

Beth

Background

Since my junior year in college I felt called to the field of Higher Education and Student Development. I graduated from Gordon College in 2002 with a degree in Social Work. Prior to graduation, I had already been accepted into the Geneva College Master's of Higher Education program.

When I went home to New Hampshire that May, I was so happy to be around family again, and I decided it must have been a mistake to apply to graduate school, because God would obviously not want me to be that far from home and family. By the end of May I had come to the conclusion that if God wanted me in Pennsylvania, then He would just have to make it so I didn't get a job in New Hampshire. (I felt I would have no trouble getting a great job because social workers were needed all over the place, I had a great work history and wonderful grades, and I had outstanding references. I could do this all on my own.) In a way I felt like I would show God that I can work up here without a problem.

June came and went without even an interview. But June also brought yet another reason to stay in New Hampshire: my very first niece was born! How could such a wonderful God not want me to be around to see Lauren grow up? He must not have known what He was doing. By the time August rolled around, I finally had a job offer...but it was the one job I had applied for in Pennsylvania! The phone call actually came at the end of July. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Beaver County, PA was calling to offer me the position of a caseworker to run the college programs. After a few words with God, I decided that I would give this position a try if He really wanted me to, but, I still felt it probably wouldn't work out. Remember, I do not know a single person in Pennsylvania.

Stepping out in Faith

Needless to say, the following week was spent packing and saying more goodbyes than I ever thought I would be saying. I was also clutching onto Lauren, holding her every second possible hoping that if I held her she would somehow remember her Auntie Beth even if I was a few states away. During this time I also went online to see what churches were around Geneva College; I guess even at this point, I knew God was the only One who knew me down there, and I should probably find a church. I emailed about four churches after finding their sites online, and I got a response from one, New Brighton Christian Assembly. This is the one I decided I would check out when I got to Pennsylvania.

Early in the morning, I said what felt were my final goodbyes, and I climbed into my rather weighted down car, maps in hand. I was headed to Beaver Falls, PA, 12 hours away. I knew deep in my heart that this is what God wanted me to do, but everything rational in me was saying I was absolutely crazy to be going. I did not have an apartment, I did not know where any hotels were out there, I was a 21-year-old female driving that far alone, and I was clueless as to what would lie ahead in the weeks to come. I arrived in Beaver Falls late that night, and after finding what I thought was the only hotel around, I praised God that I had made it out there safely. I prayed I would not be shot that night, then I laid my head down and fell asleep. (It was not the type of area I was used to being in.)

The next day, I spent time looking around and also for an apartment. After finding an apartment, I unpacked my car and set up what I could. I only had a blow-up bed at the time; my parents came down a couple weeks later with the U-Haul truck and the rest of my furnishings.

Finding my Place

That night (Wednesday), I went to New Brighton Christian Assembly. I have never felt such an awesome peace come over me before than I did when I walked into that church. A man named Frank greeted me, and, realizing I was new, he took me on a tour of the church and also introduced me to the young adults' leader. During the time of worship that evening I remember

crying and seeking forgiveness forever having doubted that God knew what He was doing. At that point, I still had no idea what He had in store for me in Pennsylvania, but I knew I was where He wanted me, and He would show me everything I needed to know. I had found my place; I was exactly where God wanted me to be.

Benefits of Following His Call

During my first few months living in Pennsylvania, my relationship with Christ grew more than it had in the previous six years. That is not an exaggeration! I did not have a clue what to do except to fully rely on God. Needless to say, He taught me so much about who He is and what it means to live for Him and to rely on Him.

I will admit, making the choice to move to Pennsylvania was the hardest choice I have ever made, but when Christ asks you to follow Him he never says it will be easy. In fact, He basically says the opposite. Even knowing what I know now, if God said to do it all over again, I would go in a minute. These past four years have turned out to be some of the best in my life. I now have a completely renewed relationship with Christ, He has introduced me to friends I never would have had if I had stayed in New Hampshire, He enabled me to complete my masters degree, and He brought Tony and I together.

I have learned that following Christ when He says go is the best decision a person can make. He knows all things and can do all things; there is nobody better to follow. He can even make a one-month-old baby not forget her aunt who lives a few states away. Lauren does know me, and I have not missed seeing her grow up, nor have I missed seeing her little sister grow up. I talk to both of them almost weekly on the phone. I no longer feel that God tore me out of New Hampshire and away from my family. He simply guided me to Pennsylvania and introduced me to new family. The family I have in New Hampshire was only added to by moving to Pennsylvania.