

## **Joshua Anderson – Grasping Gods Word Assignment 7**

### **My Family Background and its influence on my Journey**

I came from a family of four, and grew up in a southern suburb of Brisbane, Cornubia, where I was brought up in one family home, one public primary school & one catholic high school – my whole child life until 20 years of age.

#### **Brief Parent Backgrounds**

My mother was born in New Zealand in 1953 and was part of a family of 5, they were middle class family, she remembers attending an Anglian church most weeks, and assumes her parents came as well – but can't remember. They were cultural Christians, most people in the community would attend, however, as in their case were not committed Christ followers. My mother around the age of 14 remembers teaching Sunday school for some time. My experience of my mother's family was one of love, light heartedness, jovial jokes, crudeness and vulgarity.

My father was born in New Zealand in 1954 and was part of a family of 17, they were a lower class family, he remembers they attended a Catholic Church regularly without my grandfather's involvement. My father at a young age was altar boy but that stopped around 8 or 9 years old. They were just cultural Christians from what I can understand. My experience of my father's family is very minimal we had very little to do with them, only occasionally visited some members and/or they visited us very briefly, memories of smoking & swearing about summarizes what I can remember.

## **My immediate family experience**

My parents themselves were both hard workers, my father for the childhood I remember worked seven days a week. And Mum would work hard to care for us keeping the house very clean & constantly cooking home cooked meals - three-to-four meals each day (breakfast, lunch and dinner + often afternoon tea).

We were lower class poor family with my father taking on two butchery businesses (one at a time) and both failing, we were bailed out of debt from some family friends on multiple occasions and some weeks, as my mother recounts we had no money for groceries. However they kept our family house, and I never went hungry.

Despite my parent's youth memories of being involved in church, through their adult lives they were not a part of church, when they started their family (after my father's first failed marriage), we did not attend any church. I was "christened" as catholic and I can remember participating in local carol singing from time to time around Christmas, but the only church influence I remember was in my late primary school years my sister and I did a after yearlong (I think) school program at the local catholic church to do all the "sacraments" finishing with participating in nativity scene play – yet I don't remember going to church at any other time. From the after-school program all I remember is the Arnott's biscuits and watered down cordial we had for afternoon tea.

The catholic high school I attended had a religion subject compulsory for the first two years (I think) yet I don't remember learning anything except a version of the 10 commandments.

The three most notable influential aspect to my faith from my immediate family experience was:

1. As mentioned, the carol singing - uplifting and emotional experiences, peppered with aspects of the gospel message
2. As mentioned, we ate dinner together as a family around the table each night and we always began with prayer – this gave the constant awareness that there was a God (even though my parents weren't/aren't convinced there was/is)
3. My mum wasn't averse to letting me attend church events with friends: A Mormon family friends youth night activities and church a few times in my teens, as well as our "3-doors up" closest family friends yearly church conference several times in my teens – the former was mostly social but gave me awareness of church and the later was where I heard the gospel and first responded.

We had quite "huggy" close family, however my father's constant struggle with alcohol abuse stressed our family, it kept my mother, sister & I drawings even closer but slowly ostracised my father. A cycle of my father being kicked out & allowed to come back, with many physical & verbal abuse episodes, including police involvement, plagued our **storey** for many years –

leading to restraining orders & divorce, both sort by my mother and those supporting her.

### **Reflection on my journey**

My immediate family experience was colourful, broken but also one of thankfulness:

I appreciate the closeness and love that amalgamated us through our trials with my father. I appreciate how our poor economic position gave me a simple, grateful and non-materialist upbringing. I appreciate the work ethic of both my parents "if a jobs worth doing it worth doing well/right" attitude.

My immediate family did push back against my immerging faith particularly in my formative years in late my teens to early twenties – its mostly settled now. Yet I am grateful looking back to my childhood for the lack of the (in)material, the blessing of dinnertime prayer, the exposure to carols & the experience of love for one-another (through struggle) that they offered firsthand to my journey. So that where they stopped on their faith journey, thus far, I could by God's grace stumble on to Christ.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." – Mathew 4:4