

# Why I Love Being a Pastor's Wife



- *Kathleen Dalton*

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I love being a Pastor's wife....I always have. Ken pastored his first church when I was 21. I loved it then, and haven't stopped loving it yet. Yes, there have been mean people, and unfaithful people, and people who wanted to live in their sin, and people who wanted others to join their sin with them. There have been arguments about ridiculous things, hurt feelings, and misunderstandings. But still, I loved it so much! It wasn't until 2 years ago when I first taught the book of Ephesians to a Sunday School class in our church that I realized why I love being a Pastor's wife. Hold on to that thought for a minute.

One Sunday, Ken had a woman come up to him after the church service and ask if she could meet with him because she had some questions about salvation. He arranged to meet with her the following day, knowing that I would be able to join them, too, at that time.

She arrived the next day with her husband, who had just recently become a Christian. When he had come to faith in Christ a few months earlier, his life had drastically changed. He was a different person, and being a very outgoing person anyway, he had bought up all the Jesus t-shirts and necklaces he could find, and was advertising his faith in Christ in a huge way.

As the four of us sat down together in Ken's office, we got to know each other a little, and then Ken asked her what some of her questions about salvation might be. My heart was smiling a little inside as she answered: "Do I have to stop drinking beer? Do I have to change my 'potty mouth'? Do I have to be a billboard?"

Cool questions, huh? I especially liked the last one – her husband had become a "billboard" for Christ with all those Jesus t-shirts, and she wasn't sure she wanted to do that, too. 😊

It was so much fun to spend the next half hour or so talking about what it meant to become a Christian – that it was about wanting to be right with a Holy God, that it was about having a one-on-one relationship with Jesus, that it was about telling Him you knew you were a sinner and couldn't do anything to make yourself better in His sight, but that you believed He had died for you, paid the price for your sin, and you believed He wanted to offer you salvation as a free gift, not something you could earn by trying to change your life and be good enough to merit his love.

As we wound up our time together, she and I spent some time alone – I was hoping she was ready to thank Jesus for dying for her, and give her life to Him. I drew three circles on a piece of paper and explained them: All three circles represented a person's life. In the center of each circle was a chair – representing the throne of each life...the place where life decisions are made. In circle number 1 was a

chair with her sitting on it, doing the best she could to make right decisions, but not always making them. Jesus was on the outside of that circle, looking in. In circle number 2 was that same chair with her sitting on it again, doing the best she could to make good decisions. Jesus was on the inside of that circle – a part of her life – but not on the chair. In circle number 3 Jesus was sitting on the chair, and she was in the circle, wanting to do things His way, asking Him to be the decision-maker in her life.

I asked her which circle best represented her life. She told me she really wanted Jesus to be sitting on the throne of her life...she wanted to do things His way. We prayed together and she thanked Him for dying for her, and told Him she'd like Him to sit on the throne in her life.

What does this story have to do with "I love to be a Pastor's Wife"?

Do you remember Chapter 1 of Ephesians? That incredible list of all the blessings we have from God simply because we are His children, simply because we have admitted we have nothing and asked Him to be the Savior of our lives?

Well... this young woman I met with last week – the one who wasn't sure she wanted to give up her beer and potty mouth – she now has been given all those things in chapter 1!!! She was chosen by God, she is Holy and blameless in His sight, she's been adopted into the family of God because He wanted her, she had had the grace of God poured liberally into her life, she has redemption, forgiveness, wisdom, insight, knowledge of His will. She has an inheritance waiting for her, and has a promise from God, the powerful Holy Spirit, living within her until the time that inheritance can be placed in her own hands in heaven.

Doesn't that make you just love the church? We are all a bunch of people with potty mouths who don't want to be billboards - who have been transformed into the body of Christ – so changed that He uses us to "fill all in all" (Ephesians 1:23). We are everything God needs to get the job done. We are it. We are God's plan to rescue the world from the darkness which blots out the light.

