

Is There More To Life?

My story may not seem that amazing to most people, in fact it is quite ordinary, but something is compelling me to write as much down as I can, both as a reminder to me but as a message that I hope others at some point can relate to.

In The Beginning

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I didn't put my childish ways behind me in fact I got more childish, it's what most men do.

But now I am a Christian I am a man, a man of God and growing in so many ways.

Becoming a Christian was the most amazing but scary time of my life. When I answered the call from God, a call that I knew I couldn't resist, a call that all of a sudden I knew I had been looking for my entire life, I was in no way in control. At that moment as I walked to the front of my church my heart was filled with two things, a desire and willingness to put my trust in Jesus and to put everything in my past that I knew was holding me back, behind me.

To me, at the time of my calling the church was empty, except for me and the person preaching that day and who had asked those willing to let Jesus into their lives to go to the front of the church.

I didn't want to go initially, I felt foolish. Tears were streaming down my face for a reason I didn't know, I must have looked a right mess and being emotional in public is something I have always hated so had never done before.

I have always guarded my feelings, how I felt was my business and no one else's so standing at the front of a church in floods of tears and not in control wasn't exactly a position I wanted to be in but I knew I had no choice, I was being led by a force I didn't understand.

I had not known before that moment that trusting and believing in Jesus was what I wanted nor is it something I had felt I needed but something snapped inside me that Sunday that opened me up to the love of Christ and I couldn't go back even if I had wanted to.

The hours, in fact the days that followed that Sunday morning are still a bit of a blur. I couldn't remember much of what had happened and I felt it difficult to talk to people and to be honest I just wanted to be alone with my thoughts whilst I tried to make sense of things. People wanted to know how I felt but to be honest I didn't know!

What happened? Was I "saved?" What does that mean to my life? What happens next? What if I hadn't responded? Why was I still so emotional? Do I need to go and buy a bible? So much was going through my mind nothing seemed to make much sense! I knew everything had changed but why and how was a mystery to me. It's how I would imagine what it would be like to wake up after several years of being in a coma and not recognising who you were or understanding why you were different.

In the beginning everything was new and scary but exciting and I enjoyed the fact that I could finally let go of pent up feelings and emotions and lay all my baggage before someone who wouldn't judge me but would love me regardless of all my failings.

The Rollercoaster's Of Life

I have only been a Christian a short time but that short walk to the front of the church that day has turned out to be the start of a long rollercoaster ride of a journey. Not only a life changing spiritual journey but an emotional and personal journey that has made me face up to a few home truths about how I have lived my life so far and about how little I have achieved with my time on this planet.

I have never been "a bit of a tare away." I have never done drugs or mugged anyone, and my life hasn't been full of personal challenges and problems that some people go through. My life has been quite boring and I have sailed through it without too many cares. I am an ordinary person like millions of others, your typical law abiding citizen who likes it when things are just right and everyone is happy. I hate money grabbing or deceitful people and don't like it when people are being taken advantage of. Yes I have had difficulties in my life. I have had bad times along with the good but no more than most. However, I have always felt there was something missing and no matter what I did to fill the gap, nothing ever did, well not permanently.

I was always in search of whatever satisfied the moment. Sporty cars, large TV's all the gadgets I could afford, the company of people even going out of my way to make sure people "liked" me. All of which made me happy, at least until the novelty had worn off and then I'd be on the hunt for a new "fix!"

My life, like that of many was a constant rollercoaster ride with some high ups and low lows. The ups were steep and an effort to attain and were short lived once I was at the top. The downs were in some cases very steep and the track through the valleys of my life was long and seemed never ending, eventually though, another up was just round the corner and at last there was something to look forward to at least for the time being.

The ups never quite made up for the lows, they just masked them, helped me forget about them, eventually everything became superficial and life was a drain.

The Effects Of The Past

We all have pasts and by that I mean things in our lives that have affected us in some way. I was bullied at school and out side of school. Not so much physically but mentally. This has affected my confidence all my life. Being bullied made me very introvert to the point where I didn't like to mix with others especially when I was younger and through my teenage years and I absolutely hated crowds. I was a shy quiet boy and I found myself being ridiculed for the way I was. As a result I let others shape my life because it was easier than having to face up to and possibly confront others even if what they wanted me to do wasn't the best thing for me.

