

James Lainchbury

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I didn't grow up in a Christian family. When I came to Nottingham to study medicine, I met some really nice, interesting guys who I found out were Christians. I lived with them in my second year and I ended up being the only non-Christian in a house of 5!

My housemates never pushed their faith on me, but during my second year, in the midst of my drinking and sleeping around student lifestyle, I started going to a Bible study group with them. I always found it interesting and never felt judged for having views that others didn't share.

After about a year of this, I remember speaking at my Grandmother's funeral. After my speech, a relative approached me and asked, "James, do you know who Jesus is?" I didn't even know this relative was a Christian so I was a bit taken aback. I returned to Nottingham and spoke to my housemate about it. He said, "James, after everything that's happened in the last year, you're pretty much a Christian" but I burst into tears because I still felt like I was missing something really important in my life. It wasn't success at work, it wasn't loving parents, it wasn't good friendships, it wasn't sexual intimacy and it wasn't finances. I had all those things, but still felt empty and very confused.

The following week I went to a church on Sunday. During the singing I had one of the most powerful experiences of my life and couldn't stop crying. It was as if someone changed the settings inside my head. Everything became visibly brighter. I felt so energised and at the same time filled with a peace that I had never known before. At that moment, there was nothing in the world that mattered more than standing in that church and listening to that song.

I gave my life to Jesus that day.

Since that experience in 2012, a lot has changed in my life on the outside, but the most important change has been on the inside. Beyond the jumping through hoops and fronts I used to put on so people would like me; beneath the facades and masks I wore so I could look myself in the mirror without feeling ashamed; beyond all the horrible things I've done and thought about people, I've found that Jesus looks passed it all and loves me. When everything is stripped away and I acknowledge my brokenness, I've come to realise I'm not rejected, but lovingly accepted by the God who created me. I'm so glad I answered the door when Jesus knocked and so grateful I'll spend the rest of eternity with him.

