

God Has Invested in Me

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Written by

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Dexter, Missouri - When Abbie Warren graduated from Dexter Senior High School in 2010 the only thing on her mind was playing sports at the college level. She earned a scholarship to play volleyball at Mineral Area College in Park Hills, Missouri, but her heart pulled her to play basketball. A year later she tried out and earned a full scholarship to play at Three Rivers College in Poplar Bluff, Missouri.

Something was still missing, something just wasn't right. She did some soul searching like many of us do and she applied at several Christian colleges. John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Arkansas signed her to play basketball and she knew the minute she started attending school that God had called her there.

"My faith in the Lord really grew and I was attending a lot of different Bible classes," commented Abbie. "I dug deep into the word and the history of the church. Something I had never experienced before."

John Brown University is a private, interdenominational, Christian liberal arts college founded in 1919.

Abbie knew what was like to grow up in a loving Christian home. She is the daughter of a preacher who was a pastor for two local area churches, 2nd General Baptist that is now Risen Church and Liberty Hill Baptist Church both located in Dexter. This set the stage for her Christian values and beliefs and her yearning to attend a Christian based college.

Her father is Phil Warren and Abbie's mom passed away when she was only two years old, but when her dad remarried Abbie gained a wonderful Christian woman in her life. She already had two siblings, Kellie and Andy. She gained her brother James when Cindy married Phil. Later Phil and Cindy adopted two more children, Harley and Oliver and together they became a happy blended family of seven. Abbie said she wouldn't have had it any other way. She loves them all!

During Abbie's high school athletic career she played volleyball and basketball as a Bearcat and was on the first team to go to state her junior year for the Lady Bearcats basketball team.

"I don't think I truly appreciated Coach Allen and Coach Sitze back then like I do now," stated Abbie. "They complimented each other so well on the court. Both are good Christian men and helped us develop our strengths as we matured and really enhanced our ability to play good ball."

"That's what I liked about John Brown University," continued Warren.

"Good Christian coaches like I had in high school surrounded by a good group of girls playing ball. God called me to this college for a reason and it just felt right for me."

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Last summer just before her senior year at John Brown University Abbie learned her parents were moving to Saipan, the largest island in the Northern Mariana Island, a commonwealth of the United States and she became mad and frustrated with their decision. “Why would they do this to her in her senior year and not be there for her graduation that she had worked so hard to obtain. She was mad at God for asking her parents to leave Dexter.” In just a few short weeks she would understand. God had a plan. She needed to have a little faith and patience.

When the opportunity arose for Abbie to travel with a Missionary group to Manila, Philippines she jumped at the prospect. She would be able to demonstrate her basketball skills to children. That was last summer when her parents were leaving to move from her hometown as well.

The young ladies she worked with had been abused and were living with a woman who housed about 30 girls. They weren’t orphaned, but rather their parents gave them up so they would have a better life and perhaps be safe from abuse.

Manila can be a harsh environment for young girls. There are roughly 20 million people, some living in unspeakable conditions. “It was a little crazy at first. It was a big change from small town Dexter to such a huge city, but the girls were happy,” noted Abbie. “They always smiled and they owned nothing, they had nothing to be happy about, but they never stopped smiling. That really spoke to my heart.”

“I finally understood what God had planned for my parents. I knew that they were needed in Saipan. I was finally at peace with their decision.”

After she returned and started back to college in the fall, she felt empty, perhaps a little anxious. Something was missing and as the days turned to weeks she tried to put all the pieces together she decided one evening to have a heart to heart with God. She yearned to go back to the Philippines to see those smiling children, but there was absolutely no way she thought. “I am like only 22 years old! I can’t go off to another country. I am supposed to settle down, get married, work a 9-5 job!”

She talked to the tour guy one day and he told her that there were two positions open, one a physical education and a coaching position.

“How could I be a PE teacher when I am majoring in Kinesiology? (a study of human movement addressing physiological, mechanical, and

psychological mechanisms.) My dream job was coaching,." Was God telling her to come back to the Philippines?

"I went to church the following Sunday and the service was a little different than in the past. We prayed, listened to the sermon, prayed, and listened to more of the sermon, repeatedly. Each time I prayed for an answer from God about the Philippines. Finally the preacher wanted to know if there was someone in the congregation who wanted to go overseas and perform mission work. I could hardly believe it. God had answered my prayers. He was telling me to go back."

It wasn't a quick process for Abbie. They lost her application because of a typhoon. Skype wasn't working for her face-to-face interview, but she persevered and landed the job in March 2014 and so the real work begins now for her future.

She began the arduous work of sending out commitment letters to people she knew. Asking to be a guest speaker at local churches wasn't difficult, but she only has until July to raise the much-needed money it will cost her to fulfill her calling.

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“I will be giving my story and asking for prayer for safe travels,” said Abbie. “I leave for the Philippines on July 10th and will begin orientation on July 18th at Faith Academy School.” The school is a missionary based for pre-k through high school and mostly Asian cultured. There is a boarding school as well and children of local missionaries can leave their child in a safe place while serving in other areas.”

Abbie will coach with several students age kindergarten through 5th grade and will also be the asst. coach for volleyball and basketball at the high school.

Teachers do not get paid. They must raise 100% in donations to pay for their insurance, social security, food and living expenses. Abbie has agreed to an initial two-year commitment and must raise approximately \$58,000. She has already done a tremendous job raising nearly \$20,000 in just two months.

“My sister and I came up with really awesome idea of 50/50 Teams. I am trying to get 50 people to give \$50 per month.”

Abbie said her commitment of two years wasn't too long or too short, it was perfect for her life right now. Who knows where the future will take her. One thing she knows for sure is that God called her to do this and He will be there every step of the way.

“I am so blessed to be doing this,” said Abbie. “It was my dream to coach some day. I just had no idea it would be in the Philippines. I can't wait to get back to those smiling faces!”

Abbie will be speaking at the First General Baptist Church in Dexter during their Sunday morning service on May 25th. She will also speak at the First General Baptist Church of Bloomfield for their evening services.

If you would like to hear Abbie and her story here are a few dates below:

Sunday, June 1, 2014

Liberty Hill, Dexter – morning service

St. Joe General Baptist Church on Hwy FF in Idalia (Bloomfield) – evening service

Sunday, June 8, 2014

Risen Church, Dexter – morning service

First Baptist Church in Dexter – evening service

Sunday, June 22, 2014

The Lighthouse Christian Center, Dexter – morning service

June 29, 2014

The Hill in Joplin, Missouri with Rev. Bo Norman

If you would like Abbie to speak at your church or business, please contact her via email at **a_warren1991@hotmail.com** or find her on Facebook by clicking **HERE**.

If you would like to donate online click **HERE**.

Abbie has promised to keep the ShowMe Times up-to-date once she moves overseas and we will post photos and updates when she let's us know. This is a two-year endeavor and we couldn't be more proud of her accomplishments. Her future is bright!

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