

Powerful People/Things /Institutions	What Happened. Describe my experience with this person.	What I Learned (Old Ideas). What I believed about Power greater than me.	The Truth I Choose To Believe Today	Short Statement
Dad	Dad worked a good bit and was on call needing to go to the hospital throughout the night. He would bring me along on some days (especially when he went to work on Saturdays in Columbia). Going to Columbia made me feel special....like I was in a club that no one else could get in. Talking with the techs either at the hospital or Columbia always gave me a thrill. They were always so nice to me and took a genuine interest in me.			
	Dad seemed to be detached emotionally. When things got a little crazy around the house, especially if mom was upset, he seemed to go into damage control mode quickly and tell Bob and I that things were going to be ok and to just let mom calm down. "She's not upset with either of you, she's just upset about _____." It was almost as though he rolled his eyes at her emotions. I remember going to the back a lot of times and giving mom a hug when she was crying in bed. It was then that I learned to be a fixer.	I learned that emotions (especially negative ones) weren't good to have.	It's ok for me to acknowledge my emotions and the things I'm feeling. It's beneficial for me to take these things to God and, at the very least, simply say, "God I'm feeling _____ right now." It's ok for me to "sit in my feelings" as well and not run away from them by working too much or any other way.	1. God wants to hear the emotions I'm feeling and the thoughts I'm thinking 2. It's beneficial for me to sit in my feelings
	He was always at my basketball games and seemed to enjoy when people would compliment me as a player or me as a kid in general. I remember many times him telling me that he say "So and So" and they just "went on and on about how what a nice Jones man" I was or how "well behaved" I was. I learned to crave that type of feedback. I wanted to make them proud and make their friends think that I was a great kid.			
	Mom wanted us to have family devotionals and dad seemed to be reluctant when leading these in the study. It seemed like more of a chore for him. I remember him telling me the story of how he converted beliefs, but it seemed it was only to be able to marry Mom that he did it. He didn't seem to have a real relationship with the living, breathing God.	I learned that God was distant and didn't really want to commune with me.	I choose to believe that God rejoices in any attempt I make to talk and be with Him. I believe that He created me and wired me to have a connection with Him throughout the day and that if I ignore this wiring then things will make less sense and I will miss what God may have had for me that day or that moment. I believe that God never leaves my side. He is with me wherever I go and "holds my hand" throughout the day. The times where I feel like God is distant is only because of me running away from him.	3. God rejoices when I reach out to communicate and spend with Him 4. God never leaves my side and holds my hand throughout the day and night.
	One of his favorite sayings was is, "God only helps those who helps themselves." As I got older, I would push back on this and ask, "Dad, where in the Bible does it say that?" He wouldn't know, but he felt like God wouldn't pay much attention to me if I wasn't working hard for him.	It was through this that I learned that I must perform for God. That in order to be worthy of God's attention, I had to do right all of the time, stop sinning and be a good person.	God accepts me as I am. He died for me and took the punishment of death so I didn't have to. He stepped in for me because he loves me. I can bring my "bag" of sins and fears and anything to him on the cross. I can come as I am. I can come as an addict and lay my life at his feet and know that he loves and accepts me. He doesn't ask for my perfection. He asks for my life. He asks for me.	5. God accepts me fully the way I am right now in this moment and washes away my sin when I confess them to Him.
	I had, and still have, a huge fear of letting Dad down. I don't remember being beaten by him other than when I was Jones with the belt when I'm sure I deserved it, but I had an almost palpable fear of letting him down. The last thing I wanted was for him to be disappointed in me. When I had a 1.6 my first semester at USC, and when my mom and dad talked with me about it, I was so sad. I wanted to crawl out of the room. And then when mom gave me the 4 track recorder after that, I just felt dirty. I could never use that machine and not think about the dad that I had let them down and gotten the gift I wanted. It just didn't seem right and I felt ashamed.			
	I was reminded of this the other day after talking with Dad, but many times growing up he would complain about church going too and the preacher being "long winded."	God shouldn't take up too much of my life (in this case, my time or my family's time). I also think I learned a little that God wasn't real and more of an inconvenience than anything.	I believe that God will take all of the time he needs to talk with me. I don't have to fit God in a "once a week" box. He is near me all the time and it takes me time to turn to him to hear what he says. It's then up to me to listen and respond to anything he may be telling me AND living like that will more than likely "be inconvenient" from a worldly perspective.	6. I believe God is speaking to me all of the time.
