was?"

Ken: He said, "The Bible says that God has no beginning or no ending, am I correct?"

Me: I told him that, "I was no expert but I thought that it did probably say that."

Ken: He said, "How could that be? Where did I think that God came from? Nothing exists without a beginning or an ending, everything had to have a beginning and an ending thus so did God. Explain that to me", he said, "that simply does not make sense and quite simply it cannot be so, please explain this!" His logic made perfect sense from the point of view of mankind and I even agree that it was a question that anyone might ask, I was stumped and I didn't know what to say so, all I could say was:

Me: "I'll pray about it and God will need to give us the answer."

Ken: He said in a belligerent way, "Sure you pray about it and then let me know, I'm sure I'll not be hearing from you anytime soon but I would like the answer to that question."

Me: Then I said, "Ken, I've already told you, He's done it before for me and I am sure He can do it again. The Word of God is either the total truth or it is a total bald face lie and I will not waste my time serving or living a lie, I believe that God loves me and you too, and that He is concerned enough about us to answer any important question that we may have so, I'll ask Him and He will answer us, is that OK with you?"

Ken: "Sure, but I won't hold my breath."

Me: I said, "This is a logical question, God is a God of logic so, I'm sure that He'll give us a logical answer, now leave me alone, I'm on company time working on my job and I'm not supposed to debate religious matters here anyhow, I'll let you know what God says and you can be listening for anything that He might be wanting to tell you as it is your question so keep an ear open for Him to talk."

Ken: "Not likely!"

Me: "Very likely!, now go and I'll get back to you later."

I didn't know anything other than to pray and ask God for the answer. I did, and I explained to the Lord that, this had never been a problem with me but it would be an interesting thing to know. Then, in my prayer time before going to bed, I asked God what the answer to this question might be: *Father, since you showed me your reality, I've never doubted you and I do not doubt you now but the fact that you've never had a beginning or an ending is a question that, keeps coming up and it is very important to Ken and I'm beginning to be interested in your answer so, could you give him an answer to his question. If you want to tell me, I'll be glad to relay your answer to him but it is his question to you, not mine, I do not doubt you and he does so, please let him or me know the answer.*

When I pray, I will usually look for scripture to support my prayers and then, point to that scripture as a promise to me when I pray to the Lord because I've always believed that if you see it in



the Bible then, pray it, and you can take it to the bank with you because the answer's on the way. **1st Corinthians 2:12 says:** 2 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. To me this meant that, it was my privilege ask God any relevant question pertaining to His Word about Him and that, He would give me my answer. So I used this as my catalyst to pray the prayer above then at that point, all I needed to do was to wait for the answer and that's a pretty simple thing to do.

About two weeks went by and I had almost forgotten about the incident then, one day, Ken came back to my office with a glare in his eye.

Ken: "Well, Mr. Underwood, did God talk to you and did he give you an answer to my question?"

Me: "No, I talked to Him but got no answer yet, did He talk to you?"

Ken: "No, Surely, you didn't believe that He would really talk to me do you?"

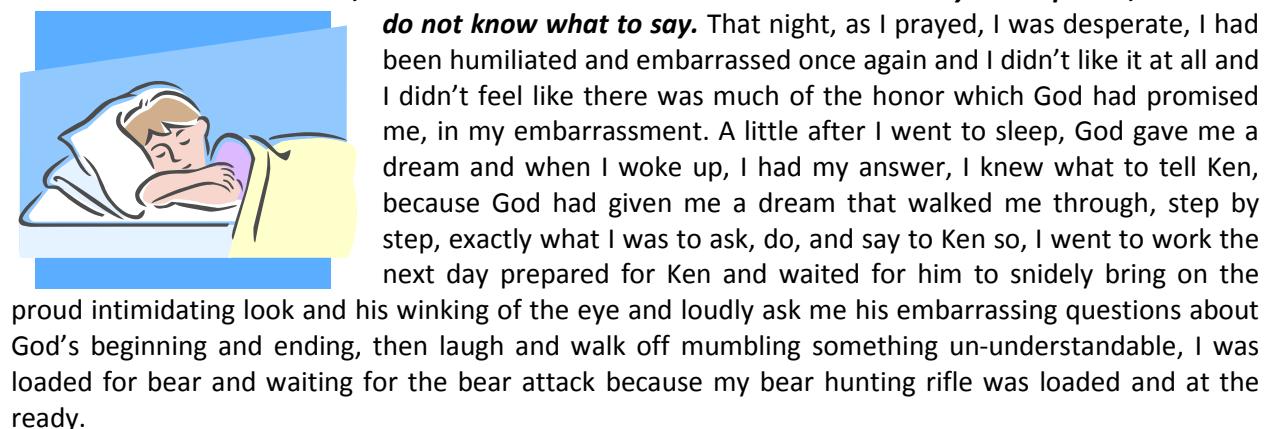
Me: "Well, yes I did talk with Him and got no answer yet, do you want me to ask Him again?"

