

Olympic Gymnast Gabrielle Douglas Says Faith Is Her Foundation

Just a year ago 16-year-old gymnast Gabrielle Douglas was tucked away in an Iowa training gym lamenting over not being able to go home with her family after the holidays. She was homesick for her Virginia Beach birthplace, and wanted to give up on her dream of becoming a world-class gymnast, but Douglas' family rallied around her and pushed her through that tough season. Now the 4'11 teen is a two-time Olympic gold medalist in the individual and team all-around competitions and a world champion. She attributes it all to her faith in the Lord.

"I love sharing my story and I love sharing about my faith," she said. "God has given me this amazing God-given talent, so I'm going to go out and glorify His name."

Douglas is very vocal about her love for Christ. She says her mother raised her and her siblings in church and made sure the Word of God and prayer were a constant part of their lives.

And though she is young, her faith has been tested as she endured her share of difficulty. As a baby Douglas was diagnosed with a deadly blood disease and remembers her mother crying out to God for her healing. "God answered her prayers," she said.

And even though her family was also homeless and living in a van during her childhood, she said their faith in God sustained them through their trials.

"[My faith] always plays a big role in my life," she said. "I don't know where I'd be without it today."

Douglas remembers Christ became real to her at age 10 and He has been her plumb line ever since. "I remember watching the Olympics on TV and my lips are moving and I said 'Oh, I'm praying'," she recalls showcasing her signature grin. "I pray before every single competition. That motivates me and gets me on fire."

For Douglas her Olympic win has only created a platform for her to inspire others. She wrote a memoir titled *Grace, Gold and Glory* detailing her struggles and the grace God gave her to win the gold. She wants to encourage other teens not to give up on their dream.

"You do not want to have regret," she said. "If I were to have quit. I would have so much regret right now, so I'm so glad I stuck it out."