

Nothing Else Matters

My Personal Process

It's been an interesting journey so far. I was raised in a strict, religious home with the usual accompanying flavor of condemnation laced through most of my experiences and relationships. The very early years were carefree but at age six trauma and almost tragedy struck my mom in the form of cancer. She lived until I was thirty one but the stress of dealing with that never departed from us. I think we all found the structure and belief system of our religious environment to be inadequate in the pressures we faced. There are a lot of good memories and good influences as well but the stresses of trying to hold things together within the fleshly, legalistic system we were in seem to stand out!

The effects on me personally led to confusion and inability to accept who God had made me to be. The search for truth and peace led to a number of short-lived excursions into various social groups and their incumbent devices for personal fulfillment and survival. God now uses this variety of experience to give me identity with a broad spectrum of people to relate to them for ministry. But in those late high school and early college days it was simply a desperate search for acceptance.

I had become a Christian, I now realize, in early high school. However, without any real training and trying to live by a faulty understanding of my relationship with God, it didn't work, and I quickly gave up and rejected what had failed me, living life and pursuing peace as I thought best. My approach was based on prevailing, popular forces and thinking from whatever peer group I was involved with at the time. These various forays into and out of differently focused groups usually lasted about a year at a time.

My search for life and love turned more philosophical than social toward the end as I began to see the probable outcome of continuing a destructive lifestyle. Also, I think I had simply vented all the rebellion and frustration I needed to and was getting tired! At any rate, I began to think more about life and not just react to it.

God was patient with me and guarded me through all this. Since salvation at a church camp, I wanted to do right and be close to God, even though others could not tell and I, myself, probably could or would not have articulated it. God could tell and worked to bring me to Himself.

“By You I have been sustained from birth;. . .
My praise is continually of You.” Ps. 71:6

As I now seek the Lord and consciously grow and serve, I must be careful of three things. I must recognize the pros and cons of the religious system I grew up in. I must remember my personal struggles and balance my quest for deeper personal answers with the broader context of a world filled with many other people of every variety. And I must forgive and respect my parents to bring resolution and peace to my relationship with them. Every good way and aspiration and trait God used them to give me must be retained while I move forward in obedience and faith in and love for my Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This period ended with me hoping to move on to a better understanding of my relationship with God, one that would be palatable, real and functional.

Reality and Faith

God met me during my sophomore year in college. As I began to think more about my life and my hopes as well as the direction I was going, I began to read the Bible as part of my

search. The pieces began to fall in place one by one with the gentle, but clear motivation of my then current lifestyle and the dead end that was approaching. Bible prophecy (it was Hal Lindsay's hey-day!) played a role in helping me see the day to day relevancy the Bible could have. Some special people also helped. But coming to know and believe the truths of freedom and salvation by grace through faith alone made the biggest difference to me. Walking home from a university class one afternoon, it hit me. If these things were true, nothing else really mattered. I decided to surrender my life to Christ and live for Him as fully as I could. It didn't seem like anything else really mattered. It still doesn't.