By now Ken was getting louder and others in my office were looking around at us, Ken was looking around at everyone, winking his eye at them, and grinning mischievously.

Ken: He said, "Yes, go ahead and speak to God for me, and if He gives you any answers to my question, let me know what they are, tell me how it is possible for God to have no beginning or ending and just always be there."

Then, as abruptly as Ken had entered, he left, quietly mumbling again. Needless to say, I was embarrassed again and so, I just kept my head down over my desk working but that night before I said my prayers, I searched my Bible for scripture to pray by: Psalm 91 has always been one of my favorites: Psalm 91:14 & 15 says: 14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. 15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him.

I read this scripture and see that I fit all of the qualifications and then, told God that, *I was being embarrassed about my faith in Him at work and that, I need your help Lord, and that, I've never doubted you and I do not doubt you now but the fact that you've never had a beginning or an ending and just always were, is a hard question that, keeps coming up and it is very important to Ken so, could you please give him an answer to his question. Once again, if you want to tell me, I'll be glad to relay your answer to him but it is his question to you, not mine, and it is an interesting question but I do not doubt you and he does so, please let him or me know the answer. I told God that, Psalm 91:15 said that I would call upon Him and that He would answer me and that He would be with me in trouble, He would deliver me and honor me. Lord I need your help here, because I do not know what to say.* That night, as I prayed, I was desperate, I had been humiliated and embarrassed once again and I didn't like it at all and I didn't feel like there was much of the honor which God had promised me, in my embarrassment. A little after I went to sleep, God gave me a dream and when I woke up, I had my answer, I knew what to tell Ken, because God had given me a dream that walked me through, step by step, exactly what I was to ask, do, and say to Ken so, I went to work the next day prepared for Ken and waited for him to snidely bring on the proud intimidating look and his winking of the eye and loudly ask me his embarrassing questions about God's beginning and ending, then laugh and walk off mumbling something un-understandable, I was loaded for bear and waiting for the bear attack because my bear hunting rifle was loaded and at the ready.



Well about 3:00 p.m. or so, in came Ken into the office,

Ken: "Hey! Underwood, have you talked with God any today? Have you got me an answer to my question or do I have to wait a little longer? How could God not have a beginning or an ending and just always have been there?"

Me: "Ken, I've been waiting for you, its good to hear your voice."

Ken: "Well, Mr. Underwood, do you have me an answer yet, or do I need to plan on waiting a little while longer?"

Ken looked around at the other employees winking and grinning.

Me: "As a matter of fact, I do have the answer to your question and I have some questions and a message for you."

Ken: "A message for me from God Almighty, how privileged I feel, what is it?", he looked around the office, winking and grinning.

Me: "Do you remember the story of Simon Peter in Luke 22, and how he denied Jesus three times just before Jesus was crucified? And how, when Jesus turned and looked at him in the courtyard, Peter remembered his words that, Peter would deny the Lord three times before the cock crowed the next morning?"

Ken: He looked at me and said, "yes I remember that story."

Me: "Do you remember how Simon Peter after he realized what he'd done, he ran out and wept bitterly, and how terrible he must have felt believing that his life would never be the same again because he had denied his friend, Lord Jesus?"

