

Testimony

I come from a small town in Honduras, from a poor family. My father Yovani died at the age of 23 when I was just a 10-month-old baby. My mother Esperanza remarried and when I was seven, she died suddenly. She was only 29.

After Mother's death I went to live with my maternal grandparents. My younger brother Denis, four years old, was taken to his father in his home town. I didn't see him again for nine years.

My mother's parents, Evelia and Faustino took care of me for five years in their home in Ocomán, until I graduated from the primary school in the village. My grandmother Evelia always encouraged me with my studies and told me that I was very intelligent. During those 5 years there was always something to eat, and a place to sleep, for which I am truly grateful.

My grandfather Faustino instilled in me a love for work, and other positive values, especially honesty. As a result, I graduated with academic excellence.

Even with my good grades, there was no chance for me to attend high school, since my grandparents could not support me. I had no idea what I was going to do after graduation. I would have to get a job, but what could I do?

One day my aunt Jessica came to visit. First she talked to my grandparents, then to me.

“Elin, would you like to go to high school?”

“I would love to go to high school, but how can I?”

“How would you like to come and live with my family in Comayagua? If you can pass the entrance exam, we will help you through school. What do you think?”

I could hardly control myself, I was so excited. I quickly said yes, before she could change her mind.

My aunt lived with her husband and four children. My grandmother Francisca, my father's mother, also lived with them. My aunt treated me as her own son and I soon came to feel like one of the family.

After arriving in Comayagua, my aunt began to take me to church. I think she felt that I might find in God something to fill the void that my parents had left. She took me to a Bible study group near her home, and also sent me to youth meetings. As time went by I came to understand that God wanted to change me. I turned my life over to Him during a time of prayer at a retreat. He filled the emptiness that had haunted me through childhood, and made my life complete. I was 15 years old when I had that experience.

During my life at school, I was known as a good student, and I tried to be supportive of my classmates. I helped many of my fellow students, tutoring them in different classes. God gave me the ability to quickly learn things, and as a result I had the time to help my colleagues and friends; I was always ready to explain concepts to them when they did not understand something I already knew. I guess I loved teaching.

During the last year of high school, I was given excellent advice by my teacher Gliany, who motivated me to continue my higher studies at the university, especially if I had the support of my aunt. I passed the entrance exam for the National University of Honduras (UNAH) and started classes immediately after graduating from high school.

I studied Agroindustrial Engineering at UNAH in Comayagua, five years of classes. During that time, I worked in the morning and attended the university in the afternoon and evening. My aunt, from the first day I had arrived at her house, had welcomed me as if I were her son. I ate the same meals as her children, and she always motivated me to give my best to my studies.

In the university, I continued to help my fellow students by tutoring them in accounting. I also supported the UNAH admissions process with tutoring in the area of mathematics. I graduated as an Agroindustrial Engineer with honors.

Graduating as an engineer is for me, the realization of a dream that I had since childhood, in spite of being orphaned. In my home town, an outstanding Engineer who owns many properties does something very significant on Children's Day and Christmas. He gives toys to the children of the town. Receiving those toys in my childhood was very special since those were the only toys I had. When I was about 8 years old I said to myself, "One day I will be an engineer and I will do what he does, be generous." That is where the dream of being an engineer came from, and the reason for helping my colleagues and friends.

I think our dreams are realized with determination. They gave me a passion for what I want to do and have motivated me to work hard and be persistent. And never to forget God. The best thing that happened to me after the death of my parents was to meet Jesus, who filled the emptiness that was in me and gave me a new perspective on life. Without Him I would not be who I am today.