

Your Past Doesn't Have to Dictate the Future

✖ Reggie Dabbs had a rough start in life, but learned that although he couldn't change his past, he could make a difference in the future—and that's just what he is doing now every day. Dabbs speaks to 2.5 million young people a year, and, with John Driver, he tells his story in *Reggie* .

Dabbs was born to a 16-year-old unwed mother who already had three children. In order to feed them, she felt compelled to accept the offer of a male friend who said he would give her \$20 for sex. As a result, she became pregnant and knew she couldn't handle raising another child. It was then that she remembered a caring former schoolteacher, Mrs. Dabbs, who had said to her students, "If you ever need anything, call me." And she did.

Mrs. Dabbs and her husband had six grown children, but took the girl into their home and cared for her until baby Reggie was born. They served as his parents until he was in fourth grade and then officially adopted him.

When Dabbs was in second grade and learned of his adoption and the back story to his life, he was stunned. "Despite the love I was given, the knowledge of my story and the shame of it all still managed to seep into my

bones,” he said. “I felt alone. Abandoned. Unworthy of love.”

Seeing life as “the sum of your choices,” he learned not to let the past that wounded him define him. “Now I am defined by God’s love that changed me,” he said.

Though it still hurts sometimes, Dabbs is thankful he did not become another statistic. “You can’t change your past, but you can change your future by changing your present reality. The reality you have the potential to experience is not someone else’s either; it is designed to fit you perfectly as if a master Italian tailor has taken your exact measurements and produced a personal masterpiece that is just your size. That is what I want for those who hear me speak.”

Dabbs challenges kids and adults not to feel “sidelined” by their past or their weaknesses. “They can become the very fuel to a God-ignited fire that will blaze through your family, community and world,” he said. “That’s what He did in me, and that’s what He’ll do in you.”

Reggie is both humorous and thought-provoking, as Dabbs tells his own story and of encounters he has had with young people. An acclaimed saxophonist, he has played with Whitney Houston and CeCe Winans, and found music has opened doors for him. He has spoken at Promise Keepers events, and has traveled with popular speaker Dave Roever, who, he writes, “was a key component

in the forging of my identity as a national speaker.”

[Click here to purchase this book.](#)