



# Heartbreak & Triumph: The Shawn Michaels Story

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Winning and losing. Heels and babyfaces. Kliqs and Curtain Calls. Tearing down house shows and tearing up hotel rooms. Ladders and cages. Vacated titles and unwarranted suspensions. Works and screwjobs. Heartaches and backbreaks. Forced retirements and redemption. Rock 'n' roll and Graceland. There are two sides to every story; for Shawn Michaels, there is "Heartbreak & Triumph." World Wrestling Entertainment fans think they know "The Heartbreak Kid." He's "The Showstopper" who pushes his high-flying abilities to the limit in the squared circle, on ladders, and in steel cages. He's the company's first "Grand Slam" champion. And of course, he's forever the guy who conspired with WWE Chairman Vince McMahon to screw Bret "Hitman" Hart out of the WWE Championship in Montreal at "Survivor Series" on November 9, 1997.

But that's the side "HBK" has allowed you to see...until now. "Heartbreak & Triumph: The Shawn Michaels Story" introduces us to Michael Shawn Hickenbottom ("Everyone called me Shawn"), the youngest of four children whose "really conservative upbringing" made him shy and "afraid that people wouldn't like me if I showed who I really was." But upon discovering Southwest Championship Wrestling (SWCW) on TV one Saturday night, the preteen Hickenbottom realized instantly what he wanted to become, and years later would convince his father -- a colonel in the U.S. Air Force -- to let him drop out of college and pursue his dream.

From there, Hickenbottom fully recounts the events that led to "Shawn Michaels's" tutelage under Mexican wrestler Jose Lothario; working matches at Mid-South Wrestling under the guidance of Terry Taylor and the Rock 'n' Roll Express's Robert Gibson & Ricky Morton; flying high with Marty Jannetty as "The Midnight Rockers" in the American Wrestling Association (AWA); and how a barroom confrontation in Buffalo almost prevented the tandem from ever joining the World Wrestling Federation. "The Rockers" would drop the "Midnight" and climb to the top of a tough World Wrestling Federation tag-team division in the late 1980s, though Michaels confesses how a "fear of abandonment" stagnated his desire to participate in singles competition, pressured him into a marriage he wasn't ready for, and drove him to drinking heavily and downing pills "just to get through the day."

With the impact of some "Sweet Chin Music" (Michaels's Superkick finisher), "Heartbreak & Triumph" expresses the "sour note" that dissolved Michaels's partnership with Jannetty and started his transformation into "The Heartbreak Kid." You'll learn firsthand of the "unfair" allegation that brought about HBK's classic Ladder match with Razor Ramon at "WrestleMania X" ("I lost the match, but I made my career"); the incident in Syracuse that set the stage for Shawn's unbelievable "comeback" victories at "Royal Rumble 1996," and in the Iron Man WWE Championship match with Bret Hart at "WrestleMania XII"; and how his escalating backstage feud with Hart inadvertently built toward the formation of "D-Generation X," as well as the first-ever "Hell in a Cell" contest against The Undertaker at "Badd Blood" in October 1997.

Beyond the squared circle, Michaels clears the air about his days running with "The Kliq" -- Kevin Nash ("Diesel"), Scott Hall ("Razor Ramon"), Paul Levesque ("Triple H"), and Sean Waltman ("The 1-2-3 Kid") -- their contributions to WWE's wildly successful "Attitude" era, and the consequences of their uncharacteristic Madison Square Garden "Curtain Call" in May 1996. And for the first time anywhere, Michaels shoots completely straight about his role in "the biggest scandal in wrestling history," the infamous "Montreal Screwjob" at "Survivor Series 1997."

While reliving the crippling back injury that forced him to retire in his prime following his WWE

Championship loss at "WrestleMania XIV," Michaels credits the new loves in his life -- his second wife Rebecca, his children, and his newfound faith -- with giving him the strength to kick his habit, recover physically, and make a jubilant return to the ring at "SummerSlam 2002" (in a Street Fight against best friend Triple H, no less). Now back on top and doing what he enjoys most, the WWE Superstar regards "Heartbreak & Triumph" as the perfect means "to review my life, and attempt to figure out how I became the person I am."

