

Jeff McClure

My name is Jeff McClure and I have been married to my wife Nedra for 24 years. I have three daughters; Brittney, Amanda, and Brooke Ann. I went to church on a regular basis when I was younger but eventually I only went occasionally and on Easter and Christmas. In those days my personality was bashful, backwards, quiet and sometimes labeled as a loner. I met Nedra when we were freshmen in high school. I was fourteen and she was fifteen. She was beautiful, outgoing, and had the “gift of gab” and didn’t seem to mind to do all the talking when we were together. I found the perfect match for me. We dated most of our freshman year and all through our sophomore and junior year and realized that we were going to be parents, right before we were seniors.

We were both raised with Christian backgrounds and knew that sex before marriage was not the order that God intended but ignored His plan and did it our way. I was sixteen and Nedra was seventeen and we were both filled with a lot of fear when we were trying to decide what to do next. We had several options but the only one that seemed right was to get married before our daughter, Brittney was born and take responsibility for our actions. It was when we made that decision that all the fear just went away and something changed inside of me. I knew that it was time to go to work. I was now a sixteen year old student in high school with the responsibilities of a husband, father, and employee. I didn’t realize it then but I believe now that it was God that took the fear away when we decided to step back in line with His order of marriage and family and He blessed our relationship. Life was good. We had a great marriage, three great daughters, and lots of great friends to hang out with. Nedra and I both grew up with Christian backgrounds but Christianity just didn’t interest me. The way I saw it was I needed to memorize the right routine, depending on what church I was in. When to stand, when to sit, where to sit and what happens if I do it all wrong? Nedra on the other hand, didn’t seem to be concerned about these things and certainly didn’t see Christianity the way I did. She went to church because she wanted not because she felt like she had to.

We heard about the Alpha course that was offered at the church, which is a practical introduction to Christianity and it was a good opportunity for us to get some questions answered and be on the same page in that area of our relationship with each other. I learned the difference between just going to church and having a relationship with Jesus. To my amazement, they are two totally different things. I’ve also learned that Jesus was not who I thought He was and that He was not interested in how to do “religion.” He was known for saying things like “Luke-warm religious people make Him sick” and that was me! On that Alpha course, I decided that whatever Jesus had to offer, I wanted it—especially forgiveness. I became extremely hungry for His teachings and for a relationship with Him. Crazy hungry! If I was awake, I was feeding myself the Word of God some how. I read the Bible, books, listened to tapes, CD’s, watched whatever I could find on TV, and listened to Christian radio stations. If the church offered a class—I went. I served on Alpha teams, went on The Walk to Emmaus and served on a few Emmaus teams, went on several mission trips.

However close someone could be to God, I wanted to be that close. That was a learning period for me that went on for over four years or so and it came with some sacrifices attached. I believe He wanted my full attention. In return He blessed our marriage that was already great and it became better. Having a relationship with Jesus and being filled with the Holy Spirit out weighs the sacrifices that I made by far. I’ve experienced God’s forgiveness, peace, joy, healing, and

have become more patient. (My daughters would like to add an "Amen!") I'm still hungry and I am still learning and I'm thankful that God knows ME personally, the truck driver from Cedar Grove, Indiana.

As I look back on the past 24 years I have no regrets of the decision that we made at such a young age. Our daughter, Brittney is now happily married to a wonderful man, Antonio from Puebla, Mexico and recently graduated from Bethel College in Mishawaka, Indiana. Amanda is going to be a sophomore at IUPUI in Indianapolis and will be working at Universal Studios this summer with Campus Outreach. Brooke Ann is actively involved with Young Life like her sisters and will attend camp for her second summer. She will be a Junior at Franklin County High School. Life was good before I knew Jesus, but would I ever go back to the way it was? Not a chance. I thought I was doing a good job raising a family, running a business but I opened the door to let Him take control and He has taken us further than I could have ever dreamed.