Mom	Mom was what I would consider emotionally unstable for much of my upbringing and would get upset for seemingly no reason. Every now and again she would express her hurt to me alone about the things she was going through and seemed to expect me to be able to help her. But as I look back on those times, I think she wanted me to make the pain go away. Many times this pain was associated with something her mother had said to her or surrounding her mother's health.			
	Many times during my upbringing Mom expressed the idea that she didn't measure up. She would say things like, "I'm not very smart," or "where did I go wrong in raising you?" She would say the latter when she was upset about something I did. The former would come when I would ask for help with homework or if dad was trying to explain something to her (especially some financial issue).			
	Mom was very loving and caring and was often doing things to show me that she cared. She would play pranks on me like hiding my food in the cabinet and very much enjoyed my reactions and attempts to prank her back. I actually became pretty deceptive at hiding her food and pranking her and learned to keep a pretty straight face.			
	Mom told me that the way to heaven was to be nice to people and to be a good person. She told me this at a very young age as I was asking her what it took to get there. I took that and ran with it and seemingly told myself, "That's easy. I can do that!" A lot of my decisions early in life were based on this information. After I became a Christian I distinctly remember two conversations: 1. Joe encouraged me to tell someone that I had accepted Christ as my Savior. I decided to tell Mom. We were standing in her part of the bathroom and I remember being very nervous about it. I told her that I had become a Christian and she said, "Awwww, Steve you've always been a Christian." Needless to say, I was confused. 2. I remember having a conversation with her (at Granny's in the mountains) about what it took to get to heaven. I told her I believed that a person must be born again and accept Christ and she said, "So you don't think that Dad's parents are in heaven? (They were Jewish)" I remember thinking, and maybe saying, "Well, if they didn't know Jesus then they probably aren't." She went on to say, "I don't believe that God keeps good people out of heaven."	I learned to be confused around this issue. Coupled with dad's "God only helps those who help themselves," I fluctuated between God accepting ANYONE who died into heaven regardless of their beliefs and God only accepting those that lived a "great" life. Most of the times I leaned towards the latter view of God: that He was vindictive, angry and didn't approve of me and my sin.	I believe that God has accepted me into his kingdom because of the decision I made when I was 13 and continue to make on a daily basis in recovery.	7. God has accepted me into His kingdom.
Granny	Granny was a godly woman that went to church often. She was a strict disciplinarian that, as I look back, let me get away with less than my parents did. She would point out that I wasn't being respectful or helpful at times. I remember one time in particular, after riding with mom to WW, I was upset that I didn't get to see the Smiths. She explained how Mom had taken the time to drive me up there and that I should be thankful she did that for me. I never really acknowledged that and remember just feeling the pain of not getting what I wanted. I also remember being extremely uncomfortable as she basically called me out on my behavior and reaction even though it's what I needed at the time.			
Mrs. Jones	Some of my earliest memories of Mrs. Jones were of her as a strict disciplinarian, but as I look back I realize that a lot of my perception was her actually having clear, well-defined boundaries. I remember not being able to get away with as much stuff at Bob's house as I was at my house. She would expect me, and the others, to pitch in and help clean up, or be (what I would consider) a little more proper at the dinner table. But all in all, she expected more out of me.			
	Mrs. Jones, and her husband Dr. Jones, would pray before meals and were active in their local church. I remember their prayers feeling very "intelligent" and I was often intimidated.			

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Coach Green	My earliest memories of Coach Green were of him kicking basketballs around the Edmunds gym and running us a lot for making mistakes at practice. He would yell and scream at us and walk out of practice. I remember being very fearful and being very afraid to make a mistake or afraid of forgetting a play for fear of getting yelled at.			
	The more I got to know him, the more I realized that he was a kind-hearted man. I would stay on the van after everyone else got off and strike up a conversation about the game. This was my "thing" after a while and, looking back, he was gracious to oblige and talk with me because I'm sure he was ready to get home after long nights on the road.			
	My senior year I decided I wasn't going to play basketball because I was "tired of getting yelled at." I told him that I couldn't take it anymore and wasn't going to play. I remember discussing this with mom and dad and they weren't happy about my decision and even came to see me play music the afternoon (at a live performance) of the first basketball practice. But Coach Green came and pulled me out of class Monday morning and basically asked me point blank whether I was going to play or not and I said "no sir." He just said "ok" and walked away. We had discussions in the days leading up to that and I shared that if I played I wouldn't want to be yelled at. Looking back, I'm not sure what prompted me to feel so strongly about an issue such as that as it was rare for me to feel so strongly about something, especially when it pertained to me and sports.			
Coach White	The day after Bob died, Coach White came and pulled me out of one of the classrooms I was sitting in and basically spent the next few hours with me. I remember him just trying to get me to talk. He asked why he did it and walked around the school with me. I remember walking out to the football field and I remember his smile. He really showed how much he cared for me by spending time with me like that.			