## Heartbreak & Triumph: The Shawn Michaels Story Details

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## From Reader Review Heartbreak & Triumph: The Shawn Michaels Story for online ebook

### Tony Christ says

#### hesitant to read but enjoyed

I was a Bret Hart fan my whole life and struggled to start this book. After meeting Shawn a few years ago, I thought I should read this book. His story and redemption is a good read.

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### El\_kiablo says

My main takeaway from this is that dudes SUCK.

So much of this book concerns the backstage politics of wrestling - which is fair, given the fact that Shawn Michael's is known for his out-of-the-ring antics almost as much as he is known for his in-ring talent. And honestly all of the backstage stuff sounds exhausting.

There's a lot of bragging, and backstabbing, and scheming, all of it motivated by a mixture of ambition, envy, and ego. And in the right context I would find all that to be fascinating. Hell, one reason why I read books about politics and politicians is because that sort of Machiavellian action has always been appealing to me. But here it just reads as petty, and a big part of that is because a lot of it comes from a very boring source: masculine insecurity.

The wrestlers don't seem to be able to handle any sort of emotion with any level of maturity. When someone gets hurt they gossip about how they are faking it; when someone succeeds they bitch that it was unearned; when someone fails they gloat. It's all very predictable, and it isn't very nuanced; it's exactly what you would expect from a super-macho basic bitch who can't admit what they are really feeling because doing so would make them seem "weak." A Machiavellian scheme is compelling when it's dastardly; when the entirety of the scheme is "I'm going to suck up to the boss when no one is looking because I absolutely have to be the center of attention but I don't want everyone to know that I'm needy" ... well, then it is just sad.

That said, a big part of my dissatisfaction is that I read this at the wrong time of my life. I'm only reading this now because I happened to find this at a used bookstore a few days before my birthday and I happened to know that I share a birthday with ol' HBK so it seemed like a sign from the universe that now was the time to give this a chance - but I haven't watched wrestling in a decade and a half and my understanding of masculinity has really evolved since the last time that I attended a WWE event. I probably would have felt very differently about this if I had read it back when it was published, when I was still sorta nostalgic for wrestling. (I definitely would have had different feelings about the Chris Benoit chapters if I had read this when it was hot off the presses, back before he killed his entire family / himself.) But at this point in my life I don't really have much use for any sort of performative aggression, either emotional or physical, so that means I don't really have much business reading the autobiography of a man who is equal parts diva, athlete and entertainer.

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## Dave says

*Heartbreak & Triumph* wasn't the most interesting autobiography that I've read. I found Eric Bischoff and Ric Flair's far more gripping. Shawn (with the help of his ghost-writer) tended to rush over certain incidents and events that as wrestling fans, we were already aware of. The only major event where we really got his side of the story was the Montreal Screwjob. It was interesting to see his side of such a famous and important event that took place in the industry. Shawn tended to gloss over some subjects, probably as a result of it being a WWE book and due to his own Christian values. I couldn't help but feel like he spent a lot of the book trying to defend his actions throughout his career. Whether Shawn is truly sorry for the questionable things he did during the early part of his career, I do not know. I honestly don't think he'd spend so much of the book attempting to justify his actions if he was looking for atonement. I do know that Shawn was an amazing wrestler and my favourite until his - in my opinion - premature retirement in 2010. Regardless of his questionable history, I have to say I was really pleased to see that Shawn overcame his demons on meeting his second wife. His life could have gone one of two ways and I'm happy that he is in a good place as a result of his family and the Lord.

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## Tommy says

This was an insomnia book...not much different from any of the other ghostwritten wrasslin' autobiographies. good, though, to have insight into the whole Montreal Screwjob from the lynchpin. Back in the day, I had Bret's back in the whole deal. I turned the page a while back. While there was nobody in the right in the whole deal, I think Bret was more in the wrong than anybody.

