

Christian Kelly Clark free and content after final Olympics run

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PYEONGCHANG (RNS)—In 2002, Team USA Olympic snowboarder Kelly Clark, then 18, thought she had everything she ever wanted—money, fame and an Olympic gold medal.

But at another competition, she heard someone tell a young female competitor who wiped out: “It’s all right. God still loves you.”

That sent her back to her hotel room in search of a Bible. When she couldn’t find one, she found the young woman instead, who was at the same hotel, and said, “I think you might be a Christian and I think you need to tell me about God.”

That encounter, which Clark, now 34, relates in her memoir, [*Inspired: Pursuit of Progress*](#), changed her life. She became a Christian, a fact she advertises with a sticker on her snowboard that reads, “Jesus, I cannot hide my love.”

On Feb. 12, Clark qualified for the women’s halfpipe finals at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang—her fifth Olympic appearance. After three crowd-pleasing runs, she landed just out of medal range at fourth place.

Minutes later, looking back on what was to be her final Olympic appearance, it was her turn to say that it was all right.

“I just kind of did what I could, and that’s all I could do on a day like today,” she said at the bottom of the halfpipe. “I am grateful I could put down some runs today.”

Clark is public about her faith and says it helped restore her sense of fun in her sport.

“It became this thing that I was made to do and I could actually enjoy, and there was so much freedom in it because I wasn’t doing it to prove to people who I was,” she says in her book.

“Through my relationship with God I learned who I was, and was comfortable in who I was. But I’ll tell you, I’ve never had more fun snowboarding, and I’ve never been more free.”

Clark is now free to run her foundation, which brings underprivileged kids to snowboard camps, and to see what’s next. She has been snowboarding since she was 7.

“I started to understand that I didn’t get my worth from people or from the things that I did,” Clark told *Christian Sports Journal* last year.

“It was from Christ. If I hadn’t had that shift in my life, I think my world would have come crumbling down.”