

Shaun, you and Greg have been in this community almost all of your lives and at Castine for 20+ years. It can be easy to think ministry is all you have ever known. Greg has shared from the pulpit you both received Christ shortly before you were married but you have a unique testimony of who or what influenced you for Christ. Please tell us about your early years growing up and about those who may have influenced you in your journey towards Jesus.

I did not have any christian influences that were intentionally trying to lead me to a relationship with Jesus. I did not grow up in a christian home however, I went to a little church in my small town for Vacation Bible School and periodically Sunday School during my elementary years (those formative years). However, once I reached junior high, like a lot of kids I lost interest in church and kept very busy with school activities.

Who or what influenced you to rekindle your childhood fascination with Jesus?

I had just graduated high school and was to be married in December of that year. Greg, my husband, said we needed to start our life in church (which was a similar move of the Holy Spirit as well, as he had no interest in the things of God either), so we started attending a little country church and my life changed immediately. It felt like refreshment to my soul, I couldn't get enough of God's word, I memorized pages of scripture. When we had our pre-marriage counseling the pastor said we needed to start with salvation and baptism, which we did.

Cory Asbury's song, "Reckless Love", describes God's love as: "it chases me down, fights 'til I'm found, leaves the 99." It sounds like the Holy Spirit did just that in your life! The Lord had a calling on your life and the role you would play in others lives. How do these early experiences affect how you influence others for Christ today?

I know this answer isn't below, but you have been a part of the leadership team for VBS for years. As a pastor's wife you are called upon to love the one in front of you in circumstances most of us would not know of or understand. Is there something you can share in that? What about as a mother and MIL?

In the full excerpt of your testimony regarding this part of your life you listed some key points that encourage us to continue being influencers for Christ. Would you share them?

- Never underestimate the seeds that are planted during those very early formative years when children may attend VBS but never go to Sunday School or church. Or even those kids who grew up in church but have gotten away from the Lord.
- You never know how God is going to work in drawing a person to a relationship with Him. If there is not anyone in their life influencing them then the Holy Spirit is enough, God will get the job done.
- Lastly God uses all kinds of influences in bringing a soul to Christ:
 - Parents, grandparents, friends, siblings, teachers, Sunday School teachers, neighbors, preachers on a christian TV station, and yes, even you.
- Don't ever think your influence is meaningless, remember, 2 Corinthians 3:6-9 - I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers.

HIGHLIGHTS OF SHAUN'S TESTIMONY

September 17, 2023

As we all know, God has no set plan for everyone to bring them to salvation. Just as each person is unique and different from others, He draws us to himself in many ways. Most people have those in their life that will influence them for the Lord. I am different in the fact that I did not have any christian influences that were intentionally trying to lead me to a relationship with Jesus. I did not grow up in a christian home however, I went to a little church in my small town for Vacation Bible School and periodically Sunday School during my elementary years (those formative years). However, once I reached junior high, like a lot of kids I lost interest in church and kept very busy with school activities.

I remember growing up trying to read the bible, but in my young mind could never get out of the book of Genesis; after all, you read a book from front to back, right? I didn't have influences affecting my life for Christ, I didn't even know I needed a Savior yet, I have always been drawn to doing the "right" thing, being infatuated with those who were "religious" and even being a little envious of their life. It's funny that I never realized, until now that we are talking about "influences" that bring you to Christ that it was really the Holy Spirit that was at work all those years in my life, wooing and drawing me to Jesus. He wanted me and He didn't care that there wasn't intentional influences at that time in my life. I had just graduated high school and was to be married in December of that year, Greg, my husband said we needed to start our life in church (which was a similar move of the Holy Spirit as well, as he had no interest in the things of God either), so we started attending a little country church and my life changed immediately. It felt like refreshment to my soul, I couldn't get enough of God's word, I memorized pages of scripture. When we had our pre-marriage counseling the pastor said we needed to start with salvation and baptism, which we did.

It was through the influence of my brother, who started going to church with his girlfriend at the time, Greg and me that my parents came to the Lord. Although I will say, another influence in bringing my dad to Jesus was him watching TBN (Trinity Broadcasting Network) a christian TV station. On the day my parents were baptized together, my dad testified

it was because of his kids influence they came to Christ. Up till the day he died, my dad was intentional about influencing his family and others for the Lord and my mother is sold out to Jesus and is now my prayer warrior.

Key Points:

- Never underestimate the seeds that are planted during those very early formative years when children may attend VBS but never go to Sunday School or church. Or even those kids who grew up in church but have gotten away from the Lord.
- You never know how God is going to work in drawing a person to a relationship with Him. If there is not anyone in their life influencing them then the Holy Spirit is enough, God will get the job done.
- Lastly God uses all kinds of influences in bringing a soul to Christ:
 - Parents, grandparents, friends, siblings, teachers, Sunday School teachers, neighbors, preachers on a christian TV station, and yes, even you.
- Don't ever think your influence is meaningless, remember, 2 Corinthians 3:6-9 - I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers.