



"I'm a Muslim, I told him. "I don't believe in the Bible." He kept trying but I refused to respond to what he was telling me. Even though I didn't accept his words, I think just hearing them did something to me. On my way home from school I became angry at Allah for never answering my prayers. So I said, "Okay, Jesus, if your'e up there, you answer my prayers."

I quickly retracted that prayer and repented to Allah for even considering it. But these little steps must have started something in my heart.

One night not many days after, I was alone in my home. My father had gone to work and I was changing channels on the TV. I stopped on a program about Easter. I wasn't really sure what the preacher was talking about, but suddenly - whoooosh! - I felt the Sprit of God come on me in awesome power. I fell on the floor looking up at the ceiling, and I knew that Jesus was right there in the room. I didn't see Him with my eyes, but I knew His presence was there. It was the same Jesus that I was curious about when I was a child. I knew Him! I also knew He was the Son of God. As a Muslim I was taught that Allah has no sons, but I knew that's who He was. I felt such tremendous joy. This is what I was looking for in Islam all those years - life! I felt like I had been dead and I came to life. I was so excited and overjoyed. My heart was flying. I knew Jesus was there with me.

I was so excited I wanted to tell someone, but there was no one to tell. So I went into the bathroom, removed my shirt and painted a red cross on my chest with the red toothpaste. It was my way of saying that now I belonged to Jesus.

Later I went by the same church where I used to spit on the lawn and decided to go in and meet the pastor. I told him what had happened to me. He was excited and taught me what it means to surrender to Jesus. I accepted Jesus into my heart, but I didn't want to tell my father what had happened to me.

A few months later, my sister came to join us. She was a devout Muslim at the time. She was very upset when I told her what I had done. Later that night she told my dad. When I came into the house that evening, my father and sister were sitting on the sofa. My dad told me to sit down. He said, "Ali, we're a family, aren't we?"

"Of course, we're a family." I said.

"We're Arabs, aren't we?" he continued.

"Of course we're Arabs, Dad," I said.

"Ali, we're Muslims, aren't we?" he asked.

As I thought on this one, I remembered reading in the Bible that I was given at the church that if you deny Jesus in front of men that He will deny you before God.

I said, "No, Dad. I'm not a Muslim anymore."

"Why?" he asked.

"Because I am happy like this." I said.