

New start for couple after past hurts

Andy Tunstall

I came from a very insecure home life and felt very unloved, my parents were always arguing, were strict disciplinarians, my mum suffered from depression and my father was a heavy drinker. I was also bullied at school and sometimes by my own brother. I recall that on at least 3 occasions my parents decided they were going to separate and they asked me who I wanted to live with. I didn't want to have to make this decision but each time with increasing force they demanded that I decide. All of this made me very insecure, unwilling to trust people and run from issues.

I went to church religiously every week but it meant nothing. I joined the RAF and decided to go to the local church, after a while I was invited for a weekend away and it was on this weekend that I first heard the message that God loved me and wanted a relationship with me, eventually I asked Jesus to come into my life.

I continued going to church but over time God showed me that he wanted to heal me of my past insecurity and hurts. However these were deep issues in my life and at that point I decided that it was too painful to let God deal with these, so I walked away from God and the church.

After 10 years I decided that I would like to go back to church, so having researched local churches, I went along to a local church, but before I left home I prayed that if God loved me then during that service he would show me. At the end of the service I was walking out of the door and a lady gave me a leaflet with a passage from the Bible which says, "Come let us return to the Lord... he will heal us.... And he will bandage our wounds."

I pondered this deeply and the following Sunday I went to another church. I knew God has spoken to me the previous week but again I prayed that if God loved me he would show me again that I was loved by him. During the service one of the people in the service walked to the front and declared "Someone here needs to know that God loves them and He says that you are precious to him"!

I needed no further convincing and once again asked God to come into my life. Approximately 3 weeks later I went to a church event where the speaker was saying that God wants to heal past memories and to set people free from their past. I went forward and 2 people prayed with me for quite some time and all I can recall is that all the memories and hurts came flooding back.

After praying I returned home and the following day, I was walking across a large car park when I was very suddenly aware that it seemed as though my shoulders felt very strange, so I turned around. I didn't see anybody but was aware that there was no heaviness in my shoulders – it was as though the burden of my past had been lifted and I was free. Since then I have learnt (and sometimes I am still learning) to trust God and not to worry or be concerned about issues in my life because he will resolve them.

Marion Tunstall

When I was 14 years old, I was groomed by an older man. He was a religious man and I believed what he told me about God. We got married and had children, but the relationship was not healthy. He was controlling and abusive, but I loved him.

One day I was invited to a church by someone I met. When I went it was nothing like I expected.

There was warmth and love. This wasn't the kind of religion I had learnt about from my husband. I wanted to keep going but he made it very difficult. I managed to go a few times and then one day he was so angry about me wanting to go he locked me in the house for 6 weeks.

One day he let me pick the children up from school and I took my chance to get away. I had a friend who worked for a charity helping women in similar situations. I drove to a lane and phoned my friend. I was moved to a safe house and this was the beginning of my new start.

Life continued to be challenging but I now knew that the religion my husband practised has nothing to do with the real Jesus who loves me unconditionally. God enabled me to trust him with everything and he has brought me and my children through.

I am now married to Andy and God has helped us to work through the challenges together.