

from the desk of

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Being born into a Christian family, I was taught about Jesus and the bible from a very early age. Each day, I was exposed to bible stories and learnt more about who God was and his impact in my life. I am very thankful for this, as the biblical principles that I was taught formed the foundation of what I believe in today.

I remember when I was 7 or 8, my family and I attended the annual church camp down at victor harbour. It was just like any other time; you would arrive on Friday evening, have dinner which would probably be chicken schnitzel and after, have a short session at the children's program in one of the buildings at the camp site. However, on the Saturday night of the three day camp, the people who led the program, John and Ross, told us a story called Barney's Barrel.

The story is about a homeless boy called Barney who lives on the streets of America. As he has no home, he lives in a barrel he found and on it is the name "Barney's Barrel." Every day, he tries to find food and get just enough to eat, so that he can survive the night. As the Christmas season approaches, much snow is falling and the nights are getting very cold. One night, Barney is very hungry and is trying to sleep in his barrel when he hears some singing. He gets out of his barrel into the cold night and sees bright lights across the street in a church. He walks over there and peers through the window to find a choir singing Christmas carols and curious, he enters the church. He finds a seat at the back as the pastor begins speaking about a Christmas message. At the end of the sermon, he asks anyone who wants to become a Christian to stay behind. As the people leave the church, Barney stays behind and the pastor tells him about Jesus and how he can be his personal saviour and Barney believes. The next morning, a policeman walks along the street and he hears a wheezing sound. Thinking it is the sound of a cat; he finds where the noise is and starts digging through the snow only to find a barrel. Inside, the policeman sees Barney who is very sick and he immediately takes him to the hospital. At the hospital, Barney asks the nurses if they could get him a bible. The nurses are reluctant at first, but the doctor tells them that Barney will die soon. When the nurses arrive, he tells them to read John 3:16 which is For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. Barney then passes away shortly afterwards and the nurses and doctors who were moved by Barney's faith, decide to become Christians.

I was touched by this story as I could not understand how Barney would give his life to Jesus immediately after hearing a message and why God would let him die just after becoming a believer. I then realised that it was because he became very sick, that the nurses and doctor and the hospital could receive the gospel and become Christians. After this story, I gave my life to Jesus and looking back on the story after all these years, I can relate the verse of Luke 18:17 and understand why Barney believed so easily. Jesus says that "truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." I don't know what the future holds and what God has planned for me, but I have faith that whatever I do, God will lead the way and be with me wherever I will go. Although there are many things in my life right now that I don't understand I trust that God will reveal the answers further on in my walk with Him.