

Jesus said: 'I came so they may have life, and have it to the full.'



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Jesus came so we can have life to the full

Two years ago, a major study looked at what Australians value. They interviewed 2,000 Australians from 30 different ethnic backgrounds. You'll be reassured to hear that the thing that makes Australians happiest is "time with family and loved ones." And, if they had the chance to change their life, 87% said that they would "have more time with my family."

We say we love relationships, but we put most of our time into not relating. Nielsen Online has found that Australians spend an average of 13.7 hours per week online on top of 13.3 hours watching TV. Often while we're online, we watch TV at the same time.

For all that Facebook and Myspace promise, and for all the celebrities we think we know through the flickering small screen, neither technology really brings us what we're looking for – intimacy, warmth, a relationship.

Jesus once met a woman whose whole life was spent craving relationship. They met by the village well in the midday heat in country Samaria. He worked out that, amazingly, she'd been through

five marriages. Perhaps she couldn't find the love she wanted.

Although Jesus knew this about her, he didn't condemn the woman from Samaria. He offered her real life. He recognised her thirst and he made her an offer that would change her life. He offered her water that would become a spring inside her, constantly refreshing her. He was introducing her to the source of all relationships – God himself.

Later in John's Gospel, Jesus explained that he came to bring "life to the full". He made this claim while telling a story about a good shepherd – one that will lay down his life for sheep whose lives are threatened. Jesus stated boldly: "I am the Good Shepherd."

Unlike so many spiritual leaders, Jesus' words weren't empty. Jesus proved his point by taking our place on the cross. He actually took our punishment for us. And he did it all for relationship because he wants you to relate to God – not to machines. And better still, by spreading forgiveness in our lives, he makes us want to relate to our family, friends and neighbours more deeply than ever.

Prayer: Dear God, please forgive me and give me the full life that comes with knowing Jesus. Amen.