

A Continual **YES**

BY STEPHANIE HOGAN

Would I say “yes” to the love that was drawing me, to the One who was calling me to Himself? What would my friends think? Would I be the only one to respond? Could I trust Him? What if He asks me to do something hard or to go far away? As I weighed the options, I could sense His presence. His love was so real, so good and so pure. I knew I could trust Him. I knew I could give Him everything.

This was not a decision for salvation. I had already asked Jesus to forgive me of my sins and live in my heart. I knew I was going to Heaven. This was different. Jesus was asking more of me. He was calling me deeper into Himself.

Again the invitation came: Will you give *all* of your life to Jesus? Will you surrender one hundred percent of yourself to Him? As I sat in my pew, I weighed the options and struggled a bit in my spirit. Would I say yes, or would I settle for a life I could control?

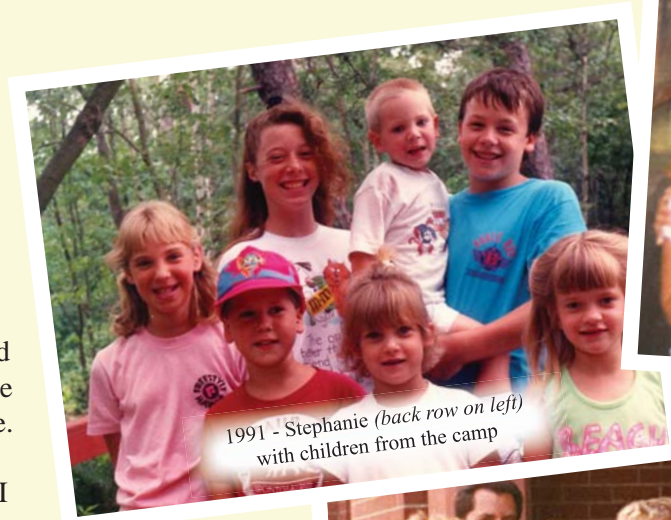
In that moment, I knew in my mind and in my heart that I would not be complete and would not be happy if I said no and kept control of my life. It no longer mattered what my friends thought. It did not matter if I was the only one to respond. I had to go. I did not want to turn away from His presence. I wanted to be all that He wanted me to be.

So I stood and threw myself into His loving embrace. And with all an 11-year-old girl had, I said, “Yes, Jesus, I give you all of me, all of my life and all of my future; I give you everything. I want to be all that you want me to be. I will go wherever you want me to go and do whatever you want me to do.”

At that altar I gave all of myself to Jesus. I was His, and He met me with His love, His cleansing and His presence. He met me. Something was different; something became new in me. I had a new center, and it was Jesus Himself.

That moment during the summer of 1988 at Junior Camp at the altar of Delanco Camp Meeting in Tabernacle, New Jersey was a turning point in my life. It took years before I was able to put into words what I experienced, but the deeper reality of what Jesus did in my heart did not depend on words.

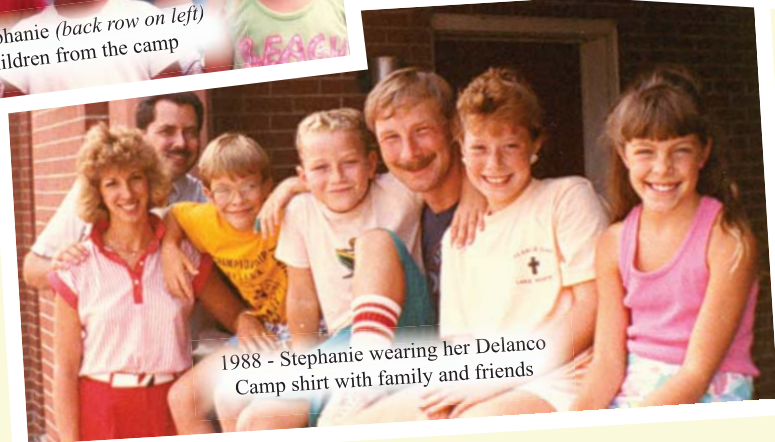
Since that encounter, I have had to learn, grow, trust, abide and struggle walking through life with Him. At each stage and in matters big and small, I have faced the decision



1991 - Stephanie (back row on left) with children from the camp



1987 - Stephanie (far left) and other junior campers with their counselor



1988 - Stephanie wearing her Delanco Camp shirt with family and friends

whether or not to obey and follow. Would I allow Him to draw me deeper into Himself? At times it has meant pain and sacrifice. Often the tempter comes with accusations that God is not good and does not know what is best for me. In those moments, my heart and mind quickly return to that warm summer evening when He came to me and I settled the questions of who I belong to and who controls my life. I am His, and He is mine.

Each new “yes” I say to Jesus is an affirmation of the initial “yes” I said to Him twenty-two years ago. The One who called me then calls me now into the deepest, richest, face-to-face relationship with Himself, the Living God. And again I say, “**YES!**”



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