

How God Gave Spirit-Filled Olympian Chaunte Lowe a Vision for Rio

American women's high jump record-holder Chaunte Lowe is representing her country—and her faith—in Rio.

When she was only 4 years old, Lowe began dreaming of competing in track and field in the Olympics. Inspired by track star Florence Griffith Joyner, Lowe started to envision herself as an Olympian, not knowing it was more than just a child's dream.

"I didn't understand that it was a vision that God placed within me," says Lowe.

Born into a single-parent home, becoming an Olympic competitor seemed impossible. Her mother was addicted to alcohol and drugs. Money was scarce. But Lowe's grandmother planted seeds of faith, took her to church and told her about Jesus. Lowe committed her life to Christ as a child, and God brought His vision for her life to fruition.

Lowe's track and field career included two National Scholastic Indoor Championships in high school; collegiate championships while at Georgia Tech; and representing the U.S. in the 2004, 2008 and 2012 Olympics. It has taken Lowe and her husband, Mario (himself a collegiate track and field athlete), to countries all around the world.

Through it all, Lowe sought to use her athletic giftedness as a platform to share her faith. "All I do is run and jump over a bar," Lowe stated. "But I have a relationship with Christ. ... God knew this sport would allow me to go and share my testimony in underground churches, to visit Muslim countries and to say ... it's because of Jesus that I am here."

After competing in London in 2012, she believed she was finished with the Olympics. However, God had a different plan.

While speaking to her church in September 2015, she felt God telling her to get ready for Rio in 2016. She told the congregation that “once again, I am stepping out on faith. God has known me since I was knit in my mother’s womb, and whatever He wants, I submit to His will.”

She began intense training for her fourth Olympics. But could she do it again?

At the Olympic Trials in Eugene, Oregon, on July 2, 2016, Lowe not only secured a place on the U.S. team, but scored first place with a soaring jump of 6 feet, 7 inches—an inch and a half higher than her nearest competitor. She currently holds the U.S. high jump record with a 6-foot, 8 1/2-inch jump, and the 32-year-old mother of three is among the favorites to win the gold at this year’s Olympics. In fact, *USA Today* projected Lowe to take home the gold medal.

The Sunday before her win, Lowe and her family were at River of Life Church (an Assemblies of God affiliate), as usual. During that service, her church family supported her with a special prayer for God’s blessing at the upcoming Olympic Qualifiers, as well as the Olympic Games in Rio.

Senior Pastor Kevin Quinones prayed that Lowe would be able to “use her God-given athletic gift to exemplify and make Jesus known.”

The women’s high jump event preliminaries are scheduled for Aug. 18, with the medal round on Aug. 20. Chaunte Lowe wants to bring home the gold. But more importantly, “I want people to know when they see me that I am a follower of Christ.”