

Hi Mango House!

As you all know, this week I will be sharing a bit about myself with all of you! I will share why I am a Christian, why I am here at Mango House, and what I want to leave behind. I will start by saying thank you for worshiping with us and letting us lead you all in worship!

This is actually the first time I have done anything musical in my whole life. God blessed me with a small number of gifts, and music is not one of them. If someone asked me to be on a praise team a few years ago, I would have been absolutely terrified of the idea and I would have said an immediate NO.

So, what changed?!

I became a true Christian and got to know who God really is. Let me explain this!

Most of my life, I have struggled with anxiety and fear. I am a more timid person in general, but I was most afraid of failure and disappointing people around me.

In high school I played volleyball, but during games sometimes I would be so afraid of disappointing my coaches, my teammates, and all of the people watching, that I would freeze and would forget how to play, even though I practiced for hours and hours every week.

On big tests in high school and college, I would be afraid I wouldn't get a high enough score and disappoint my teachers and parents. So when I took the test, I would be so afraid my mind would freeze and I wouldn't be able to answer any questions even though I had studied a lot.

In these moments, when I was afraid, I would run to myself instead of God.

My anxiety was the worst in college. As many of you know, I want to become a doctor. But the college classes I needed to take were very difficult. Again, I became afraid that I wouldn't do well enough to become a doctor. In college, I was also in a lot of emotional pain. I was coping with a few painful experiences and relationships and my family was undergoing hardship while I was away, especially my younger sister who I hold near and dear to my heart. I was terrified by how much of my life I couldn't control.

So this time, I not only ran to myself but I ran to temptations. I did whatever I wanted to try to make me feel better. By doing this, I was actively ignoring and running away from God. I even stopped consistently going to church.

The more I strayed from God, the more afraid, empty, and lonely I felt. Eventually, I fell into a season of depression.

I didn't understand why I had to be so afraid and in pain or why others I love and cherish were in pain. At one point during my depression and time away from God, I even wanted to stop existing.

But our God is full of grace and love. Throughout all of these times of fear, doubt, and anxiety, God reminded me of his love through people in my life.

The most important reminder was from my dad. My dad reminded me to remember how God has always held me in his palm, even when I stray away in fear.

Through my dad, God reminded me of how His love is greater than anything I could be afraid of. God reminded me that the only way to truly find courage is in Him.

So, long story short, I am Christian because God loves like no one else. God's love goes beyond anything we could ever fear. He perfectly loves us even when we don't deserve it, and he shows us that love through his people and by showing us grace.

Since that conversation with my dad, I have learned to find strength in God, even when I am afraid. Since then, I have been able to make brave decisions like leaving my home behind and traveling to a different country to serve God's kingdom.

Two years later now, I have even found courage to be in a praise band even for just a few weeks.

## 2. Why am I here?!

To simply put it, I am here because God called me here. As some of you may remember, I first came to Mango House 5 years ago. Since coming, I never forgot Mango House and all of the amazing people here.

When I came out of my season of depression and healed under God's loving hand, I felt he was calling me to take time away from school to return to Mango House and serve Him.

So, I am here to serve as your sister in Christ. I am also here because I have a heart for serving others in education. I used to really struggle in school, so I know what it feels like to not understand school. I am also here to encourage and support you all in your studies.

I really do believe all of you have the potential to be great students!

## 3. What do I want to leave behind?

With my students, I want to leave behind the attitude that your abilities and mind can blossom by working hard and trying your best. That way, if you feel called to a career with a difficult road, like medicine or engineering, you can feel encouraged to pursue it!