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Alaska Association of School Boards

Turning to God instead of Substance

A life changing experience occurred when I was 11 years old and my father passed away in a drowning accident. I grew up in Sand Point, a small island with about 1000 people off the Aleutian chain in Alaska. My father and I did everything together, like fishing, hunting, going to the beach, building things, playing basketball or just hanging out together.

After he passed away, I felt like there was something missing in my life. I was lost and didn't know what could fill the gaping hole there was. This led me to wonder about what the afterlife was like.

Then, my best friend Matthew Bravo asked me if I wanted to go to a bible study with him. When I first went I was very shy, but it was very interesting to me. We had just started to learn about evolution in school, but I didn't think that was how our world could've come to be. After a few bible studies, I began to understand and believe in what the Bible was saying. Also, it was reassuring to know that my father was up in heaven with the creator of everything around us and that his was just part of the plan that God has for me. I thought it was the craziest thing ever, that our creator would come to Earth to give his life for all of our sins. After, a few months of going to bible studies and church I decided to live my life for Him.

After making the best decision of my life, it felt great to know that God will always be there when I'm feeling down. This is very significant because if I didn't turn to God, who knows what kind of things I would be getting into. A problem in my community is drug and alcohol abuse and I'm glad I didn't turn to that. There's so many people struggling with addiction in my community I'm now trying to show them that God could save them like he saved me. Also, there is many people who just don't care about the afterlife and just live for themselves. I'm trying to be the light that shows them that God cares for them and their lives would be so much better if they built a relationship with Jesus, the man who came to Earth died for their sins.

My father passing was the worst day in my life, but now that I know he's in God's kingdom I no longer feel very sad about it. I now know that it was a part of His plan and that choosing to build a relationship with Him was the best decision of my life. I'm glad I turned to Him instead of things that would pull me even further from him and I want to help others that are being pulled away. I want to show them how happy you could be when you life for Him. This has helped shape who am I today and what I will be in the future.