

# God's Faithfulness After Loss

*Bible teacher shares after son's death*

*Story by Christmas McGaughey*

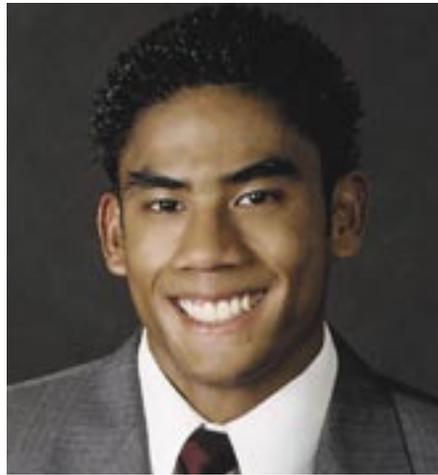
One day before his 21st birthday, former high school football standout Aaron Finfrock was tragically killed in a motorcycle accident. His death sent shockwaves through the community, the school system, and around the world. Many knew Aaron's story from the testimony his father, full-time Bible teacher Dan Finfrock, has shared with thousands over the past 20 years.

God used Aaron, born in the Philippines, to speak volumes to his adoptive missionary parents Dan and Debbie Finfrock. After Aaron's death on March 22, 2006, the Lord used Aaron's testimony to bring an estimated 200 young people and adults to Christ in his Southern California community.

## A Son is Given

Aaron's story began in January of 1985: After learning their main financial supporter would discontinue, the Finfrocks were seeking God's will for staying in the Philippines. That same day, Dan met a distressed woman by the road carrying a sickly, malnourished infant. The boy's mother had died; his grandmother and a local pastor had turned him away. The woman told Dan the baby would die soon without help. Dan brought the boy home. He and Debbie took him to a hospital, bought medicine, and stayed by his side for ten days.

As they prayed about whether to keep the child, Dan recalled: "God said He had brought us here because the church was frail, just as this child was frail." He felt God instructing them to keep the boy, nourish and care for him, and he would grow strong. It would be a sign of what the Lord would do with the Filipino church: As Dan taught pastors to teach the Word, the Christian church in the Philippines would be strengthened and flourish. "Aaron's life was a testimony of God's faithfulness to His Word," Dan recalled. God kept His promise: Aaron grew strong—even becoming a star athlete despite his small stature—and the Filipino church was strengthened. Over the decades that followed, Dan has taught inductive Bible study around the world.



**Well-known athlete Aaron Finfrock, son of Dan and Debbie Finfrock, was tragically killed a day before turning 21.**

Debbie recalled conversations with Aaron about his unique role in their lives. "He was proud of it—that God had saved him from birth and that he was a special kid." She added, "He loved the Lord."

## Hope in the Storm

"We didn't know all of the impact he had until he died," Debbie recalled. Well-known for his athletic abilities—especially football—Aaron had been featured several times in the local newspaper, and his life story had graced the front of the sports section of the *LA Times*.

Dan recalled, "As Aaron and I read the article that day, I told him, 'Do you realize how significant this is, that you're on the front page and Kobe Bryant is on the third page?'" Aaron was known for his playful side and constant, infectious smile. Dan said, "He loved to see people laugh."

Aaron's funeral drew more than 1,200 people, and nearly 100 responded to an altar call to receive Christ—including those from opposing football teams who were touched by Aaron's life. "A big-name football coach came up afterward to say God worked a miracle in his life; his life was changed that day," Dan said. Later, a memorial service was given at Aaron's Christian school; again,

nearly 100 responded to receive Christ. "Aaron didn't die in vain," Dan said. "A lot of people say, 'What a waste,' and you say, 'No, it wasn't a waste,' because God worked miracles in people's lives."

## Grieving in Christ

Losing Aaron has been "the hardest thing I've ever gone through," Dan said. But he and Debbie have kept their eyes on the Lord, trusting in His sovereignty, His purpose, and His goodness. "I had done a lot of funerals over the past 35 years," Dan said, "but I had never fully understood what people go through. I've lost a parent—but a child, you don't expect to bury them." When faced with such loss, a person has two choices: "You can either get angry, frustrated, bitter, and resentful; or you can say, 'OK, Lord, I'm looking to You. How will You be glorified through this tragedy?'"

Citing Mark 6, when the disciples were caught alone in a storm, Dan said, "Part of the problem was that they weren't looking for anyone to come; they had no hope. It can be easy in the midst of a storm to lose hope. Because our family had lived by faith for so many years, we were able to say, 'OK, God, You are in control. I'll rest in that, whatever You want to do.'"

## Comfort in Fellowship

God comforted Dan through a pastor friend who had lost a teenage daughter. "It doesn't just go away in a couple of months," Dan said. "My wife and I have learned that grief is very individualistic; we all react differently, but it's important to talk about it. Most people don't want to talk to you because they think it hurts too much, but actually the healing comes through talking it out."

Aaron is survived by older siblings Nathan, Lela, and Corrie. Dan and Debbie continue to fellowship at CC Redlands. Director of Intensive Care Ministries, Dan has resumed equipping pastors and leaders by teaching inductive Bible study seminars. ✨