

## Baptism testimony – Alysia Lim

From young, I wrongly assumed myself to be a Christian. I studied at a Christian girls' school in my primary and secondary schooling years, and after the innumerable morning devotions, weekly chapel services and Discover Jesus Weeks, I somehow got it into my head that I was a Christian, simply because of my belief in an all-loving Christian God.

However, in hindsight I realized how shallow my perceived object of faith was. I regarded God as an ever-helpful therapist who would accede to my requests for good grades and a smooth life, instead of a Redeemer who is loving and just at the same time. He offers the far greater gift of righteousness through which undeserving sinners like myself can be reconciled to Him. Also, although I proclaimed Him as my God, I was actually serving several other gods: human approval and grades. In secondary school my friends often used the words “nice” and “patient” to describe me, and that was a reputation I actively sought to maintain throughout my schooling years. This façade eventually fell apart in junior college when I realised that my motivations for being understanding and approachable – even to people I didn't like – were mainly to satisfy my desire for human appreciation. In addition, I was constantly obsessed with studying (which I'm sure my close friends can attest to), grades, and training my musical abilities. I was hardened at heart. Despite claiming that I believed in God, I had subconsciously displaced Him from the place of authority in my life. I was my own god, determining what I wished to achieve.

However, God had other plans for me. As a music student at junior college, I was fortunate to study under two teachers who are now husband and wife – Mr and Mrs Seow. I am thankful for God's work through Mr Seow, as well as my close friends Deborah and Regina. It was these two friends who never gave up finding time to sit me down and talk to me about Christianity, no matter how many times I rejected them with the excuse of doing work and having to study. This eventually culminated in having a conversation with Mr Seow about Christianity. It was then that he questioned my knowledge about God, and made me realize my inadequate understanding of the faith. I was then invited to join bible study sessions outside school, through which I learned so much more about who God was, the actual sinful nature of man, what Jesus did, and how we as undeserving sinners should respond to His work on the cross for us. It was through this Bible study that I realised how sinful I was in having so many idols apart from God. It took a long time for the gospel to really sink in, and for me to start experiencing a heart transformation. When it did though, I really rejoiced and gave thanks to God for His lavish grace in saving me even when I was in rebellion against Him, and for giving me a heart transplant and the ability to fight sin daily. Ephesians 2:4-5 couldn't be plainer, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved.”

Though I now have a close relationship with God, I wouldn't say my former idolatries are completely gone. However, the temptation to succumb to my sinful desires of seeking human recognition and grades has been weakened considerably, because all of these fleeting pleasures pale in comparison to the joy and fulfilment I can find in enjoying a relationship with and glorifying God. Nearing the end of my A levels, I found myself questioning the need for that extra 'A' on my certificate. Also, for the first time in years of learning music, I really enjoyed just learning more about a symphony and using the creative abilities God has given me, instead of regarding it as just another item on my study list for mere regurgitation. In addition, I find myself able to love people better, not for the sake of hearing things like "Wow you're a saint", but really, to love others just as God loved me first.

Today, I was baptised and became a member of RHC. Baptism is a public profession of the death of my old self, and new life in Christ as part of His body, the church. I really thank God for bringing me to this close-knit family of believers who have taught and encouraged me thus far in my Christian walk. God is truly a sovereign and loving Father, for whom nothing is impossible.