

Rhett

No man in my life has affected it more than **Rhett Inabinett**.

In my early twenties my car broke down in Columbia, South Carolina. I had just left the Marine Corps Air Station in Beaufort, South Carolina, and I was trying to figure out life. I enrolled at Midlands Technical College, not because I was driven to get an education, but mostly because it allowed me to collect my VA benefits while I sorted things out.

While I was there, I met a young lady named Margaret. I was interested in her, and one day she invited me to church. Well, if a young man is interested in a young lady and she invites him to church, chances are pretty good he's going to church.

That's how I met her father, Rhett.

Rhett had three daughters and no sons. I started spending time over at their house, and before long he took me under his wing. I'm not sure exactly what inspired him to do that. Maybe it was my work ethic. I was the kind of guy who would clean ditches, mow yards, haul things, or do whatever work needed to be done. I think Rhett could see that I was eager for a father-type figure in my life, and maybe he was eager to have a son in his life.

Whatever the reason, we bonded.

Rhett and his wife Vivian took my daughter Veronica and me under their wing. We had dinner at their house almost every night. After dinner we would sit around watching television and talking. When the evening wound down, Rhett and Vivian would head to bed, and Margaret and I would stay up talking for a while before I went home.

One night changed my life forever.

I was getting ready to leave, and I asked Margaret if she could tell me more about Jesus. She told me she couldn't do that. I don't remember her exact words, but she made it clear it was something she didn't feel she had the knowledge or the ability to explain.

So she went and knocked on her parents' bedroom door and woke her father.

Rhett came out, and the two of us walked into the backyard. We sat down at the picnic table under a tree in the quiet of the night.

There, in that backyard, Rhett led me to the Lord.

With my eyes closed, I asked God to forgive me of my sins. Rhett

placed his hand gently on top of mine as we prayed. In that moment, I could feel the Lord's hand resting on my head. At the same time, I could see Jesus nailed to the cross, tremendous agony on His face, bearing the weight of my sins.

That moment was real to me. It was personal. It changed me.

After that night, Rhett and I grew even closer. I became what the Bible calls a yoke fellow. We went to church together. We witnessed to people. We worked together. Rhett helped me with a business, and Vivian helped too. She would drive the dump truck to the landfill with Veronica riding along, and she would help pick up shingles on jobs.

That family became as close to a mom and dad as I had ever known.

Eventually Margaret met another young man in college. Out of respect for her, for him, and for the family, I stepped away from the relationship. It was one of the hardest things I ever did. Losing that daily connection with their family felt like a catastrophic loss.

But the bond Rhett and I formed never completely went away. Even today we still talk once or twice a year. We are both getting older now.

I would not be the man I am today if it were not for him.

Every child he raised, every grandchild he has, and the hundreds—maybe thousands—of people whose lives he has touched owe him a debt of gratitude. His character is unmatched. He is one of the finest men I have ever known.

When I get to heaven, part of me feels like I will stand there ashamed, knowing Rhett will see the sins that were in my life. At the same time, he will also know the respect and admiration I have for him, and how I tried to follow in his footsteps.

Rhett Inabinett is a blessing to this world.

And no man has affected my life more than he has.

Two Nuggets of Wisdom

1. A godly mentor can change the entire direction of a man's life.
Sometimes God sends someone who simply walks beside you, works beside you, and quietly points you toward Him.

2. Life-changing moments often happen in ordinary places.
A backyard, a picnic table, and a quiet conversation can become the place where a life is forever redirected.

Three Proverbs

Proverbs 27:17

"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

Proverbs 3:5-6

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Proverbs 20:7

"The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him."