

The loss of faith essay sample



It is very difficult for a young teenager to keep faith in a God during a crisis. This can be very well shown in Elie Wiesel's novel *Night*. This novel is a personal, first person account of a young child, named Eliezer, and his time in a concentration camp with his father. It shows how Elie's faith, once strong and incredibly vibrant, becomes almost nothing. Be it through the loss of faith one of his mentors has, or seeing human bodies burn around you, or seeing a helpless young boy, trying to get air as his body hangs from a noose. All choices and decisions, though have a starting point, and Elie's starting point was when one he looks up, began to lose faith in the lord God. Elie used to have a very strong faith in God. He had such a strong faith that he wanted to study the Kabbalah as a teenager, but the Kabbalah is meant to be taught at the age of at least thirty. He also prayed to God every day and wanted to be a rabbi when he grew up. This all began to change, when one of his mentors, Moishe the Beatle was expelled from Sighet, the town where he lived for being a foreign Jew. After several months, Moishe returned, but he was not the same man who he used to be. According to Elie, "Moishe was not the same. The joy in his eyes was gone. He no longer sang. He no longer mentioned either God or Kabbalah." (Weisel, 7) Though this didn't directly affect Elie, it began to plant a small seed of doubt in God. Two years after this experience, though, Elie see's something that causes him to lose nearly all faith in God.

Ellie arrived at Auschwitz in the spring of 1944 after being kept in a hot, crowded, disease- ridden boxcar. Upon his arrival, he could see ash, which looked like snow, and he could smell burning human flesh. Others who were there were saying that the Nazis were burning the Jews and cremating them

alive, Elie could not believe it, until they separated him from his mother and sister whom he never saw again. The Nazis then made Elie, his father, and other male survivors walk right past the flames where they were burning people. The Jews began to recite the Kaddish, or the prayer of the dead, and as one can see, Elie began to lose all faith in God. He thought as his people were reciting the prayer “ For the first time, I felt anger rising within me. Why should I sanctify His name? The Almighty, the eternal and terrible Master of the Universe, chose to be silent. What is there to thank Him for?” (Weisel, 33) Weisel, though, has yet to see one final act that begins to make him lose faith in God nearly entirely.

Watching a young child die right before your eyes is a terrible thing to witness. Watching a child gasping for his last breath while being hung is a life changing event. Elie saw a young child being hung right in front of him. The young child was associated with some rebels within Buna, so the Nazi's, as punishment, and to set an example. They hung him and others who broke the rules. As the suffocating child was hanging on his noose, gasping for his last breath, Elie heard a man behind him asking “ ‘ For God's sake, where is God?’ And from within me (Elie) I heard a voice answer: ‘ Where His is? This is where- hanging here from this gallows...’” (65) Elie had come to the conclusion that God was dead and was powerless against the Nazi's. Elie has now given up his faith in God.

By the time Elie gets out of the concentration camp on April 10th, 1945, he has seen more horrors and suffered more pain as teen than many adults have their entire life. Be it through the loss of his father, to the death of the rest of his family, to even being beaten and starved to near death day after

day upon being in the concentration camp. Elie's faith in God is nearly gone, because he watched a young child hang before his eyes, he saw his own teacher lose complete faith in God, and he even saw people's bodies burning before him.

Elie had a completely reasonable reason to give up his faith in God. But, he didn't lose his entire faith. By the time he reached adulthood, he became a practicing Jew. Eliezer Wiesel thanks God for keeping him alive during his stay at the concentration camp during his Nobel Prize acceptance speech on December 10, 1986. He said; " Words of gratitude. First to our common Creator. This is what the Jewish tradition commands us to do. At special occasions, one is duty-bound to recite the following prayer: ' Barukh atah Adonai... shehekhyanu vekiymanu vehiganu lazman hazeh'- Blessed be Thou- for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this day." (117)