

## \*Jessie Garren\*

I have been a Christian for as long as I can remember. I have grown up in a home with two Christian parents and one wonderful younger brother. I have never considered leaving my faith, but in elementary school, especially 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade, I did some things that I know God did not smile upon. They were not really all that major but still none-the-less wrong.

Through the years I have definitely grown in my faith and learned from my mistakes, and I'm still learning. During this past year, since we found out I had cancer, I think my faith has grown tremendously. I have had to trust Him with medical reports and scan results and, most of all, that He is healing me and that he's really there and is always with me, even in the toughest of times. That He has a purpose for all of ~~that~~ this. I have learned that He did not give this to me but he let it happen. It has been one long journey.

We are still on this journey and God has used me to touch more lives than I can even imagine. I have had people tell me that I have inspired people all over the world! That was absolutely amazing to me! I have been called up in front of 300

Students and I've also been called up in front of ~~4,500~~ students for these question and answer sessions about my life right now. It is absolutely amazing how God is using me through all of this! It's exciting what's already happened and also thinking about what He might have planned next!

I originally wanted to go on this same mission trip last year but was not able to because the cancer "popped" up. So I have waited a year to be able to go on it again and I'm very excited that I was able to this year!

I felt called ~~this year~~ to go this year because I have never been on a mission trip before and I also feel that God has something else planned for me when we get to the Dominican Republic, or maybe even while we're traveling. I feel like I'm taking what I have for granted and not appreciating it enough.

God is such an amazing God and it's going to be incredible to see what His work is going to do when we get down there!