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## Catherine Maddock says

The book that I am reviewing is Heartbreak & Triumph The Shawn Michaels Story. This book is about a young man named Michael Shawn Hickenbottom or also known Shawn Michaels in the WWE. When he watch wrestling for the first time when he was little he knew he wanted to be a professional wrestler. His nickname was "The Heartbreak Kid"

He got the nickname "The Heartbreak Kid" from when he was tag team partners with Marty Jannetty and they are known as the "Midnight Rockers" during a episode of Monday Night Raw when they were celebrating Shawn kicked Marty through a barber shop window and that's when he got the nickname the name "The Heartbreak Kid". One of his most famous matches was called the "Montreal Screwjob" because at a Pay-Per-View called Survivor Series when Shawn put Bret "Hitman" Hart in a submission move and the bell rang but Bret didn't tap out so it was one of the most talked about matches of all time. He had to retire in 1997 due to a back injury he had in a casket match against "The Undertaker". It was caused by when The Undertaker threw him at the casket. Then, five years later he made a shocking return at a Pay-Per-View called "Summerslam" and he beat Triple H for the World Heavyweight Championship in a Elimination Chamber Match.

I would recommend this book to anyone who is into WWE and is into Autobiography books. It tells a story about a legend in the wrestling business and one of the most respected wrestlers of all time. I think Shawn Michaels wrote an awesome autobiography book. He tells his story in 1st person Point of View and he also uses 2nd Point of View when someone else is talking. If you combined both of the Point of Views in this

book it will be interesting.

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## Hermit says

When you debate about who the best in any particular field is, it is not easy to draw a conclusion. But when it comes to in-ring pro wrestling performers, none stand in the same league as Shawn Michaels. And most people who understand wrestling, will agree that he is the best ever in ring performer.

This book gives us the chance to read Michaels's life like a novel. At no point does he deny that he has made mistakes in his life and is an imperfect individual. But he also knows how good he is in the ring. It is also an entertaining book. The writing style is good. From his childhood when he admired Ric Flair, to the Montreal Screwjob and to his marriage and rebirth as a Christian, he explains all that he went through. You also get insights into some of the famous wrestlers he has worked with, like Triple H, Kevin Nash, The Undertaker and Bret Hart; and of course, Vince McMahon.

The best thing about this book is that Shawn Michaels's story is actually a very interesting one to read. Like most stories of popular literature, it has success, downfall, mental struggle and victory in the end. Shawn finds his sanctuary inside the ring, he loves being there, but doesn't like the life outside of it and creates trouble for his peers and his boss. Eventually all his life is crushed when he has a back injury and is told that he can no longer compete in the ring. It is then that he meets a woman who likes the man that Shawn is and not the character. She introduces him to Christianity and suddenly Shawn has something worth living for outside the ring. As his back heals, he has a family and he has God in his life. Now when he comes back to the ring, he enjoys it more than ever and he is not afraid because he knows he has something outside of it as well. This time he is not a trouble maker and he is above championships. He learns to 'fly with his feet on the ground'.

Adequately called, Heartbreak and Triumph, this book is obviously a must read for Shawn Michaels fans but also for wrestling fans. And it is also a must read for those who want an insight into the pro wrestling business and see how things work. And it is even a good read for any person looking for a good read.

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## Steve says

This self-serving book was one of my least favorite wrestling auto-biography. Who are we kidding, this is the worst. Shawn spends many pages putting down many wrestlers, including Jean-Pierre Lafytte, Bret Hart, and others, while stating that he did not do this to be negative, he was just being honest. He also makes no apologies about this. Then he makes a call to his religion, being a born-again Christian. IF you ask me, that is being two-faced. I can slam people but then say that today, I am a man of God. He is such a hypocrite. I have lost respect for him. This is the first book that got me angry at the WWE performer. Read if you are a fan of hypocritical, self-serving, hide behind religion people.

