



# Claire, Christian

**Claire is a member of a Protestant Christian church. Becoming a Christian has had a major impact on her life.**

I was brought up in Belfast and lived there all my life until now; I'm currently studying medicine at University in Leicester.

I'd always been to church, but I didn't really understand until I was 15 that I needed Jesus Christ myself. I became a Christian then, and I made the decision like this: I got to meet other young people at a Scripture Union at school. They showed me that being a Christian wasn't about going to church on Sunday – it was about a relationship with God.

Before I was a Christian there was a mixture of things I noticed about Christians in my school. They had a tremendous support; there was always someone to turn to. They had a real fellowship of Christian friends. This seemed to me to be both something they gave each other, and something from above. From God.

I agreed to go away on a retreat weekend with the Scripture Union. The speaker had a picture of a wilderness, and a figure representing Jesus on the road. She asked us to picture ourselves in the picture, in relation to Jesus. I could see that I was at a distance from him on that day. Then she asked us to picture where we would like to be, and I realised I wanted to be much closer. That was a turning point for me in my life.

**Jesus is central to Claire's beliefs.**

On the subject of Jesus, I believe he was a perfect human being, sinless. His death was a brutal killing. He had the power to stop that at any moment, but he didn't because if he didn't die, he couldn't be resurrected, and so save the human race. He made a sacrifice to pay a debt for all people, many of whom would never recognise it. It takes enormous love to do that, and it's central to the Christian faith.

Jesus wasn't just a good man – he claimed to be the Son of God. He wasn't just a moral teacher.

I think he was either God come down to earth, or he was crazy. I believe he was God on earth.

**What would Jesus do?**

Part of being a Christian is to think 'What would God want me to do in this situation?' and 'What would Jesus have done?', whether about minor things like not saying something horrible about a friend's choice of clothes or the big things in life – knowing that God has a plan for my life and is in control.

God can speak to you through other people, so it's important to have a good network of Christian friends. The faith is about relationships – many of the Ten Commandments are about what you do with other people.

**Deciding to train as a doctor has raised many questions for Claire to think through.**

As a medical student, I have many things to think about with regard to my faith. In terms of science and religion, I don't even separate them at all.

A non-religious friend said to me recently, 'Surely the complexity of nature shows that there can't be a god – why would he bother to make it so complicated?' To me that seems a roundabout logic. To God, surely this 'complexity' is very straightforward. The fact that the whole of nature 'fits together' – trees, for example, the physiology of the way they work is perfectly adapted to their situation. That's too perfect for me to think of as coincidence. It seems to me that trees are designed – by God.

One of the things that the General Medical Council feels strongly about at the moment is that personal beliefs should not make a difference to the way you treat a patient. Respect everyone, and don't treat them differently if they are different to you. But it goes deeper than that. The abortion issue, for example – I don't believe in abortion, and could never perform one, but I can't deny that treatment to a person who wants it, and I wouldn't seek to do so.

I'm a Christian first, and then a trainee doctor.

**Jesus called his followers to be disciples, and to do as he directed them. So making a decision as a Christian means asking, 'What would Jesus do?' This is a good starting point for the difficult choices we get to make.**