Joe Smith	I always felt that I didn't fit in with Mark. He seemed to be drawn to the "cooler" guys in the youth group and I always felt on the outside looking in. Even when I became a Christian and sat in the office talking with him about it, I got the feeling that he didn't really want to be there with me. When he asked me if I wanted to pray now or later, I replied, "Later," and he said, "Yeah I figured." (That story may not be accurate, but I do remember him asking me if I wanted to do something with him present and when I answered that I would do it by myself, he seemed to roll his eyes like, "figures.")	I felt like I didn't matter to Joe and that I didn't really matter to God.	I believe that God cares about me more than I will ever know. I will never peel back enough layers to know how much God wants to be in relationship with me. Therefore, I matter more to God than I will ever truly know and I matter enough to God for him to allow his only son to die for me so that I may have eternal life and a direct line to the heavenly father.	8. I matter to God. 9. God wants to be in relationship with me.
Uncle Phil	I vividly remember playing basketball with Phil in the resort at Granny's in Linville. He was very rough with me and taught me the phrase, "No blood, no foul." He even gave me a hat with that phrase later on. His stated objective was to toughen me up, but I remember feeling as though he was too rough with me.			
	I remember having a conversation with Phil one day and he said that he felt God was something someone that set the world into motion and that was about it. He then left us to pretty much fend for ourselves.	I learned that God wasn't here anymore and that he only created the world and had left us once he did that.	I know that God is talking to me throughout everyday.....it's just a matter of me listening and being attentive to his voice and proddings. He sends people, circumstances, thoughts, and tuggings on my heart to communicate with me.	10. In addition to His Holy Spirit, God will communicate with me through the people, places and things I encounter throughout the day.
	Uncle Phil told me one time that having sex outside of marriage was ok as long as the couple was in love.	I learned to be very confused in regards to sex outside of marriage as everything I had learned up to that point was that sex was something that married people did.	I choose to believe that sex is something that should occur between a husband and a wife and should be a spiritual experience as well as an outpouring of love manifested in a physical nature. I also choose to believe that I have a LOT more to learn about healthy sexuality.	11. Sex is something God created for a man and wife to enjoy.
Coach Jones	I was always in awe of Coach Jones, and in a way, still am today. He was always interested in what I had going on and always very encouraging. He's magnetic still to this day whenever I talk with him.			
"Columbia"	Keeping up appearances was very important around Columbia and around school. I was Bob's brother, Dr. Smith's son and the "nicest" mom's son. I didn't really have an identity my own until I started growing facial hair in the summer and then when I started shaving my head.			
Youth Group Friends	I didn't feel like I really connected with my friends from high school that attended the youth group. I even remember having a conversation with Will stating that I wasn't even sure God existed. It was like I was a heretic with the way he reacted. I didn't dare bring that sort of talk up again after that.			
Youth Leaders	I felt close to my youth leaders. They really took the time to get to know me and really invested in my life. Steve, Bob, Joe and Mr. Green were all instrumental in my growth as a person. I remember talking with Mr. White one night at a weekend retreat. That was a nice moment. A lot of my conversations had a lot to do with girls and who I was interested in at the time, but they were always gracious to listen.			
Mom & Dad's Friends	I felt like I had a lot to live up to in order to make sure mom and dad's friends thought I was worthy.			
West Virginia Mission Trip	Working with the Smiths and Bob Smith was an experience I'll never forget. I remember Bob telling me, "When you think about starting your own ministry, think about doing something different." I immediately began formulating things in my head.			
Coach Field/Coach Brown	I was in awe the first time I met both of these guys. I immediately went into almost a submission with Coach Brown when I met him.....literally was speechless. I felt like I had to be perfect in the office and on the floor for practices and games. I couldn't stand to let either one of them down.			
Bob	I always looked up to Bob when I was younger. Whenever he would speak, I would listen. No matter what he was talking about (golf, basketball, school, mom and dad) I almost thought he knew more than I did. Even to this day I refer to him as the "smart" Smith and say that he is much smarter than me.	I learned that I didn't measure up.	I am me and Bob is Bob. I am me and others are others. I don't need to compare myself to others. I can learn from others, yes, but I don't get anything from comparing and saying things like, "I should be able to do that." One thing I do get from comparisons is guilt and shame and that doesn't come from God.	12. God doesn't compare me to others
Profession	A lot of times when I go to tournaments I feel the need to put a "perfect" self out there so that coaches will see the "Great Steve" and want to hire me to work for them. Trying to make them see I'm a "great basketball mind" or a "great worker" drives and fuels a lot of my behavior there. It's an exciting world to be a part of, but a lot of times I allow myself to be defined by what they think of me.			
