

Life Stories

Winter '09

How has knowing God changed your life?

I grew up believing in God and Jesus and went to church regularly. I never learned, however, that God wanted to have a relationship with me. I didn't understand the significance Jesus played in my life, only how he impacted my death (he died to forgive my sins so I could go to heaven – if I were good). In 2006, while attending Al-Anon, I learned how to turn my will over to God. I also began reading the book, Waking the Dead, by John Eldredge. I learned that God wanted to have a relationship with me, that God loved me just for who I am (I didn't have to do anything to earn it), that God wanted me to have a glorious life (rather than just survive), and that Jesus came to heal the broken-hearted (which I was). During 2007, I read all of the Ransomed Hearts books and each strengthened my new relationship with God and stoked my desire to know God more deeply. In 2008, feeling that I needed to get to the next level of worship, I began attending The Creek and felt welcomed and accepted. I joined a Life Group and experienced enriching fellowship, which has further my growth in Christ. Where my life used to be a daily grind, I now have a passion for life. Where my life was characterized by fear, resentment, and emptiness, it is now filled with hope, joy and compassion. Where I had almost no self-worth, I now have more self-confidence because I don't live my life trying to please everyone and know that God created me with a specific purpose in life and I am a beloved son. God used to live in my head and now he lives in my heart. ~ Joe Dusich

God has been ever-present throughout the ever-changing phases of my life. I was introduced to Him at a young age, so I have always had a baseline understanding of who He is. Like anyone, I have had varied moments of closeness and separation from Him. What has remained constant, however, is that His presence in my life experiences has always been purposeful. I can think of difficult moments where I thought I couldn't feel God's love. And then, through later reflection, I realized His support was the one clear beacon that helped me through. His guidance and love are always so appropriate to where I am in life. He whispers encouragement when I'm at a weak point and flashes a neon sign for me when I'm taking a stubborn route. It's hard to adequately understand this unconditional love that I am offered everyday. All I know for sure is that it takes a special kind of love to truly stick by me and adapt to who I become. That's just a love that can't be matched. ~ Mary Briemle

The Creek
COVENANT CHURCH

Have a story? Email Carol: carolutz@ca.astound.net