

New Man Story

Dr. Jon Iadonisi— “5 Days That Changed My Life”

Jon is a computer scientist and former Navy SEAL who invented new capabilities for the Special Operations Community and Central Intelligence Agency while serving in the Navy. He earned a B.S. in Computer Science from the U.S. Naval Academy, an M.S. in Homeland Security from San Diego State University, and a Ph.D. from the University of New Haven, with a focus on Cyber-Crime.

Jon is now the Founder and CEO of VizSence—a global consumer intelligence company which combines proprietary technologies, artificial intelligence, machine learning and data to assist clients with their digital marketing campaigns.

To say that Jon is a smart, resourceful, driven and self-confident guy would be an understatement. When his father was diagnosed with leukemia, he designed software tools trying to find a bone marrow match using geo-targeting on Facebook. He was dedicated to defeating the disease. However, his father died after a four-year battle. Men like Jon are inclined to believe they can solve any problem through intelligence and determination—but his father’s leukemia was a problem he couldn’t solve.

After losing his Dad, with whom he was very close, Jon starting building up walls around his heart to protect himself from further pain. In his case, that resulted in his becoming an angry man with a quick temper. Self-reliance, a callous heart, and a combative nature were a recipe for an isolated and bitter life if he continued down that road.

But Jon had a good Christian friend who perceived what he was becoming and encouraged him to go on a Christian Men’s retreat. Jon’s initial reaction was to rebuff the suggestion by telling him, “I’m perfectly fine where I am, and I can figure this out.” Knowing better, his friend persisted until Jon took up the challenge and went.

John tells what happened to him on the retreat: “I showed up, and five days later my entire life had changed. I met Jesus and had supernatural healing occur in my heart. That set me on a trajectory which has made every day of my life extraordinary—because of the transformation and restoration which Jesus produced inside of me.”

Discussion Questions

1. Do you know anyone like Jon before he came to Christ?
2. Can you relate to Jon’s self-reliance issues...or to the walls of protection around his heart?
3. What might have happened had Jon’s friend not persisted after being rebuffed?
4. Have you as a Christian ever taken a strong position like that with a friend?
5. Has anyone firmly but lovingly encouraged you to take a step that would save or improve you?
6. Have you ever been on a life-transforming Christian retreat? If not, does that idea appeal to you?

Click below to watch a 4 minute clip of Jon’s MGF talk

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