College Experience	I was in awe of the players, building and experience when I was a manager. I never wanted to let anyone down. Whenever someone wanted me to rebound, or get water, or whatever, I jumped at the chance. I wanted to be "the guy" that everyone counted on to be there early, stay late and do a great job.			

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Bob's Death	Losing Bob was one of the hardest things I've ever endured. I'll never forget the feeling (the kick to the gut....the dropping heart) when dad and mom sat at the breakfast room table and dad told me, "Bob took a gun last night and shot himself." I immediately shut down and went into my head. I didn't know what to do. I remember going to school and seeing everyone being upset. I remember walking around in a daze until Coach White came and got me out of class and walked around with me just to get me to talk. It was as though I was in a fantasy world. The world seemed different....shaken....just different. I felt dead inside. How could this be? He still must be here I thought.			
	There were mornings after Bob died that I wouldn't talk to anyone for as long as I could. This was a conscious decision. I'm not too sure why I did it, but I would go the entire morning at my house just silent at the breakfast table and silent on the ride in. Looking back I was most likely masking any pain I felt at the time.			
	Bob died when I was 13 and I remember talking with Mrs. Jones when I was around age 21 or 22 and crying and crying and crying with her looking for the truth about how he died. The pain I felt then was, looking back, some of the (if not all) of the pain I had suppressed for the previous 10 years. There have been times that I feel pain and cry in talking about it since this conversation with her, but it's never been as bad as this conversation was. Up until this point, I was afraid to talk about my feelings surrounding his death and everyday that went by was just another day that I didn't talk about it. So, with that, more pressure was building. I would tell myself, "Why haven't you moved on yet? That was YEARS ago. You have to get over it." But sitting with Mrs. Jones that day was one of the most freeing days I've ever experienced because of the pain I was able to get out into the open.			
The Reaction of Those Around Me After Bob's Death	People, especially mom and dad, handled me with kid gloves when Bob died. No one really talked with me about it. I remember mom and dad worrying that I was going to commit suicide myself and checking up on me and being afraid to leave me alone.			
High School Sports	I put a lot of stake into my performances in basketball and golf. Getting All Conference in golf as a freshman "hooked" me and made it to where I craved this honor for my final three years. I put a lot of pressure on myself after finishing 3rd in the state as an 8th grader and shooting 1 under as a 7th grader. If I didn't play well, I felt like I was less than what I was. I had a need to play well and receive the pats on the back that would inevitably come. I craved the attention. I would feel most alive whenever people would compliment my play or my talent. If I didn't get compliments then I felt that I wasn't worth anything and that I must not have performed as I should have.	I learned that if I didn't perform well, or pray the right prayer then I wasn't worth much.	I choose to believe that God loves me the same regardless of my performance in any area of my life.	13. God loves me apart from results and outcomes.
	I remember using God as a sort of genie in a bottle. "God please let him make this free throw so we don't have to run." If he made it, there was elation in my heart. If he missed it, I would feel like God has deserted me.	I learned that God was a genie and that if I wanted something, I should ask for it. Deep down, though, I believed that praying meant only asking for selfish things like less running. Requests I made seemed to only serve my own needs and my own fear.	I choose to believe that prayer is a two way conversation and a way for me to get to know the Father more completely, a way to listen to Him, a place for me to make my requests known, a place to tell God how I feel, to confess sins and a place to be completely honest with God.	14. Prayer is an open line to God.
Fred at the Heritage	When I met Fred (I think that was his name), it was almost as though I had met a person from another world. He had an aura around him that was almost angelic. My parents wanted me to meet him because he professed his faith and they knew that was important to me. He was one of the first people that I met that I could see God in.	This was one of the first instances that I saw God in another person. There was no doubt that Fred was a believer and I was instantly drawn to what he had. He is the first person I can remember thinking, "I want to be like that guy." Talking with Fred taught me that God can live within people.	I believe that I can too can be a "Pat" to someone else, however that will only happen through God's power and strength working through me. I cannot "will" my way to being a godly person. It is only through a constant and conscious contact with God that I will be able to listen more intently and discern his will for my life.	15. God will use me for His purposes.
Youth Meeting	Sitting in the fellowship hall during this youth conference was the first time I felt the tug of God on my heart to make a decision to give my life to Him. Bob had died a few weeks/months before so I think I might have explained this tug on my heart away at the time as just being pain surrounding his death. But really I knew that in that moment I was feeling something that I had never felt before. I felt that I should have walked up to the stage and accepted Christ. But I allowed fear to keep me on the floor and not move. The room was full of kids and I was afraid to walk up in front of them for fear of what they might think of me.			
