

Camp Memories

I still remember the first time I went to camp. I was a shy little 7th grader from York NE, and perhaps the only reason I went is that the Tandy's talked it up so much. It sounded like a lot of fun so I thought I would give it a try. My Mom drove me up to Intermediate camp, and when I arrived I was so scared! I did not know anyone.

As time went on, I fell in love with my time at camp. It was a place where I felt like God was helping me grow spiritually. During morning personal time I would go into the woods by myself, study my Bible, and talk to God like he was a close friend. Some of the best times of my life were spent out in the woods at camp reading my Bible.

Camp was also a place where I met some of the closest friends I have had in my life. I have met several people with whom I still keep in contact. My wife was the best of those friends I met there. I first grew to like Tarese because I saw that she was somebody who loved God and would not compromise her principles. I was also amazed by the fact that she spent a great deal of time every day just writing notes to people and encouraging them. I was one of those people she wrote to, and I remember, to this day the good feelings that those notes brought.

Nebraska Youth Camp is an amazing place to develop as a Christian. I can still remember how camp encouraged me to take chances that I never would have taken without it. I remember my 8th grade year of camp so well. I grew in ways that I would never have thought I could have grown. During that period of time we did not have song leaders for singing sessions. Instead, any guy could just start a song at will, and everyone else would follow. I remember to this day how much I wanted to try, and I can still feel the fear in my heart as I very quietly started to lead a song. Almost nobody heard me sing, and my song was quickly drowned out by a counselor named Troy Bendickson. Troy came up to me, however, and told me "sorry about that, try it again." I tried it again and have been doing it ever since. The first sermon I ever gave was out at camp. It was about 5 minutes, and probably not very good; but because of the love and encouragement I received from the counselors and staff I became more and more confident.

Nebraska Youth Camp has changed so much since I was a camper there. Two fires have done a lot of damage to some of the natural parts of the camp. The basic principles, however, still hold true. Camp is a place to meet good Christian friends; it is a place to receive encouragement and love. It is a place that people can go to grow closer to God and develop as a Christian. Camp is not about grounds or buildings; it is about relationships with other people and relationships with God. Those first few years out at camp made such an impact on me that I continued to go as a camper, counselor, and a teacher every chance I had. I was even able to sit on the Board of Directors for one year and helped to shape how camp will influence the lives of a new generation.

Camp is a place where lives are changed and where people are pointed to heaven. Let's offer up our support in prayers and encouragement to continue this good work.

-Phillip Quelle