

**Ellie:** When you are little, you have to discover whether things people tell you are fantasy or fiction. I remember many times needing to ask the question 'is this a true story?'. It slowly dawned on me that I was not always told the Absolute Truth! For example, Father Christmas.

My parents never told me he existed, but when I was about four, my older brother told me that he had seen a glimpse of Santa one dark Christmas Eve as he sneaked the presents into our stockings. Of course I believed him totally! Only later did it dawn on me that he had been teasing me and I came to realise through my experiences that real life just doesn't fit with the Father Christmas story – however fun it is.

I was also brought up to believe the Christian story. This is the story that God had created the Universe. He had created people to have a relationship with and that he loved and cared for us as his own children. That people had decided to go their own way and not obey God's way but God had to send his son Jesus to show us what following him really meant. That Jesus had died for us, risen again and is now seated in Heaven with God, that because of this we can have a relationship with him again and that the Holy Spirit is the one who facilitates this here with us on Earth. To some today, this story sounds as impossible as Father Christmas. But my experiences in life have actually contributed to my realisation that it is all Completely True. Fact.

Since I can remember I have talked to God. I have asked the tough questions about ethics, evolution, suffering, other religions, the Bible and history. I have found many answers through the wisdom of others and many answers have 'come to me' (from God?). Other answers I am still waiting for.

I have had downs (and ups – but they're not the problem!). I have tried lots of the usual things to get fulfilment out of life such as partying, shopping(!), having a good job, making myself look nice,

having a husband and children (which is ace!) but actually I realise I haven't really needed to experiment much. It didn't take me long to miss what I really long for and what really only satisfies – the love of God my Father. God invented everything good in life and I think that although you can enjoy them immensely without him, if you include him in them, you can enjoy them to the full – how He intended them to be enjoyed.

God has been so kind to me. That is what a perfect father does – he looks after his children. He answered my prayers when I was little so that I never stopped believing in him and as I have grown into an adult, I have grown in my love for Him. His love for me hasn't had to grow – it has always been too vast to even comprehend. I live every day for Him and have discovered that it is far, far better than anything else offered to you in this world. When terrible things happen and all that you love is stripped away, what do you have? There is nothing in this world that can give you any hope. There is only God and his love which is everlasting. I choose it. That Love and Life Everlasting.