

How I found faith

By [Chris Brundage](#)

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When I was four years old, our family moved to southern Nevada. I grew up in the desert. I walked through the desert each day to get to school. After school, and on weekends, I played in the desert. I was familiar with sand, lizards, and Joshua trees. I learned early to love the desert.

(After I die, you can mix a spoonful of my ashes in with the Nevada desert. The rest can go in a Memorial Garden.)

Although I grew up in a desert, I didn't grow up in a church. After our move, we got disconnected from church. I didn't go to Vacation Bible School or Sunday school. In my teens, we started going to church again. We attended First Presbyterian where Rev. Philips was pastor. He preached long sermons. I tried not to fall asleep. But my eyes grew heavy. Finally at the end of the sermon, he'd say three little words: "Let us pray..." At last I could close my eyes! I didn't find God in church (at least not right away).

I found God in the mountains. Or rather, God found me in the mountains. When I was fourteen, I went to a Presbyterian youth camp in the Sierras. The camp was called Calvin Crest. I spent a week there in 1977. We sat on the floor in the lodge and sang songs. We heard speakers tell us about God and faith. We swam in the pool and played on the field. We went hiking. We had a campfire at night.

On the final night at the campfire, people came forward, one by one, threw a pinecone on the fire, and shared how they met God that week. I wasn't one of them. I still wasn't sure whether I believed in God or not. I was an agnostic.

The change happened next year at Calvin Crest. I can't tell you why it was different. I don't know why an agnostic became a believer, but that's when it happened. We did the same things: sang songs, listened to speakers, sat around a campfire. But I changed that week. One night I left our cabin and walked out among the trees. There was a smell of pine in the air. The stars were clear. I looked up at the night sky, and suddenly I knew that God knew me. God knew me all along, but I hadn't

known this until now. God who made galaxies knew who I was, a teenage boy. It was a startling thought. John Wesley's heart was 'strangely warmed' when he found faith. I just remember smiling and laughing to myself. The little laugh people use when they finally get something. That was the birth of faith in me.

Later I learned that there are reasons to believe in God. Thomas Aquinas has five of them. Blaise Pascal and C.S. Lewis also offer good reasons to believe in God. But I don't think reasons to believe will make you believe in God. Reasons only remind you that the belief in God you have is reasonable.

After Calvin Crest, I started reading the Bible. I noticed a curious thing about how people find God in the Bible. They often find God in the desert, on a mountain, or by a lake. In other words, they find God outdoors, like I found God at Calvin Crest. You can find God indoors too. But we often bump into God out in God's creation. John Calvin said nature is a theater of God's glory. It's a theater where the play is always going on.

Some of you have found faith. You can point to a time in your life when faith appeared. Others have not yet found faith. Still others have walked through pain and sorrow and wonder if they have lost their faith. Everyone is in a unique place in their life of faith.

To anyone who needs a new faith, I'd say ask for faith. And put yourself in a place where faith can appear. Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you. Seek, and you shall find." Just by going to Calvin Crest 36 years ago, I was seeking God. And much to my surprise, I was found by the One who had been seeking me all along.

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