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## Nicholas Bobbitt says

It wasn't nearly as good as Jericho's books. Shawn spends a lot of the time trying to defend himself rather than telling interesting stories.

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### **Patrick says**

While this wasn't a bad Autobiography, It wasn't amazing or anything either. On the subject of Bret Hart, While I understand this was his view of things, I didn't really agree with his opinions or believe what he said happened between him and Bret. Montreal 97 Survivor series will go down as the most controversial event in wwe or wrestling history. Also putting Steve Austin and Hulk Hogan on the same category when it comes to wrestling ability is absolutely wrong and quite disrespectful to Austin. Nevertheless Michaels proved that even though he has been changed and has gotten his life right with God. He's still Shawn Michaels.

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### **Big says**

Great story about a man who overcame his demons and turned to God for the answer.

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### **Matt says**

I've read a few books this year that were 5-star ratings to me because of nostalgia and my personal interests, but may not be 5-star reads for everyone. This book would fall into that category.

In this autobiography, professional wrestler Shawn Michaels recounts how he got into the wrestling business, rose to championship level in the 1990s, and then later became a Christian after his retirement. As a Christian myself, who watched professional wrestling in the 1990s, and named Shawn Michaels as my favorite wrestler of all time, this book was made for me.

It was a great walk down memory lane to have Michaels talk about wrestlers and matches that I watched as a child. It was often a quick read for me because I got swept up in the tale he was telling. A lot of the behind-the-scenes information was really fun to read.

I loved his Christian conversion story, and I'm guessing that a lot of people that knew him pre and post conversion were moved by the transformation in him.

As a father, I was also touched by what a great family man Michaels became, and loved reading the passages about how much he loves his family. In the last lines of this book, he shows that he is now focused on the right priorities.

My only complaint would be that because Michaels wasn't well-liked by his peers prior to becoming a Christian, he spent a lot of time in this book defending some of his actions (or explaining how certain things that people believed about him weren't true). Because he was defending himself so often, it started to become a little tedious.

With that one complaint aside, I really enjoyed this read, and if you liked professional wrestling in the 90s, or Shawn Michaels as a performer, I think you will like this book as well.

Because this book was released in 2005, the last wrestling event discussed in this book is WrestleMania XXI (vs. Kurt Angle).

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## Ben Phillips says

Written partly by Shawn and partly by a ghost writer, on behalf of the WWE, the book like many other wrestling memoirs charts most of the career of one of the, if not the greatest wrestlers to ever enter the squared circle. Telling from his early days growing up in Texas, to his dad loaning him the money to be trained at 19 as a professional wrestler, to his chart topping success as well as the infamous Montreal Screw job.

Interesting points:

The book gives an outline how a 'small guy' made it in a 'big man's' sport and became a legend in the process.

You get to hear another version of events regarding the infamous Montreal screw Job. It wasn't all Shawn's fault, Bret has some blame to consider and accept.

Re-visiting some of his early career matches, how he and Marty met up and created one of the most memorable tag teams the WWE has ever known.

Likes:

I like Shawn's take on the Montreal Screw Job. If you have read Bret's book and I highly suggest that you do, You can piece together what actually was going on at the time. All of the friction and the hate towards each other (between Bret and Shawn) turns out a lot of the time to be miscommunication.

I also enjoyed how he and Marty first started in the WWE and the humorous tale of being fired the very same day they walked into biggest wrestling company, they were given their marching orders after a bar incident.

Shawn being Shawn had a ton of heat with many guys and this reflects in his many opinions of many different wrestlers that he has either known or worked with over the years.

Dislikes:

Shawn's memory from certain aspects must get fuzzy from time to time. Some memorable events such as his 'relationship' with Sunny isn't mentioned within the book. (Maybe his now wife would have something to say about this fact, who knows).

He is quick to blame everyone else for the mistakes or the issues he had with wrestlers etc. Nothing is ever Shawn's fault and he spends a good proportion of the book explaining how he was always looked on as the 'bad guy'.

