

Along the Way

Growing up as a devout Muslim in Ethiopia, a country often thought of as a Christian-majority nation, Jemal despised followers of Jesus Christ.

He would eagerly debate Christians to make them doubt their faith while pointing to the Quran as the source of ultimate truth. When Jemal was in the eighth grade, he taught other Muslim students how to draw Christian converts back to Islam.

In high school, Jemal met a former Muslim named Yonas who travelled throughout the area sharing the Gospel with Islamic leaders. Whenever Yonas was in town, Jemal would debate him and ask questions about the Christian faith.

Over time, Yonas' answers began to make sense to Jemal. "I learned from Yonas and the Bible about Christ," he says. "Also, I was looking in the Quran. When I compared them, I started to leave the Quran and gradually started to love the Bible."

When Jemal shared what Yonas had taught him about Jesus and the Scriptures with local Islamic leaders, he hoped they could debunk Yonas' claims. But surprisingly, they had no answers. They simply warned him about the dangers of meeting with a Christian.

For several years, Jemal read his Bible and met with Yonas in secret. Then, when he turned 20, Jemal decided to place his faith in Christ. "It took many years to decide," Jemal says. "I was afraid to come to church and talk about Christ because if [militant Islamists] heard and knew I converted to Christianity, immediately they would [hurt] me."

Jemal's family noticed changes in his character, and when his father asked him if he was a Christian, he boldly shared that he was. Jemal's brothers and some other men from the village beat him, trying to persuade him to return to Islam, but his love for Jesus – which had been growing for years – sustained him through the persecution.

Jemal's father rejected him and told him he never wanted to see him again, so Jemal fled to another town where Yonas welcomed him as a brother in Christ. The new believer participated in a training program for Christian converts from Islam and has since been working in full-time ministry. After completing the training, Jemal got married and returned to his hometown, but

unfortunately his family continues to persecute him.

Despite this rejection and the loss of his home, land and belongings, Jemal says Jesus is worth it, and he hopes that God will use his new life for His glory.

Reading Between the Lines

Define the Verb

The word "persuaded" means:

- a) Convinced someone
- b) Pursued a goal
- c) Took a break

What tense is the verb "persuaded"?

- a) Past
- b) Present
- c) Future

The word "participated" means:

- a) Took part in
- b) Rained heavily
- c) Enjoyed something

What tense is the verb "participated"?

- a) Past
- b) Present
- c) Future

The word "share" means:

- a) To give a portion of something
- b) To injure
- c) To hoard

What tense is the verb "sharing"?

- a) Past
- b) Present
- c) Future

Fill in the Blanks

Put the verbs from above into the correct sentences.

1. James _____ his teacher to give him another chance at his test.
2. Michael _____ in the 100-metre dash in track and field.
3. The toddlers are _____ their toys well.