Train to Orlando	12th Grade - I remember a guy giving Sue a hard time on the train. I remember thinking he was drunk. Once he got in trouble for allegedly touching her, I felt a pull on my heart to try to give him something "life giving." I decided to leave my Bible on his bag. I remember writing a note on the inside cover. The feeling I felt was one of excitement that I gave him that. It is one of the few times I can honestly say that I felt the call of God and responded to Him.			
Karen	If I was only able to write one entry on Karen, it would focus on my giving away my power to her over and over again. I am constantly fearful about standing up to her. It happened even today as I was putting up hurdles. She asked what was taking so long and my first instinct was to take a picture of a pile of old hurdles and say, "See what I've done today," in order to justify my being at school for an hour and a half after school when I didn't need to be there. Why can't I just tell her what I'm doing and just surrender her reaction, good or bad?			
	I treated her as my God for much of the relationship. How could I go on without her? How could anyone love me like she does? She even told me things like, "Girls don't like guys like you." At times I felt that I wouldn't ever have anyone if I didn't commit to her and try to make things work.			
	She talked down to me a lot of the time. I endured a lot of grenades. Many times she called me selfish, an asshole, said "fuck you," got loud and yelled at me, used shaming and guilt messages ("Thanks for leaving me out here by myself"). It was rare that I stood up for myself and said, "I'm not going to hear this right now. Either you talk to me in a more appropriate manner or I'm hanging up." However, whenever I did do that, I felt more union within myself.			
	I created a system of checking in with her throughout the day that I came to resent. Wherever I went (work, daycare, grocery store) I had to tell her and if I didn't tell her in an appropriate amount of time, she would become agitated. She would also flip out whenever I wouldn't answer the phone or reply to her text messages within a few minutes. This allowed me to always be on guard and always have my phone with me and created some anxiety and fear around missing her calls/texts.			
	I lied to her a lot, especially when I would get fed up with the fighting. At the end of a difficult conversation I would just "throw in the towel" and agree to whatever she said. This was usually once I felt really exhausted, but it was also whenever I felt like I was letting her down. "You're taking the easy way out," would prompt me to say "NO. I'll stick it out and in fact, I'll prove you wrong." Letting her down produces a lot of anxiety for me and through lying I try to manage that anxiety and her reactions.			

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	I began to wonder what was actually true or not. Take the Oregon trip for example when I wanted to raise the money and take my runners up there. I thought it was the greatest idea ever and yet I allowed her to talk me out of it. Then I remember waiting until the last minute to tell the kids. I felt so bad about that and still deal with some bitterness and anger surrounding. The point of that story is that I have a hard time knowing what is true. She convinced me that I was wasting my time on something like that and that I should be coaching runners and not fundraising for a trip like that. But for me, I thought I was doing something really special and was hoping to provide an opportunity for the kids to see a part of the country they wouldn't normally get to see.			
	For a while, especially early on in the relationship, I believed that sex was a very important need for me. I was basically commuting from Ladson a few times a week because I knew I could go and get what I thought I wanted. We began having more and more unprotected sex until she got pregnant and we had to endure an abortion. There were many nights that I just wanted to "get to the sex." We would go out, drink (I would be bored) and then we would be physical. The very first night we hung out we got very physical. She wanted to have sex, but we didn't.			
Accepting Christ as my Savior	I remember doing this on a Wednesday night Bible study and feeling guilty that only about 20 people were there and feeling sad that I didn't have the guts to do it at the bigger youth group. I remember talking with Joe after it was over and almost feeling like he didn't believe that I had done this.			
Masturbation/Porn	Whenever I discovered online porn in the library at school, I felt great excitement. When dad told me that we were getting internet, the first thing I thought was that I would be able to look up porn. The computer was upstairs (very creaky stairs) so I could click out of anything that was inappropriate by the time someone came upstairs. Masturbation ran rampant throughout my middle and high school years. I would masturbate very close to where my parents were and I even did it in class one time. Masturbation was becoming a drug for me. If I was sad or just bored, I would masturbate. I always felt guilty for doing it, but that was never enough to make me stop doing it.	I learned that when I wanted to feel better (for a split second) I should just masturbate.	I choose to believe that acting out sexually, though exciting and thrilling for a few brief moments, will only lead me down a destructive path. Once I take a drink of lust, I cannot control myself.	16. Lust is toxic
				17. God is in control