He mentions the Kliq as his real friends and that everyone was against them, much like the above paragraph. Everything the Kliq did was for the business and guys didn't help themselves by not liking them. When from reading ND listening to many wrestlers opinions on the Kliq, I have never heard one say that they thought the Kliq was a great asset to the WWE.

The last few chapters seem to be rushed. Either a deadline was approaching or they needed to quickly wrap up the story so far for whatever reason. The last few chapters are devoted to his wife and his religion. Now There is nothing wrong with being religious, but this is a wrestling book and Shawn again tries to paint himself as being born again and as a changed person. Something that after reading didn't convince me one bit. The content all seems forced, like the book wouldn't get released unless Shawn was able to shout from the roof tops about how he has been saved.

Conclusion:

Before reading the book I had a 'fan hatred' towards Shawn. This is mainly in part to me being a massive Bret Hart Fan (I even wanted Bret to beat the British Bulldog is '92' at Summer Slam, in my home country!!!) I did try to lay that aside, but I have listened and watched too many documentaries/shoot interviews from other wrestlers, both past and present to say that even after reading this book I still feel, if not more so now, a strong dislike towards Shawn Michaels.

To me, Shawn puts too much emphasis on trying to convince everyone he was unjustly treated and that he was always a victim. Even going so far to say that it was all Marty Jannetty's fault in the Rockers breaking up which is no where near the truth.

This is no where near the best Wrestling book by far to pick up and read, but it does give some interesting points for any wrestling fan to think over, in particular the Montreal Screw job. Pick up as it is a short read and easy read, but for that price you may be throwing the book down in an anger rage over Shawn's point of view.

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### **James Madden says**

#### **Too pg**

Its not a true tell all autobiography, its clearly watered down to appease wwe as he has a legends contract with them

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### **Anthony says**

Shawn did a great job of explaining his upbringing and his wrestling career in depth. A lot of backstage drama was written about and his passion for the sport was demonstrated.

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### **Logan Weatherly says**

Great bio. Very imformative and honest. I loved this book. I have a new respect for HBK and other wrestlers. A must read if you're a wrestling fan.

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### **Jeff Dalton says**

This book feels too sanitized. I think a better testament would have gone much deeper into the life of debauchery and drug abuse.

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## Aidan B says

From a kid who started wrestling as a tag team to a multiple world champion and considered one of the greatest of all time, he made an impact on the world of wrestling.

Shawn Michaels was born in San Antonio, Texas. He struggled in school but passed and didn't want to go into a normal job. He wanted to become a Professional Wrestler. His dad paid for him to go to wrestling school at age 19 and he also did small shows. He started tag teaming with his friend Marty Jannetty and they drove all across the U.S. just to get on small shows in front of 50+ people. They were discovered by the WWE.

There first night they came to the arena and they were strayed down by the talent in the locker room. They weren't respected but they showed everyone that they should be. They rose to the top of the tag team division. Shawn wanted to go solo and he turned on Marty.

They then had a feud against each other that lead Shawn to win the Intercontinental Championship. Kevin Nash would join Shawn's side and Michaels wrestled Razor Ramon at Wrestlemania 10 in a ladder match. Ramon won and Shawn then got beat up by Nash. Michaels wrestled Bret Hart at the next Wrestlemania for the WWE Championship and Shawn won. They had a battle at Survivor Series that same year but there was a lot going on backstage. Bret was going to work for WWE's rival company WCW and Bret didn't want to lose his championship that he beat Shawn for after Wrestlemania. So he thought he would win the match and walk out with the title but the owner of the WWE, Vince McMahon and Shawn Michaels wanted the title to stay in the WWE. So they had the match and when Michaels put Hart in Hart's submission move: The Sharpshooter, Vince came to the ring and called for the bell even though Bret hadn't tapped out. This made Bret very upset he actually spit in the face of McMahon. Later in the locker room he asked Shawn if he knew that was going to happen and Shawn said no and Bret punched Vince in the face and walked out the company. After this he joined Triple H to form Denigration X the tag team and they were the hottest thing in the WWE other than Stone Cold Steve Austin. They held the Tag Team Championships and were known for their comedy and in-ring skills.

