

## FRIENDS

By Donna Rotsch Jensen

It is my hope that we can become friends, you and I. ☺ so I want to tell you about the wonderful thing that happened to me.

I will begin by introducing myself. My name is Donna Jensen, I'm soon going to be 80 years old. I was raised in Southern California without God or any Christian influence in my life.

As a teen, it was my desire to be wise and lead a noble life. I also wanted to be the best wife and mother anyone ever had. I failed on all accounts.

My family also failed as they suffered mental breakdowns, suicide, severe illness', and death on the battlefield.

When I sat down to think about it all in my mid-twenties, I discovered that I believed in a God, but pictured him sitting on his throne amused at our efforts with life, and I didn't like him. I didn't think you could know if Jesus was who he said he was so I gave him no more thought. I believed this life was all there was, and if that was true, you could have it! I thought briefly about suicide then myself, but made a conscious decision to go on living. I would do the best I could with each day, I just wished I'd die in my sleep and not have to face another hopeless day. Did you ever feel that way?

The only thing that kept me going for the next three years was trying to make the people around me happy, even though happiness was out of reach for me. Then one day God said, "Enough!" And in His mercy, brought me to Himself. He did that by using a teenager where we were both employed to tell about a miracle over lunch that she had seen the night before at a revival meeting. She said a little boy who was deaf had been healed. I was amazed! That was the first time I'd ever heard anyone say God had done anything nice for someone.

I asked if there was going to be another meeting and she invited me to go that night with her and her husband. After our arrangements were made and I was walking away, she called after me, "By the way, the evangelist is a Jew."

Hmmm, I thought, I wonder why this Jew believes Jesus is the Messiah?"

The auditorium was filled to overflowing that night in East Los Angeles. Emotions were running high as the crowd sang about hope and breaking bondages.

And then it was time. The evangelist came to the pulpit and the crowd quieted. His gaze took us all in and then he began. He told us about Samson and the plan God had for his life. He said there was a divine plan for us as well. I had wished something like that was true.

He went on to explain how God had equipped Samson for the work he was to do and how he lost his strength through his sins and then had to die to complete the job. He assured us this was a true story, not a legend.

Holding his Bible high he said, "This is the word of God. All of it!" He added that not believing something didn't make it false. He said that he could say that he didn't believe in the law of gravity but if he jumped off this building, whether he believed in the law of gravity or not, we'd pick him up off the ground and whether we believed the Bible or not it would prove true in our lives and he hoped we'd find that out before it was too late.

And you know what? God was also in the auditorium that night. As the minister spoke those words to us, God backed him up. How did He do that? By burning those words into our hearts and minds. When God speaks to you, you know it's God! The minister had said the Bible was all true! God had said amen! All the things I doubted or disbelieved began to play across the screen of my mind. I remembered how I'd once told a minister I wasn't a sinner and if anybody was going to Heaven I was! But since I now had God's word on the truth of the Bible, I could see I was one "gosh awful" sinner! And furthermore, I was headed for a hell I didn't think existed. But wait, that also meant that Jesus is really the son of God! He would save my soul if I asked him to. And I did just that. And just like that, it was done! I never felt any condemnation, just acceptance and loving forgiveness. I left that meeting wanting to be used by God to lead others to him.

That was nearly 50 years ago. I can tell you from personal experience that the Bible is true and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and no other religion, will transform your life.

When you enter into a relationship with Jesus, you become no one's puppet but are infused with the power of the Holy Spirit to be fully and uniquely you. But don't think that nothing will be *required* of *you*. Once you are born again and empowered for service, your training should begin. Far too many stop there and never mature in their Christian life remaining only a shadow of what they could have been. Study to show yourself approved, be a doer of the Word, not a hearer only, allowing the wisdom and love of God to flow through you to others.

I needed to get over the idea that life is all about me, that life should be painless and care free. We were not meant to be a hot house plant. We were meant to become strong and of good character by weathering the storms of life with Jesus alongside and guiding, and yes, sometimes carrying us when we can't take another step, knowing He will never abandon us.

As God is my witness, the truth is that there is a never-ending Hell meant for Satan and his evil angels and a Heaven created for the children of God. Jesus *is* the son of God, He *did* die for the sins of all people, of all nations, of all ages, and He *did* rise from the dead. He *will* save you the moment you acknowledge Him as Lord and ask forgiveness of your sins.

I hope you can see why I wanted to share this with you. A friend wouldn't keep this from a friend.