

Dear Pastor,

I came to know Christ as my Savior my sophomore year at Arizona State University through the life testimony and friendship of my Christian college roommate. I noticed in him joy, wisdom, and strength that didn't seem to come from the world. I was raised Catholic, so I believed in God and was familiar with the name of Jesus but didn't know anything about Him. That's when I decided to do a more thorough investigation. I wrestled through many questions and doubts for months, and God, in His great grace, answered them providentially. Eventually, I could no longer deny His existence, I could not doubt His love, and I did not have any more questions or any excuses left. So one April night I asked Christ to save me from my sins and to be the Lord of my life.

I started attending Tri-City Baptist church and I grew in in my faith. After a few years, a missionary presented God's work being done in the Philippines. Being raised American, I was curious about my Filipino heritage and decided to visit. I spent four weeks constantly preaching the Gospel to thousands of high school students, and I saw God work powerfully through me. The first day back to work at my engineering job, I realized that what I had experienced in the past four weeks was more meaningful and fulfilling than the past two years working for a bigger paycheck. I returned the next three summers, and the burden the Lord had given me only grew stronger.

I subsequently met with my mentors and pastors to discuss this "calling," and they advised that I start attending seminary. I had the passion; now I needed the knowledge. Seminary was God's way of equipping me with the necessary tools for ministry in an environment where that passion could grow and thrive. After a few years, I received my Master of Divinity and started making preparations to be a church planter in the Philippines.

But the Lord had still not opened the door for me to go, and after consulting with my mentors, they asked how I could train pastors, having never been one myself. What I needed was experience. So reluctantly I stayed and asked the Lord for direction. A week later, I received an offer to pastor a local Chinese church plant, which I accepted. I served there for five years. In hindsight, I am grateful for this opportunity because it taught me a lot about myself and gave me great experience in ministry and leadership.

I am excited for where the Lord is leading and hope to learn more as I partner with other local churches to finally head out to the Philippines to plant churches, where believers can find Christ-honoring, Gospel-centered communities to grow in their faith.

Josh De la Rosa