

Jesus, No Longer Irrelevant

I grew up in a family that attended church regularly. Every week I heard Bible stories about the Israelites and Jesus. But those stories seemed irrelevant to my life. The stories involved people who lived a long time ago, in a place far away. Additionally, my church did not have many young people. We did not have an active youth group. Many people were older. So, I associated God with little old ladies who were just as clueless about today's world as the Israelites were.

In high school I put God on the shelf. He was largely irrelevant in my life anyway, so I didn't see much purpose in learning or thinking about Him. He only made me feel guilty for having fun. Putting God on a shelf gave me the freedom to do the things I wanted to do. It freed my conscience.

My junior year in high school I was invited to Young Life. I had no idea that Young Life was a Christian outreach ministry. I thought I was going to a party with a bunch of my friends. Only it was unlike any party I had ever been to. Instead of beer there were skits and games. Instead of hanging out we listened to a man named Pat talk about Jesus.

Pat spoke about Jesus as if he knew him personally. He explained Jesus' teaching in a way that made sense to my adolescent mind. He captured my attention and the attention of every teenager in that room by explaining the relevance of Jesus Christ.

I was mystified. It amazed me that over eighty teenagers, most of whom were not Christian, were willing to talk about God and learn more about the person Jesus Christ. For the first time in my life I felt like God was someone who could be understood and known personally. So for the next three months I continued to attend Young Life to learn more about God's plan for my life.

During that time I learned that I was a sinner. I actually already knew this, but I did learn that my sin was more terrible than I ever thought. So terrible, in fact, that I could do nothing to make up for it, or free myself from it. I also learned that Jesus came for this very reason. He came to do something I could not do. He came to pay for all the rebellious things I did and all the regrets I had. He came to free me from my addictions. He came to give me a new life. This new life he came to give was a relationship with God. A relationship not marked by shame and alienation, but a relationship marked by forgiveness, reconciliation, peace, and joy.

In Jesus I have found security, meaning, and a peace that passes understanding. It was almost ten years ago that I began my relationship with Jesus Christ. Throughout those years I have learned more about His greatness and more about my weakness. I have learned about his faithfulness, love and power. He truly has changed me.

Not only has Jesus changed me, he has changed the way I see the world. Jesus is the most relevant person ever to walk on the face of the earth. Through understanding more about Jesus I have come to a clearer understanding about the God of the universe, the world we live in, and myself. He has been the most influential person in my life. Would you consider spending time getting to know Him? You won't regret it.