

IN REAL LIFE. "Religion at Cedar Falls High School inspires kids to do good things rather than making trouble," Jacob Leisinger ('16) said.

FAITH of my FATHER

After questioning his path for life, son chooses to follow his dad's direction

When **Josiah Sabino ('16)** was young, church was all about image, whether that meant being the last one standing on the dodgeball court or making an impression on the young ladies.

"I lived for the world, sought lots of people's praise of myself," he said. He was just "wanting everyone to notice me, wanting to fit into every crowd possible and living for man's attention," and that was breaking his dad's heart.

"Since the very beginning of [Josiah's] life, God has been the main focus in his life at home," his dad Paul, who is also a pastor, said. "It's somewhat heartbreaking when you care about something deeply that's not being embraced by your kids."

Paul stayed optimistic and supportive and even succeeded in helping Josiah find faith one night in junior high. "I did not want to be under God's wrath or have God against me anymore," Josiah said, "so that night by putting my trust in him and owning up for my sins and asking for forgiveness, I gave my life up to Christ in eighth grade."

But Josiah's image struggles persisted. "After that, life was just spiritual high's for me. On Sundays and Wednesdays, I would be so on fire with God, but during the week just completely dishonor him," he said.

As Paul described Josiah, he said, "We have had the most struggles, grief and turmoil with him. Josiah has been our hardest child by far. There have been times where I have just been like 'are you kidding me?' But Josiah has always been full of passion, saying 'always' and 'never,' big sweeping statements."

When the family moved from its hometown in Ames to Waukee, Josiah found it even harder to find an identity. "My walk with God, it was the first time I'd ever been to a new school, and normally growing up in Ames everyone knew who we were because my dad was one of the head pastors at Cornerstone, so nobody knew me in Waukee, and I just kept trying to please everybody."

And then the path led to Cedar Falls. Paul was asked to plant a church there called Candeo. When the Sabinos first moved, Josiah went back to trying to please everyone until two of his impactful spiritual leaders died, one committing suicide and one dying in a house fire.

During Josiah's life at that time, he had another big image struggle. "At one point I had this huge struggle of 'I need to lose weight' and battled with that for a while," Josiah said, "and that's when I started to watch Candeo take off."

In the midst of his struggles, he saw evidence of the power of God's work his father had told him of come to life.

"I remember the first Candeo service was six people sitting in my living room to seeing us pack out the place when we came from nothing. I just lost it crying. I was bawling just thinking, 'God you're so amazing.'"

And just like the fire in Candeo, Josiah's faith grew deeper each day. "I feel like I'm finally starting to understand what a true relationship with God looks like. Sunday



PREACHING PAIRS. Sharing roles in preaching at Candeo Church, **Josiah Sabino ('16)** and his father Paul have teamed up to deliver their passion for Bible instruction. *Photos by Maia Lindaman*

mornings at Candeo are awesome, and Wednesday nights are awesome and these spiritual highs are awesome, but when it comes down to waking up early in the morning to open my Bible and seek the Lord daily, that has been so rewarding," he said.

Of course, Paul is more than happy. "Josiah wants to talk to me all the time about what God is doing in his life," Paul said. "He told me 'Dad, I can't think about anything else' and 'so I'm not doing that. It's now out of my hands.' He is now someone I respect, someone who challenges me and someone I admire, and that is language I would never imagine I would be using describing my son calling him a friend. I honestly feel like I'm living a dream."

Josiah now has his future planned out. "I'm really just seeing God wreck my life for him, and I'm now planning to go to University of Northern Iowa these next four years and be heavily involved with Salt Company, our college ministry and take Cornerstone study of theology. I'm just so excited to serve the lord and see what he has planned for me."

In short, he's following his dad's footsteps.

by Maia Lindaman

ATHEISM. "Instead of believing and making God my main priority, I choose to value respect and making myself a better person, and when I die, whatever happens to me will happen," **Isaac Turner-Hall ('16)** said.

Different but the Same

AGNOSTIC. "It's kind of like a middle ground between religion and atheism. I don't necessarily believe in God, but I do believe something is out there," **Sarah Stortz ('16)** said.





Abdul's path to Prayer

1



"It can be really difficult finding a room to pray in because there are usually students in most rooms."

2



"It can be awkward asking the teachers to leave their room, but usually they understand."

3



"Praying is not hard for me to do. It's my favorite part of the day."

4



"Power hour has helped me a lot because last year I used to have to get a pass every day and miss 10 minutes of sixth hour, but now prayer falls at the end of power hour."

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STAYING COMMITTED. Being Muslim, Abdul Rasidagic ('16) praying five times a day is what his religion requires. Every day, Abdul went through the struggle of finding an empty room to pray in after lunch.
Photos by Maia Lindaman



Muslim

TRADITION VS RELIGION. "Dressing in traditional clothes is more of a cultural thing rather than religious; however, I love wearing the clothes and putting on my hijab. I love getting together with everyone in my family to celebrate at religious gatherings," **Rabia Afzal ('16)** said.

Catholic

UNDERSTANDING MORE. "For as long as I can remember, I've been attending a Vietnamese Catholic church in Texas where my whole extended family lives. They speak in all Vietnamese, and I used to not understand what they were saying at all, but over the year it has been cool to figure out what they were talking about and to help my younger siblings understand better," **Ashley Le ('17)** said.



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Designed by Maia Lindaman



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