

# FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions:

## A Tatterdemalion's Testimony

### What inspired this memoir?

Initially, I wanted to say thank you to Tim Tebow for being a positive influence in my life so I sent him a version about how he influenced my Christian testimony and journey. After the thank you to him, I wondered if my story could help others in some way. For example, I wondered if other “modern women” and “false converts” would be able to relate and then find light in the darkness of their lives. Maybe I could help straighten their paths a little and they could avoid my mistakes. I also wondered if I could let long-standing Christians know what it's like coming into the Christian religion to develop faith and the distractions and pitfalls that act as barriers. Telling a good story, creating art was also a big motivator.

### What is a tatterdemalion exactly?

While it's defined as a raggamuffin and a person in tatter clothing, I think it also speaks to the condition of the heart of a person. A tatterdemalion is as much someone rundown as it is someone deeply hurting. It's not necessarily being poor financially but poor in spirit. It's not necessarily someone with chaos in his/her life but someone whose life is in shambles.

### Questions about getting started

- **How did you know where to begin?**

Initially, I wanted to focus only on the two year mission where the Holy Spirit use Tim Tebow in my life. However, I'm an unknown person. Readers have no idea who I am because I'm not a public figure so I needed to go back into my life and introduce myself. Because I spent around eight years writing the book and re-writing it, and because there were so many struggles with creating it, I wanted to start sort of at a “turning point” and with the current struggle: *Is my story worth telling? Am I good enough? What's the point of sharing a testimony?*

I knew my whole life that I had stories to tell about it which is probably why God gave me such a special, strong memory but I found that when it came time to share my story, I had been so beaten down by the world that I struggled to share it and could only do so through writing...and even that was a monumental challenge!

Now I know to begin with vulnerability, prayer to Father God, and courage. All the other tactics and even strategies come after.

- **How is a memoir different from an autobiography?**

An autobiography and a memoir are similar but if you're looking at the author's life in its entirety, that's more of an autobiography. A memoir is thematically different because the narrative is more focused topically.

- **What is your theme?**

Journey. One big, long journey from a tattered demon creature to a human being.

## **Questions about the writing process**

- **How did you know what to include and what to leave out?**

With careful deliberation, I chose to focus on my story and where the story of others impacted mine, careful not to tell their story and to handle them delicately with grace. The Holy Spirit changes people and you never know who has had a "heart change" so I wanted to give people the benefit of the doubt in order to move along the story which was so jam packed as it was.

- **How do you handle memory and truth?**

A good memoirist like Mary Karr has a phenomenal memory, good observational skills, and can record these things. I'm blessed to have had that up until I hit about thirty-years-old. It's easy in a case like mine to draw on those abilities. However, perspective still matters so you want to be delicate with how you deal out your cards, so to speak. Writing from your perspective is also less confusing to the reader than shifting from one to another. I found that talking with people or deducing their perspective was not ideal for the reader's experience. It's helpful to know also that memory is still not necessarily perfect and that's where the honest truth and healthy intentions come into play. This way telling your personal experiences aligns with definitive history.

- **What are the obstacles you see that prevent people from writing their memoirs or not completing them? What do you recommend to overcome those obstacles?**

It does seem like people never even get out of the gate. They think, "I have a story to tell!" but it's such a big endeavor that they never climb that mountain. There's also the hassle of reliving the moments enough times to write them down and edit them. Thinking critically about what makes for a good story and developing the chops to tell it are necessary but will hinder a lot of people. Being brave and healed enough to let people into your life if a scary thing so not

everyone is ready for memoir writing either. I simply recommend having the kind of relationship with yourself that you know if you can handle this endeavor or not and invite God in to interactively write the story with you because it's so much better than writing alone.

A big obstacle for me was getting back a scathing critique on a draft where the editor told me how awful a person I seemed to be and that I was the meanest of mean...misery on a page. She saw my pain on the page and just received it as anger and judgement. But because she mixed some professionalism with her attack, her judgements carried more weight with me than they should have so I stopped writing the manuscript for a couple years. Getting some distance, good counsel, healing and being willing to brave through another re-write with courage and vulnerability made all the difference.