

WHAT THEY DIDN'T REALIZE



I knew what it was like to sit on a curb and weep because I wanted to run away. I knew how it felt to be locked in a closet by an older sibling. I knew what it meant to feel fear as a parent grabbed a gun and threatened suicide. But when I became a Christian at 15, I didn't know anything about what it meant to live a Christian life.

I was drawn in to my faith by the presence of God and His Spirit but I grew in faith because of caring and well-meaning people. They taught Sunday school and youth group. They shushed us when we talked too loud during the service. They hurded teens onto the bus every Sunday afternoon so that we could go to the nursing homes and sing and let wrinkled hands rest on our smooth ones.

Looking back, I know I was trying at times. Like the time I kissed the boy on the youth group hayride. Or when I shared my testimony for the first time and I uttered a curse word in the middle. I ran out of the room in embarrassment, but a woman found me outside. "Maybe you could say it a different way next time," she said with a smile. Her hug made me feel safe and accepted.

Maybe there is a behaviorally challenged teen in your world. They act on impulse. They say things that make you cringe. They run after God, but fall just as hard in the process.

And yet you keep loving them, teaching them about God, and showing them that their life matters to God. Maybe their home life is a "secret" like mine was. Lots of teens need spiritual moms and dads because, for some, the only they see Jesus is through you.

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A few years ago I had the opportunity to visit my old church. When I thanked a couple, now in their golden years for all that they had done, the response was, “we didn’t do that much. We just loved you kids.”

What they didn’t realize is that their love helped that sometimes annoying teen with a very hard home life grow up to be a good mom, a loving wife, and a grandma whose life is wrapped in Jesus. I want them to know that every word I write, every time I speak, every I kneel and pray with someone to know Christ, it is somehow linked back to that group of faithful adults who loved me right where I was. Their patient example showed me Jesus. It inspired me to work with teens for years and to open our home to teens in crisis. One day in Eternity I know they will understand. But for now I want them to know that they transformed my life! I will always be grateful!

Prayer that you can also pray:

Dear Lord, help me to be faithful to show Your love to a teen or a child who needs it. Help me to be patient and serve as an example. WE don’t know every story but You do. Thank You that small acts of faithfulness can be multiplied in Your hands. In Jesus Name. Amen.



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CUT--HERE



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