**Hannah’s Testimony**

Hi, my name is Hannah. I was brought up in a Christian home. However, I knew that my parents being Christians did not mean that I was a Christian. When I was 8 or 9, I started feeling uncomfortable at Church. It was really difficult to explain but I knew I didn’t have what everyone else around me at church had and I knew I didn’t belong. After discussing this with my dad, he suggested it may be God telling me that I needed to put my trust in him. I knew God existed, but my plan was to live my life and on my death bed I would put my trust in God and go to heaven. I wanted it to be on my terms. At the age of 10 I realised that tomorrow is never guaranteed. I truly understood that Jesus came into the world, lived a perfect life, died and rose again so that he could forgive me for my sin (all the wrong stuff I do). I knew he would help and guide me through life. I wouldn’t have to face anything alone

I would love to write that since that moment my life has been a dream and easy. But we live in the real world, it hasn’t been easy. When I was 14, my 3 grandparents passed away within 10 months. I’m not going to lie, I had a lot of guilt after they passed away. I loved my grandparents so dearly but because we were separated by distance I didn’t get the opportunity to spend as much time with them as I would have liked and when I did see them I didn’t prioritise the importance of visiting them. Sadly, I didn’t realise this until it was too late. I struggled with guilt and a fear of what would happen next. I used to wake up every morning wondering whether life was ever going to get better. I gave up all social activities, I couldn’t understand why this was happening and I didn’t want to talk about it. It felt like everyone was falling away from me. At the age of 16/17 I suffered from physical symptoms which were triggered by anxiety. I didn’t even know this was possible and caused a lot of worry and confusion for myself, my family and friends.

During this time, I struggled. I kept trusting in Christ but I couldn’t understand why everything had happened. I’m so thankful to God that he didn't let me fall away. Things in my Christian life started to make a dramatic improvement after church one Sunday. That night I prayed to God in tears. Life had been hard, but God has been faithful. It is now becoming clear to me as to why I went through it all. I could have given up, but thankfully he didn't let me. Since then I completed my A levels and got into uni. I took a year out to visit South Africa for 3 months, volunteering with a Christian charity out there. The Lord’s plans worked out, enabling me to go even when it seemed impossible. Now I’m here in Leeds.

I know that my life has not been as difficult as it is for other people. We all face our own struggles. Being a Christian doesn’t mean you won’t face struggles but we have God to help us, the wrong things that I have done and will do have been forgiven and I have an eternal hope with him in heaven forever. So that’s my story. God has helped me this far and I know he will continue to help me. I’m not perfect, in fact I’m far from it but I have been forgiven through Jesus’ death on the cross so that I can have a true and personal relationship with God.