

Faith Page November 2011
What I had to Unlearn from Church

From the day I was born Sunday has always meant going to church. I have vivid childhood memories of wearing my little three piece suit on Sunday mornings. Of course with my dad being the pastor, church was pretty much mandatory for our family.

Don't get me wrong; I am thankful that my parents took me to church every Sunday. At church I made lifelong friends. My first career job was a youth pastor. In fact it was at church where I met my wife. Above all, church is where I learned about Jesus and how much God loves me.

While I learned so much growing up in church there are things I have had to unlearn. For example, I used to have an "us-them" mentality. There was "us", those that went to church and believed in Jesus as our Saviour, and there was "them", those that did not go to church and did not trust in Jesus as their Saviour. The goal was to make "them" part of "us". If you have spent any amount of time in church you know exactly what I am saying.

To be accepted by the church and God I learned a pattern of behaviour. I lived by statements like, "If you were taken to court for being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you?" and, "Why would anyone believe in Jesus if they can't see a difference in the way you live?" I thought I had to follow a set of Christian rules to show others that I was living my life pleasing to God. And I FAILED! Not just some of the time, I constantly failed.

I didn't know that I had believed a lie. I believed that if I lived to a certain standard others would see this great void in their own lifestyle and realize they need what I have. What a shock to find out that in the real world people don't want to change who they are to become someone they never wanted to be.

The process of unlearning made it clear that I was the one who was wrong. God's purpose is not to change you. The lie that God wants to change you implies that you aren't good enough and God needs to make changes. That simply is not true and not the Gospel! God's purpose is to show us His indescribable love.

The truth is we were never created to live in a prison of boundaries. We were created to be free. God created each of us with unique personalities, passions, and desires and God never intends to change that. God does not want to take your freedom. He wants to give each of us His Life. It's His life that gives us the ability to be free.

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