Before we were ever born God had our good works all planned out! He knows what my dear little friend from last week will do for Him - things which will count for eternity - and He chose her to do them because no one else could do it so well. (Ephesians 2:10)

And as she, and the rest of the people at our church, work side-by-side, in spite of our differences and shortcomings, we are being viewed by the powers in the heavens – the angels and the demons – and they have their mouths hanging open at the display of God's glory they are seeing. (Ephesians 3:10) That glory has been witnessed by the whole world throughout all generations!!! In other words, the church, since the time of Christ, has been reflecting the glory of God for over 2,000 years. Even during the Dark Ages, even when persecution nearly wiped us out, even when all missionaries were chased out of China...even...even....even. Churches are stupendous, magnificent, shining, grand, and powerful....at their worst!!!! They are indescribable at their best!!!! Our churches are the brightest places in our world.

The woman I've been telling you about came to church the next Sunday with a notebook. One of the last things I had told her after she asked Jesus to take the throne in her life was that she should read her Bible every day. She told me she didn't understand the Bible...that she had a question about almost every verse. I told her that was great! She should write down her questions as she came up with them and then ask someone about them as soon as she could. That was the best way to learn and grow.

So she came to church Sunday morning with a notebook. She had gotten to the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Matthew, had written down all her questions, and now she figured she needed some answers before her book got too full and she forgot what it was she wanted to know. 😊

We sat in a quiet place during our Sunday school hour and I answered her questions from her book, one at a time, working our way through 8 chapters of Matthew. Ahhh...so much fun. And on her wrist was a small bracelet of rhinestones with a tiny cross dangling from it. Her billboard.

You see why I love being a Pastor's wife?

This is not a life of solving other people's problems only to find out down the road that they never really changed. Of course that does happen, but more often than not I see people turn their sin-filled lives over to Jesus, and then Jesus takes those lives and turns them upside-down, and fills them with purpose and love for others. Drunks and drug addicts become preachers. Selfish moms learn to love their children and husbands first. Teens caught up in prostitution become clean and pure and marry and serve the Lord. Homosexuals have their desires turned around to the way God always intended them to be. Businessmen who were filled with lust for the next dollar begin to give those dollars to Jesus, and begin to leave their lust behind as they pursue the riches waiting for them in heaven. Through God's work in the church, people's lives really change.

I get to teach the most valuable lessons taught anywhere in the world.....to sit down with an open Bible in my hands and share the wisdom of the ages with ordinary people who then do extra-ordinary things.

And I can't fail. Did you know that? Did you realize that full-time service for Jesus is totally fail-proof? Why? Because I can't do it **at all**. I am absolutely unable to produce any change in anyone...to bring anyone to Christ...to heal anyone...to change anyone's mind. Only Jesus can do those things. When those things happen, it's because He did them. I only offer my "circle" to be his throne - to be a conduit for His power and His love and His ability to change. So I can't fail.

But I can goof up, and, oh my, I have. I have let sin stop His power from flowing through me. And when that has happened, I get to get back up and try again. There is no limit to His patience with me. He chose me for this job and He won't give up on me.

My children have been saved from living in too small of a world. They have learned to be polite, gracious, giving. They have seen that the world doesn't revolve around them. Jesus gave my children a life which opens them up to the grand plan of God for eternity – not just the limited joy of tonight's football game or party.

I have in-service, on-the-job training for my whole life.

And I never have to retire. Service to Christ is until I breathe my last breath. Nothing can keep me from serving Jesus. Not age, not sickness, not pain, not even Alzheimer's. If I finish out my years with Alzheimer's, God Himself has chosen to use my little bit of remaining energy in that way. He always knows what He's doing. My energy when I was young was valuable. But slowing down as I age is turning out to be even better. I have begun to trust Jesus even more to do those things I can't do any more.

The sky is the limit for what I can learn, what I can teach, jobs I can do, new things I can try, lives I can touch, people I can meet, places I can go. It's the best job in the world. I'm working in the church - a mismatched collection of once hopeless, dysfunctional people who *"love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love."* (Ephesians 6:24)



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