

Faith and Gen Z: Kenzie Eifert

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It's tough out there for Gen Z, [research shows](#). Mental and physical health statistics suggest a generation under [strain](#). But some graduates of Texas Baptist universities are bucking these negative trends.

Kenzie Eifert is one Gen Z example of faith's positive impact.



Effect at L.D. Bell High School. (Courtesy photo)

Eifert graduated from Wayland Baptist University in 2021 with a degree in secondary education in English. She currently teaches 10th and 11th grade English at L.D. Bell High School in Hurst.

How she ended up at Wayland “is kind of a funny story,” Eifert explained.

She was a competitive swimmer in high school and planned to continue swimming in college, too. But it was important to her to attend college at a smaller campus that provided a Christ-centered environment.

She got a scholarship to swim at Wayland, but about a month before she

was to arrive, Wayland abruptly cancelled the swim program because the coaches were moving to Colorado.

As she'd already been guaranteed a scholarship for swimming, Wayland honored the agreement for all four years. So, Eifert went to Wayland on a swimming scholarship, but didn't have to swim.

Laughing, she remarked, "God worked all that out for me."

Although at first it was heartbreaking because "you work so hard to be a college athlete," she said.

"But looking back at it, I just see how God worked through the whole situation, because I got to really enjoy my college experience and make really great friends, and not have to be so focused on a sport the whole time."

Blessing in disguise

She wouldn't have changed it. She ended up meeting her husband, Kyle, and it was a blessing in disguise, Eifert continued.

Eifert arrived at secondary education as her major and career because she comes from a family of teachers and preachers, she said. Almost everyone in her family is either a teacher, preacher or youth pastor.

Growing up, she saw her mom teach elementary school, and she always wanted to be just like her mom. Then in high school, she had an English teacher who was "the most amazing English teacher you could ask for," Ms. Harvey.



Retired Wayland President Bobby Hall presents Eifert's degree. (Courtesy photo.)

The rigor of high school English and the in-depth approach of Ms. Harvey drew Eifert's interest away from elementary toward secondary education. And she decided high school English teacher is what she wanted to be.

COVID-19 interrupted the end of her junior year at Wayland, but the pivot to online classes in the spring of 2020 went remarkably well, she said. Professors were especially helpful during distance learning. And they were easy to contact by Zoom, when needed.

By the fall semester of 2020, students were able to return to campus for in-person classes. Eifert expressed how thankful she was to be back on campus for her senior year.

How she ended up in her current position is "also kind of a funny story," Eifert said. Her principal, Mr. Belcher, had been principal at the elementary school where her mother taught and Kenzie attended when she was a child.

Eifert remembered her mom talking about how great Mr. Belcher was as a principal, "just because he had high standards, but also in the fact that he was willing to clean up trays in the lunchroom. ... He had a servant heart."

Eifert kept up with Mr. Belcher through the years because of the respect she had for him as a leader. So, when she graduated from college, she reached out to him. He was principal at a junior high at that time, but she was certified to teach middle grades, too.

He showed her around the campus, and they talked about her plans. Her plans were 100 percent to teach in the Hurst-Euless-Bedford school district, she said. She's a product of the district, her mom and aunt still worked there, and "I loved going through school in H-E-B," Eifert continued.

Belcher shared with her that he was moving up to high school to L.D. Bell the next year, which "was such a blessing from God. Because, truly, I wanted to teach high school. I didn't want to teach junior high."

She would have done it to get her foot in the door and work for Mr. Belcher, Eifert said. But she was thrilled to interview with Belcher at L.D. Bell and get the job. She loves teaching there, even though the other high school in the district is the one she went to.

An added blessing, her mom has now moved up to high school and teaches with her, right across the hall. The staff at L.D. Bell is welcoming, and she loves working with her mother.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my three years there," Eifert said.

"Teachers are kind of like police officers in that they have very interesting stories," Eifert continued.

"It's always a good profession to be in, because there's never a dull moment. You're always on your toes. Your workdays go by fast, and it's always very rewarding."

Growing up in a godly home

Eifert grew up in Watauga, at Spring Valley Baptist Church, where she and her husband attend again since moving back to the area. Her grandfather is pastor. Her uncle is youth minister, and her father is associate pastor.

Eifert credits her upbringing in a godly home for shielding her from the hopelessness many in her generation face. While Gen Z may not be known for its optimism, personally, she is a very optimistic person.

Throughout anything, her parents have taught her: “God’s going to take care of you. And you can only control the circumstances and the things that are in your control.



Kenzie and Kyle Eifert.
(Courtesy photo)

“And other than that, you just have to put it in God’s hands.”

Throughout her life, she’s seen God work. Not that she’s never had hardships, Eifert said, but things worked out for her in getting into college and having scholarships. Then she was able to go on from college straight into the career she was praying for, which is the exact career she wanted.

Apart from career, she points to God's hand in her personal life, as well. She met her husband, who she describes as "amazing," in college at Wayland. They worked through an early change in career for him with grace, and he loves what he's doing now.

Then six months ago, they had their daughter, Austyn Jane.

"There's a lot of things in life that are uncertain," Eifert said, "but the goodness of God is never one of them."

Throughout her life she's seen God's faithfulness, so she's never worried that he won't take care of her, no matter what.

Eifert acknowledged it was hard for her in college, though, when swimming for Wayland didn't work out. It's one time her faith was challenged, somewhat, because she had prayed so much about swimming in college and had had such a peace about Wayland.

At first, it was disappointing and hard to understand why things turned out the way they did, Eifert noted. But once she got there, she was able to see how God worked in that situation.



The Eiferts. (Courtesy photo)

She graduated college debt-free, made great friends, and met her husband who she “wouldn’t trade for the world.” She’s glad she trusted God and her belief that he was leading her to Wayland, even with such a big change in plans.

College in Plainview also gave Eifert the opportunity to participate in a faith community not made up of her own family. It was good for her to get to do that, she said, because it helped her take responsibility for growing her own faith.

She was able to serve in her college church, teaching Sunday school just as she had back home. But in having more ownership of her faith, she discovered her relationship with God was only going to be as good as the work she put into it.

She needed to be faithful, Eifert explained. Being at Wayland—where classes included Scripture, professors demonstrated care and prayed for students, and the whole atmosphere was Christ-honoring—supported her

independent spiritual growth.

She and her family are happy where they are and would be content to be there for many years, she said.

For more on faith and Gen Z see [Cynthia Montalvo](#), [Sarah Potts](#), and [Lauren Beal's](#) stories.