

My Life Before I Met Jesus

Those that knew me best, can attest that I was cold, emotionless with a heart full of anger and bitterness. I had no empathy, compassion, or even interest in others. My spirit was prideful and I thought myself better and smarter than others. As a result, I was not able to nurture or sustain any healthy close relationships. When conflict or situations arose, I just compartmentalized them by blaming everyone else. I would tell myself I am great- it is their fault. I did not need them anyway! I never said I am sorry, that was a sign of weakness.

It may sound strange but I always felt like an outsider to my own life; like I was observing from the other side of a glass window. Never belonging, yet so proud of what I had scripted rather than being grateful for and present in all my blessings.

You see, I was living a duplicitous life: trying to create a picture perfect, highly successful image for the world but hiding secrets and lies deep within. I became very good at lying to protect my image. Yet, I was a hypocrite, preaching and holding others to high standards. However, I myself had no moral compass. Was it against the law? being my only gauge.

I was an ungrateful, ego maniac taking full credit for having a hard working, honourable husband, and healthy, brilliant and amazingly talented children; instead of acknowledging they were God's creation and thanking God daily for the gift of being a wife and mother.

How I Realized I Needed Jesus

For me, realizing I needed Jesus was not a light switch moment. God had been shining his light for me to see for months. I was very scared of the light. I believed God was a big, mean ogre who would punish someone as wicked and poisonous as me. In my darkest hours, I came

to a fork in the road. I knew that if I did not change, I would lose my family. I contemplated taking my own life or I could take a leap of Faith and ask Jesus to be my saviour.

How I Committed My Life To Jesus

I opened the door of her garage and I ran into the arms of my dear friend Stacey. I cried like I had never cried before and explained to her that I was pure poison on the inside. Words can never describe the abundance of mercy, compassion and wisdom Stacey showed me that day, as she helped lead me to the Lord by sharing her strong faith. I did not know what I was doing, so I just held Stacey's hand and asked her how to accept Jesus into my heart. I just repeated her words out loud. A few days later, Stacey presented me with my first bible and I started my journey at Psalm 32- The Blessings of Forgiveness. I highlighted nearly every word that day and scripture has been speaking to and transforming my heart with the help, guidance and comfort of the Holy Spirit, ever since!

Difference Jesus Has Made In My Life

Jesus has given me a new identify in him! He has healed the God shaped void in my heart and continues to soften my heart layer by layer. He is teaching me a new way to live. To live motivated to serve and bless others. To live in wide eyed wonderment of everything around me and to be adventurously expectant of God's good purpose and plan for my life.

Another difference I must share is that I love, love the word of God. I had always believed it was a dry boring book of rules although I had never actually read a word from it, but I have learned it is not that at all. It is a living, active book filled with wisdom, love and incredible stories of every genre (mystery, action, adventure, musical, war,

thriller, romance etc.). When I hike, my children tease me because whatever hike I am on, I always enthusiastically declare 'this is my favorite hike ever'. I am exactly the same way in the bible (Ruth, Nehemiah, Jonah, Titus, Philippians, Colossians, Acts, Song of Solomon, James, Revelation) each book becomes my favorite. Verse by verse my faith grows, as I watch God use ordinary people to do extraordinary things. At one time, I always dreamed of getting my master's degree in business but now I faithfully attend what I have coined as God University. My decision was and is, not to just read the bible but to study it. To not just study it but to apply what I have learned to my life and share my learnings with others. I believe God designed the universe to work a certain way and I am so grateful to now have His instruction manual and the power of the Holy Spirit in my life. What an amazing gift he has given me and given to every believer.

Lessons Learned

Faith is a journey and I know I am not yet the woman that God desires me to become but I am very thankful that I am not the woman I once was. At this point in my journey here are 8 of the lessons that I can summarize from my emotional wounds and failures:

Lesson #1: Good grammar changes a story. Did you know that the semi colon is now used to create awareness for suicide prevention, a growing epidemic as the result of isolation and loss of hope in our world. A semi-colon represents a sentence the author could've ended, but chose not to. My story has a semi colon in it, my story isn't over yet and I intend to finish my life strong! And I will because I am not alone, look at all the amazing people God has put in my life. My heart overflows with peace, joy and love

- Lesson #2: The art of humility begins with a recognition of our dependence on others and an appreciation of God's gift of life. Early in my Christian walk, my son gave me a bible verse on humility that his hockey team had learned and he encouraged me to study it so we could learn how to heal together. It is one of the greatest gifts of wisdom I have ever received.
- Lesson #3: Gratitude, like faith is a muscle. The more you use it, the stronger it grows and the more power it gives you from the inside out.
- Lesson #4: Life is a series of miracles, notice them, marvel in them, enjoy them
- Lesson #5: That being a wife and mother are precious gifts! - Their importance is very undervalued in today's culture. We have to change that for the next generations and this can only be done by understanding and championing God's design for the family unit.
- Lesson #6: There are 3 ways to learn in life: the easy way (through the bible and experience of others), the hard way or never learn at all.
- Lesson #7: You are never more free than when you have no secrets.
- Lesson #8: Every day is another opportunity to change your life

Thank you for allowing me to share how God is writing His story in my life and taking the time to celebrate His goodness with me.