Ken: "Yes."

Me: "Well, Ken, I do not know what has happened between you and God previously that made you the way you are with people like me, people of faith, but God wants you to know that he loves you and wants you to continue on with whatever calling he has given you to follow in the past".

Then, I took my elbow and hooked my elbow around Ken's and asked him to come with me into the alley between the buildings.

Ken: "What are you doing? Where are you taking me?"

Me: "I'm asking you to go with me into the alley so that I can answer your question with a question, you'll understand all if you'll just come with me."

Ken: "OK, lets go"

We walked through the back entrance of Dallas City Hall into the alley, arm in arm. On the way, I thanked Ken for his diligence to stay on me about beseeching God for answers because I had learned something about God that was very valuable to me that I would take with me always. When we had walked past the buildings into an opening where there was a large parking lot we stopped.

Ken: "Well, what now Ron?"

Me: "Look up, Ken, what do you see?"

Ken: "A beautiful blue sky."

Me: "Ken you've asked a very complicated question, "Where did God begin and where will He end?" Ken, where does that beautiful blue sky that you're looking at begin and end?".

Ken: "It doesn't have a beginning or an ending as far as I can see."

Then, Ken stopped abruptly, he swallowed hard and with tears in his eyes, he turned and walked quickly away, mumbling something un-understandable and I didn't see him again for a couple of days. As I walked back into the office through the back door one of the people said, "He went into his office and closed the door and he looked like he was crying, what on earth did you say to him?"

Me: Nothing, I just gave him a message that someone wanted me to give him, you'll need to ask him about why he was crying if that is what he was doing.



Ken had realized that, what I was implying was that God was just like that blue sky, it had no beginning or no ending but would likely go on forever in all directions without beginning or ending and just always be. God lives in countless other dimensions of time and space and with our small finite understanding, it is difficult to explain God's existence. It is a difficult thing to grasp thus, God had used something that Ken could understand as an example to explain what Ken did not understand. I was so impressed at God's great wisdom and pleased at his understanding of Ken and me enough to explain and make a difficult thing simple to understand.

A couple of days later, Ken came by my desk and very quietly ask me if we could talk when I had a break, I said sure, I take a break at around 10:30 a.m. and at 3:30 p.m. and that, I would see him in the break room. Later, at coffee break, Ken walked in and with a serious look on his face, we had the following conversation:

Ken: "Ron, I've never met a man as sincere as you about God, admittedly, you've told me that you're uneducated and are ignorant regarding a lot of things of faith but you're doing what I should have done in my Christian beginnings. I've always put my stock in education and put that first in my life. What you're doing now is something that I should have done as young Christian and still in high school. Like many kids, I only socialized and lollygagged around as a teenager and failed to get a good, solid Christian faith foundation with good solid teaching. The thing that you do not know about me is that I began attending Baylor University several years ago in an effort to study and become a Baptist Minister. I got into a freshman religion class there where they literally tore my faith into shreds, and when they asked me that same question, "How is it possible for God to have no beginning or ending?", I couldn't answer it and thus lost faith in God and began believing that it was only a myth. I dropped out of school and have been miserable ever since, making people like you miserable when I could. Thank you for your patience and understanding with me. I am back on a positive footing now with God. Admittedly, I do not know where this will take me but I am back."



Me: "Well Ken, Like I said the other day, God wants you to know that he loves you and wants you to continue on with whatever calling he has given you in the past to follow, I believe that would be a good place to start, now go forward and never look back. Peter failed God miserably by denying Christ three times and look at where his future finally took him, now the rest is up to you, if I can ever help, let me know".

Ken: "Thanks Ron," like I said, "I do not yet know where this will take me but want you to know that, I'm back on the road again."

About six months later, Ken came by my desk and told me that, he was resigning to go back to school and asked me to pray for God's guidance for him. I never saw Ken again but Praise God for His love and His Promises in His Word. I would like to believe that Ken is a Minister somewhere teaching and preaching God's word to a congregation that needs him, he would be a good one.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald A. Shadwoood". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "R" at the beginning.