



Confessions

Growing up, Nick never knew what love was, so he sought it out in other places. A true story.

I am the youngest in a family of seven. I was brought up hearing about Jesus but did not have a real relationship with God. My family was not closed-knit and my siblings lived their own separate lives. We were struggling with our own lifestyles and my parents had their individual struggles too. My mother was an obsessive mahjong gambler while my dad was into alcohol. I won't say he was an alcoholic but he did drink a lot. **My parents were not bad or evil or abusive but maybe they never had or never knew love.** Later on in life, I often asked myself why my parents would have so many kids yet neither had time for us nor gave us the love we desired. Whatever the case, **I don't blame them for my wayward lifestyle.**

I slowly drifted into my own world. My parents managed to send us through secondary school, but it was then I found comfort in cigarettes and solace in drugs by the time I was 16. No one paid attention to my slow, initial chapter of destruction. Life became quite distorted from then on: from cigarettes, alcohol and soft drugs, I moved on to heroin, the mother of all drugs. I immediately got hooked and spent whatever money I had to support my addiction. When I ran out of money, I

of A Wayward Kid

resorted to stealing and other menial crimes. At that time, I knew Jesus, but I have never allowed Him into my life. I guess that's why I ended up in dire straits.

Eventually, I got caught and wound up in prison.

Five times in fact. And if that is not a lesson, **I was also given a total of 19 strokes of the cane** – but that too did not deter me from going back to my old ways.

I was introduced to Teen Challenge while serving my last prison term in 2003. It was a seven-and-half-year sentence and I was given the opportunity to serve the remaining six months in a halfway house. I managed to complete my mandatory six-month programme but deep down, I knew that I was not ready for society. Sure enough, I ended up on drugs again. I tried many ways to overcome my addiction but I failed. And I was too proud to try Jesus. But I had to find help.

And God turned my life around. So, I came back into the Teen Challenge programme but with wrong and selfish motives.

Thankfully, the staff and Director of the centre were not easily fooled. They continued to have faith in me and believed that God would transform my life. And God turned my life around. Gone are the attitudes of disobedience, hatred, unforgiveness and ungodly behaviour that have led to my downfall. God has brought about a drastic transformation in me, and my family and loved ones testify to that.

I thank God for giving me countless chances to turn back to Him. I thank God for putting my life back on track. I thank God for mending the broken relationships

with my loved ones. I thank God for teaching me to forgive, and to seek forgiveness. I thank God for all that He has done for me and all He has planned for me in the future.

Teen Challenge Singapore is a registered Volunteer Welfare Organisation providing faith and community-based programmes, and quality rehabilitation and therapy to the marginalised in society.

Teen Challenge Singapore is also one of the organisations Trinity supports as part of its Local Ministries expressions.

This is a poem Nick has written:

All Messed Up and Nowhere To Go

All this while I have lived my life in vain;
Filled with anguish, sorrow and pain;
Founding pleasure but yet no joy or peace in me;
Like tossing and turning in the tumultuous sea.

I was all messed up almost all of the time;
I left Jesus' side but He never left mine;
He was always there yet I turned Him away;
I failed to respond, I refused to pray.

So when I was down and couldn't go down no more;
I wondered why and what I was living for;
But Jesus said, come to me those who are weary;
And rest will be given, most certainly.

To Him now, I give my all;
In times of need, His name I'll call;
With Jesus, I no longer feel empty inside
My worries and fears will now subside.