I made jokes of it at the time partly to hide how I was truly feeling and partly in the hope people would find me funny and start to like me, which of course never happened.

Looking back, I missed out on so much because of the way I was, I missed things I'd never get to do again and I hated myself for being like that. I never enjoyed my younger years and much of the time I lived in fear of what people thought of me.

Probably because of how I grew up, I have always thought of myself as a kind, caring person who puts the needs of others first. I know what it is like when you need a helping hand and no one is there or worse still when people turn their backs on you. I don't like seeing others in situations where they need help but no one is willing and I never want to be someone who appears to turn away from someone in need. As a result most of my friends would have said I was a Christian before I became one but many are astonished as to how much I have

changed over the last however many months since my conversion. I am still the same but different in some way. I still want to help others but I want to help others help themselves too.

My New Life

Life now in some ways isn't much different from how it was before I became a Christian but I don't feel alone through the bad times and yes I thought initially Christian's had it easy, how wrong was I, but Jesus is with me in everything I do. My sins have been forgiven, I know that but although I have a new start in the eyes of God, I still have doubts about myself sometimes, some of the things that troubled me in the past are still there and return to haunt me but they don't affect me the way they used to. Sometimes I wish life was easier but I know there is a reason for everything even if I don't know what that reason is at the time and I know God will only put me through what I can bear.

God has shaped me to be the way I am and deep down I like the person I am and now I realise that I hope to serve God by doing what He wants. He made me and loves me and has brought me to where I am now and it is only fitting that I listen to Him and obey his instructions although so far it's been easy as I haven't felt He is asking me to give up anything important to me. In fact He has given me so much more than I could ever imagine.

God has given me so much. I am happy now, healthy-ish and on a journey I now know I wouldn't have wanted to miss. I have good friends both in the church and out side of the church who care about me and I have an amazing girlfriend who knows what's best for me is to build a loving, trusting relationship with Jesus and I am so glad she cares for me that much and I know she is so right! I feel so privileged to know and be surrounded by such caring people.

I have learned that being a Christian is not about self or what I can achieve for myself which fits in with how I have lived my life. It's about others and building them up and chiefly about having a relationship with God and pleasing Him. Yes I need to look after myself in order to be able to worship God and do his bidding; I want to be able to fulfil my role as set out by Him and bring my gifts, whatever they are to others. God has plans for me, I know that because He put me in church that day and changed my life, a life that He knew needed changing even if I didn't at the time, a life He knows can be used to serve His purpose. He will let me know what my gifts are and how He wants me to use them and I can't wait to fully realise my potential according to God's will.

Thanks to God's grace I am forgiven and as a result a different person and I worship Him for everything He has done in my life even before I was aware He was at work and I worship Him for everything He is doing in my life now and everything He will do in the future.

Meeting God has changed so much in me and all for the better. I am more confident about myself. I am more confident in my relationships with others and I feel my life has a purpose even if I'm not entirely sure what that purpose is yet. I am stronger mentally and I know I can face everything that life and God has in store for me.

I am growing so much, so fast, not just spiritually but emotionally, as a man and as a child of God and I have a deep yearning inside me to grow more and share what I have experienced and learned with others. Obviously I still don't understand so much about my new life and I am in such a hurry to learn. I have a fire for God in my heart that is never going to go out and each step I take with Him helps to fan the flames of my desire for more.

I now know during the good times Christ is there with me and through the bad times He is ready to guide, help, protect and carry me. God cannot be fooled and I can't hide anything from Him, He knows all about me and loves me so I know the best thing for me to do is love and trust in Him.

So Is There More To Life?

The title of this text is "Is There More To Life?" I now know most things we buy or chase like fast cars, careers, money, every gadget know to man, to be liked even, are to a large extent things we want, not necessarily things we need.

There is more to life than possessions and no amount of career satisfaction or money can fill the God shaped hole that is in all our lives whether we realise it or not. These things are good but not at the expense of realising our full potential in the eyes of the Lord.

We need things to be able to live, God knows this and will provide us with what we actually need so we can stop worrying about unimportant things like possessions and start concentrating on living a fulfilled life with Jesus because what we can get from Him far out weighs anything we can buy or attain through any worldly means.

Life is still a rollercoaster ride but for the first time I am enjoying the ride.