

Out of Isolation

Robbie Hunter was born and raised in the small town of Ridgeway, Colorado. Life as he knew it was filled with a distorted view of both the church and the “Christian” life: looking good on the outside, attending youth group regularly, but not establishing his own relationship with Christ. In high school he started to realize that his beliefs were more acquired from his parents rather than being established in his own faith in Christ. This began a season of searching for God to become real in his own life.

“I was brought to the sudden reality that I was not as ‘good’ as I thought I was after a dating experience gone wrong,” he says. “My eyes were opened to the reality of where my life was going.” After struggling to find a church to connect with he started to live his life in isolation, finding community with nonbelievers more rewarding than with people who claimed to love Jesus.

Stefanie Hunter’s story begins in the midst of a Christian home and a good relationship with her parents. As she got older she started to realize that there were discrepancies between what Christians say they believe and how they handle conflict resolution with one another.

“I was challenged by a guy who hated God to ask questions about my faith,” she explains. “I began to ask the really tough questions about the fundamentals of Christianity, and started over with my faith. At 17, I developed a truly personal relationship with Jesus Christ, learning from Isaiah 43:19.”

Even though she found that she indeed wanted a relationship with Jesus, Stefanie also began understand the effects of cultural Christianity and found herself disconnected from those who claimed to believe the same things she did.

Robbie and Stefanie got married in 2006 atop a mountain in the Colorado Rockies. Although they are very much in love, both had been living in isolation from accountability in Christians for so long that they began to form poor communication habits in their marriage. They both struggle with pride and self-righteousness, as well as connecting with one another on a spiritual level. After finding Watermark Church through a friend, Robbie and Stefanie began to discover what true Godly community looks like.

Robbie recounts, “Because of isolation we started to neglect one another, and through a series of events that neglect turned to distrust. When we came into community with other believers who challenged us to change, it was painful at first to try and break down two years of false foundations and rebuild our marriage on the foundations of Jesus Christ.” The going has been difficult, but Robbie continually turns to 2 Corinthians 5:17 and is comforted by the fact that the old has gone and the new has come.

Although the process has been painful, the rewards have begun to show in the ability to remain open and communicate with one another. “We’ve discovered that community is a group of people who get together and actively work on releasing themselves from the idols that stand in the way of a truly open relationship with Jesus,” Stefanie says. “It’s a group of people who watch out for one another and love one another the way a family ought to.”