



God doesn't care about you.

Depending on where you are in your walk of faith—whether you know God's grace or believe it is a hoax—the statement, “God doesn't care about you,” may be bringing up strong emotions for you right now.

If you disagree with my statement, then you may want to shout at me right now to correct me. For you, you've felt God's love, grace, and mercy, and it has done something deep inside of you. It has changed you.

If you agree with my statement, then you may want to shout at me as well, but your shouting may want to encourage me to say it again. For you, you've felt pain, rejection, loneliness, and maybe heartache, and these feelings have done something deep inside of you as well. These feelings may have made you angry, calloused, apathetic, or hurt.

The truth that I want to share with you right now is that both thoughts are right. Before you pass judgment on your crazy youth director right now, I want you to press through that confusion you may be experiencing and follow me.

Personal Testimony, Part One

Let me tell you a little about my own story.

[TEACHER NOTE: You can use my story, but I would encourage you to craft your own personal testimony in a way that both demonstrates the loneliness and isolation you may have felt before Jesus and the hope experienced with Jesus. Not everyone has a testimony of dramatic proportions, and not everyone in your group will have a testimony like that either. Testimonies are not meant to compete or be better/less than others. The point is to highlight the transformation that is brought about by Jesus.]

I began attending church as a baby with my parents and continued to attend through my elementary school years. We went to a couple of churches, vacation Bible schools, and Sunday school classes. I even said prayers at night as a kid. My faith was simple and childlike and not very

personal or deep at all. I grew up trusting and respecting my parents. I believed what they said and followed directions.

This way of life continued until middle school when everything began to change. I had lived a very sheltered life.

Beginning in sixth grade, the world started opening up to me. So much of what my parents had sheltered me from began to flood into my life all at once. I had my first real girlfriend, which didn't last long. I had a second girlfriend for a couple of years. I found new friends, who weren't the best influences on my life, but they felt like real friends to me. I began to explore things on the Internet I should not have. I also developed some unhealthy eating and lifestyle habits.

In the midst of all these changes, we quit going to church, I quit praying, and I began to develop some extreme resentment to God and all things related to the faith. It would only take about two years for me to identify myself as atheist and then as wiccan, as I began to dabble in incantations and witchcraft.

I had completely left the faith of my parents and the faith of my childhood. In my opinion, there was no way that God cared about me, and there was certainly no way that God cared about the world. I relegated the stories of the Bible to myths and fairytales, similar to the Tooth Fairy or Easter Bunny, which I had whole-heartedly believed in as a kid. I was angry, self-centered, and generally not a fun person to be around.

Jonah, a prophet in the eighth century, BC felt a lot of this rejection, anger, and disappointment too at the end of his mission.

How God Didn't Care About Jonah

We don't know a lot about Jonah and his life leading up to the moment where God called Jonah for a specific mission, but we do know that Jonah was a prophet sent on a mission from God.

Let's read the beginning on Jonah's story...

Jonah 1:1-3 ESV – “Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” 3 But Jonah rose to flee to

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