



My Relationship With God

By Lisa*

From the beginning of my life God was gracious enough to bless me with my mum who is a Christian. I grew up learning about Jesus and praying to Him. It is something really special when God works in the hearts of little children. I see this every week looking after the preschoolers at my church. God was working in me even while I was their age. I was a cheerful little girl, and particularly remember having God's voice reminding me it was good to think of others first.

There were definitely times during primary school when my priorities switched from others to all about me. I was enthusiastic and keen on being the leader, which may have come across as being bossy at times. In recent years, I found a diary I had been writing in at the time. There was a lot of self-pity, hate and jealousy in there. But God was still at work.

My year 6 Scripture teacher, Shayne Hamilton from Youth Ministries Australia, who was also the Youth Worker at my high school gave us all a Bible and helped us to read and understand it. This was probably the first time I was excited about reading my Bible on my own. How amazing that He would talk to us! The last entry I had put in my diary was a prayer. I wrote that Christ came down to earth to die for my sin, and then rose again that I may have a relationship with God. My prayer was that I would remember this miracle and live for it.

I started year 7 at a Christian high school. It was more about fitting in than living for Christ, and many of the students were keen on rebelling against the ethos of the school, which made it difficult for me as a follower of Jesus. By term 3, I moved to my local public high school.

He blessed me with some great Christian friends there but I still made some decisions lacking in godly wisdom; one being that I was getting too close to a boy who wasn't going to encourage me in my Christian walk. This was quite a big compromise to my faith, and I found it increasingly hard to hand my worries over to God, even though I knew he had a perfect plan for me. I even struggled with depression, as I knew my desires weren't in line with God's. By the end of year 9 I realised that I needed to make big changes to my priorities.

In January before I started year 10 I went along to a camp named JLC. I was kind of a late entry and didn't know what to expect. It ended up being a camp about leading your student group at school... which I had not been going to at all. By the end of camp, I was convinced God wanted me back in the school student group.

After camp I changed around the priorities in my life and God was in the top spot. The peace God gives is amazing and I could finally hand my whole life over to him.

When school started again I began going to the student lunchtime group run by the staff of Youth Ministries Australia. It is a voluntarily run program where students attend in their lunchtime if they choose too. I was already amazed at how God was working in the group. In term two, Shayne and Stuart from YMA asked me to consider being on the leadership team. I was busting to use some of the stuff I had learnt on JLC.

In term 3, two friends and I were in charge of leading the group. The three of us decided to run a major outreach week.

So I decided I would make some posters and put them in the places at school that people would definitely read and not have the impact of peer pressure – the back of toilet doors, the place where everyone does their major thinking.

Now it was probably thanks to God that we accidentally got about 100 posters printed rather than just 30, because for a week after we first put them up, we had to replace them every day. The posters were being ripped down but we were praying that even if people didn't come along, the topics on the posters would have an impact on their hearts.

When the day came we had over thirty new people come, which was amazing for our school – we had about 15 people voluntarily coming

to the group each week at that time. We had another outreach week at the end of the term, and there was barely enough room to fit everyone inside. What an amazing answer to our prayers!

This year I did my HSC (Higher School Certificate). I set myself up a worry jar for placing all my prayers, and through it I have been so aware of God's constant provision and his answers to all my prayers.

What a comfort knowing that my ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) won't determine my worth – God already decided that I was worth the sacrifice of His only Son.

Next year I will be doing a Christian Gap Year course at Bible College. I will also be serving with Youth Ministries Australia in the work at my High School. I will even be spending a month in Fiji – not for a holiday, but for an intense time of mission! The following year I am hoping to become a nurse through University (God-willing!) and do mission work wherever God decides.

*Students name changed for confidentiality.

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