

Redeemed: One Young Man's Story of Returning to God

1. Testimony

- Before Christ:

Growing up in a Christian home with split parents was tough. There were times when I felt loved and then there were times where I felt more alone than I could have ever imagined. I was so confused and lost. Then, middle school came along and life got even harder - trying to figure out who I was, who I was supposed to be, and who I wanted to become. Having a split family and being different from so many of my friends caused me to feel set apart. That is when the bullying began, the anxiety started, and the mild depression set in. What is this? What is making me feel this way? Why did I hate waking up everyday? Why did I lose all motivation and drive to do absolutely anything? May 2014... it was just a normal Wednesday night. I was fully expecting to go, get some free supper, play some games, and then go home, like every other Wednesday night. My youth pastor was teaching a passage about what sin really is - things that we struggle with, how we can turn away from those things, and how we can practically overcome those things through the Lord. That is when the conviction hit. Although I was young and didn't really struggle with more of the heavy things, I knew that the lying, disobeying, cussing, and other minor things that I was doing was wrong. This is the moment that I felt that overwhelming conviction just completely fall over me. I knew that the only thing for me to do at that moment was to ask the Lord to come into my heart and truly accept Him as my Lord and Savior. Life is full of ups and downs, unfortunately for me, life after Christ was a lot of downs for me. At least for the first few years. Four months after I accepted the Lord into my heart and began that walk with Him as such a babe in my faith - my best friend committed suicide. Instead of turning to Him for that peace I so desperately needed, I turned to the world. This led to a four year long never ending pit that I seemed to be stuck in. I fell into so much sin, I found my identity in people, drinking, parties, and girls. During all of this time I had perfected being the two-faced Christian and becoming a hypocrite. It had become a talent of mine. But, it all changed my senior year. I went to camp after I graduated, expecting to just do the same things I did every year. Thursday night rolls around and I remember the atmosphere in the room. I will remember it for the rest of my life. The Lord convicted me of the decisions I had been making for the past few years. I knew at that moment that I could not continue to entertain the lifestyle I was participating in. I had to run back into the Lord's arms... and rest there. So, that's exactly what I did. After returning from camp I began to pursue the Lord. It was hard. I still felt dirty. I felt unworthy. I felt undeserving. And I am. We all are. But by the grace of the Lord - he gives us that opportunity to dive deeper into a

relationship with Him. So I fought for it. Every day. It was hard. But I worked at it. College started out rocky. I went to a community college that was full of the same people I went to highschool with, so the temptation to fall back into that lifestyle was so prevalent. In January of 2020, I decided to pack up and move to Alabama. I had to get away from home and the people that seemed to surround me there. I needed something new. I needed to start fresh. I get on campus for orientation and instantly feel at home. I meet my fiancé. I get involved in the Baptist Campus Ministries that I am now the president of. I am a director for the camp where I made my life changing decision. I surrendered to my call to ministry. I have been blessed more than I could ever explain. All thanks to Jesus.

Three Takeaways -

1. Go to church.
 - The only way for you to grow is to be nurtured and taken care of. You need someone to mentor you. You need to be involved in order to grow. It is where you will find your community of people to hold you accountable and lift you up.
 - Hebrews 10:24-25
2. Follow through on your relationship with God.
 - A relationship with Jesus is the most important thing. You have to have a deep and personal connection with Him, and the only way to do that is through studying, reading, and prayer. Seek the Lord. You will find it easier to be in the Word, surround yourself with the Word, and live by the Word. There is POWER in the Word of God.
 - 1 Peter 2
3. Surround yourself with other Christians.
 - Community is vital. It's what I didn't have at community college. It made for a very lonely and isolated season of life, and with isolation comes temptation. Within your community you will find encouragement, accountability, and discipleship.
 - James 5:13-20

Questions