

## Purpose for Life

According to our world's standards my life before I was a Christian would be considered rather normal. I was a "good" kid, I came from a "good" family. I kept out of trouble, did well in school and behaved most of the time for my parents. Our family would have considered themselves Christians, although we only went to church for Christmas and Easter and didn't study the Bible, pray or have a relationship with Jesus.

I can't recall if there was a particular event that made it begin, but around summertime when I was fifteen I began to think of eternity. I would lay awake at night and think about forever and what happened to us when we died, and I didn't have any answers. I wondered if there was a purpose for this life, because the everyday sorts of things began to seem so futile to me. It began to bother me and I would literally keep myself awake out of fear. However, even in my ignorance I thought that it must have something to do with God, whoever or whatever He was. I would "pray" the "Now I lay me down to sleep" prayer every night before I went to bed out of fear of dying. I read some parts of the Bible, including Revelation, which terrified me. A friend of mine and I actually tried attending a few churches. I was just searching for answers. What I didn't know at the time was that the Lord was calling me to himself; and it is amazing to look back now and see how he orchestrated things.

Towards the end of the summer I went on a family vacation to the shore. One evening while walking on the boardwalk with a friend we were approached by two girls who asked us if they could talk to us about something. The first question they asked was, "On a scale of one to ten, how sure are you that you are going to heaven?" I think I replied, "A five," which is quite comical now. But they went through the four spiritual laws evangelistic track with us. It explained how we are separated from God by our sin and how Jesus had to die on the cross to pay the penalty of our sin, so that we would be restored to our relationship with God. All we need to do is accept Jesus as our Savior. And again, even though I didn't completely understand the significance of what I had just heard, I knew that this was the direction I needed to take to find the answers to my questions. I took the booklet that they gave us back to my room and prayed the prayer on the back cover, confessing my sins to the Lord and accepting him as my Savior.

My life didn't drastically change after my experience at the beach. I had accepted the Lord but came back to my life where there was no guidance, direction or answers to my many questions about what I had done. It wasn't until school started that year that the Lord provided exactly what I needed to grow in my relationship with Him. I was involved in several activities at school that led me to a group of Christian friends. I knew that there was something different about them by the way they acted and reacted to the

world around them. One of them explained the gospel in detail to me, gave me guidance about where to begin reading the Bible, and answered my questions as I read. Another invited me to her church and I began to learn about Bible study, prayer, and fellowship with believers.

Things that I had read before in the Bible had new meaning. Various concepts of the Bible became clearer as I studied them more in depth. The larger picture of the gospel and the sheer grace of what Christ did for me on the cross became evident in my life. And I began to grow in my love and worship of Jesus Christ. I saw purpose for my life. I knew where I would be when I died. But, more importantly, I began a living, growing relationship with the Creator of our world because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

That was nine years ago. It was a beginning of the lifelong process of sanctification in which the Lord calls us to become more and more like him. I realized that there really isn't anyone who is "good." We are all sinful and in need of the Lord's saving grace. I am truly at the beginning, learning each day how I need to be more like the Lord. Every time I stumble over yet another sin I am reminded of my need of the grace and forgiveness that Jesus offers.

Since that time the Lord has taught me many things about who He is and what he has done for me. Just the circumstances that put me in the right places at the right times to hear the message of salvation is an amazing picture of how the Lord desires for us to be in a relationship with Him. There have been difficult times and struggles over these nine years; however, his grace has always been evident and his blessings abundant in my life. I am amazed that the Lord of the universe calls me one of his own. And my heart breaks each time I again realize it was at the expense of his one and only Son. I am once again reminded of the depth of His love... a love undeserved by me.