

Paralympic Athlete on Accepting Jesus: 'It Was the First Time I Felt Enough'

Paralympic athlete Jessica Long, who was born with fibular hemimelia that left her without bones in her lower legs, grew up going to church with her adoptive family. But she didn't like church, because "God made me this way."

Long had to have surgery every time she grew. But when she was 10, she started swimming. At 12, she was selected to represent America in the Athens Paralympic Games, and she won a gold medal. She found her identity in swimming, but she says she was sad a lot.

"One summer night, I was at my Friday night youth group Bible study," Long says. "And I'm sitting there, and I just couldn't do it alone anymore. I got up and made the walk to the front, and I found this woman. I said, 'You know, I want to give God my whole heart for once.' I prayed with her, and as soon as I prayed, it was the first time in my entire life that I felt enough."

Long says God gave her the strength to forgive her birth mom for giving her up for adoption. And she isn't upset about being born with her condition anymore.

"My legs still cause me pain," Long says. "And I think it's honestly this really cool, beautiful reminder that I can't do it on my own. ... I just put my head down and picture God almost racing alongside me when I swim. ... I just feel Him [saying,] 'Just keep trying, Jess. I'm here with you.'"

For more of Long's powerful testimony, [click here](#) for the entire video.