Shawn held the title until Wrestlemania the next year, where he lost it to Stone Cold. Shawn was injured going into this match and he had to retire. He found God in the four years he was away from the company. He came back in 2002 after Vince asked him to do one more match against Triple H. Triple H was in the ring when Shawn returned and they said they were reforming DX. Then Triple H hit Shawn with a Pedigree(his finisher). This made them fight at Summerslam 2002 where Shawn won. They found out from this match that he could wrestle more so he was in the first ever Elimination Chamber match with Kane, Rob Van Dam, Chris Jericho, Triple H, Booker T, and himself. He won the match by pinning Triple H to win the World Heavyweight Championship.

He then faced Triple H at Armageddon and lost the title. At Wrestlemania the next year Shawn faced Triple H and Chris Benoit for the title and Chris won. The next year he faced Kurt Angle in what lots of wrestlers and fans have said is the best Wrestlemania match of all time. During his career he was hot headed but when he was injured he found God and stopped using pain medication. He became The Greatest Wrestler of All Time.

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## James says

Interesting to get the other side of Montreal. Wonder if we'll ever get the truth?

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## Chris Ioannou says

Naturally subjective rating considering Shawn Michaels is, to me, was and still is the best in ring performer in the business.

I feel HBK's life can be summed up in to two parts; that is, before and after finding religion, because he seems like a completely different man when he found religion (2001, I think it was?). He looked so at peace and genuinely enjoyed what he did in the square circle, compared to the man who didn't seem to care much about other people other than himself.

Furthermore, I feel that Shawn has written an honest a wrestling biography as one could hope to see, which made it all the more exciting for me to read!

The only qualm I have with this book is, he was still wrestling when this book ended (Last entry that relates to anything in wrestling was 2006 if I remember rightly). HBK retired in 2010, so there was the missing chapters like thoughts on retirement, wrestling with Taker at WM 25 and 26, inducted in to the Hall of Fame etc etc

Also, D-Generation X would have just reformed in 2006. I don't know if this book offers Shawn's insights in to the reformation, seeing as HBK felt like he had to be a lot more responsible for some of his actions?

Nevertheless, a good read from what sounds like a great guy!!

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## David Santos says

<http://www.davidasantos.com/2011/12/b...>

A great book. One of my favorite wrestlers ever from the 1990's. I was a fan of all fans. I would dance to his music, collect magazine covers. I loved his ring gear, music, attitude and humor (especially in DX) I've watched several of his DVD's but this is the first time I read his book. I learned a lot about HBK. One can argue that he is still cocky in this book, but one can not deny what he does in the ring. The fact that he put John Cena over...many times is a reason to be a fan. he jobbed to some who he shouldn't have.

Anyways some great insight into his life and how things got started in WWE how he first met many of his buddies, the formation of factions, issues with Marty. Drugs, the parties. Everything is told through Shawns eyes and he takes his time writing it giving us a detailed story. And then there's Bret Hart. After years I was finally able to hear the real story of what happened in Montreal. I felt the stress of Shawn getting to me. Much credit to him, I could never have lived with the guilt.

There is a quote in this book that couldn't be any more truer and showed me that hey Shawn really does know the business and what's going on today: "That's one of the problems with the business now, we put titles on guys hopping that it's going to get them over. You need to get over first, than get the title." The IC

title has lost its meaning because it never gets defended, same with the US title. They slap the belt on someone for months and months but never have the defend it, in hopes that the belt will get the individual over. it fails.

I really liked his transformation into a Christian. I could tell he was different when he returned in the mid 2000's He really did act like a new born person. And I am glad. you look at the long list of wrestlers lives that drugs have taken, Shawn could have been one of them hadn't God brought his wife into his life and prayed so much for him.

"..Continue praying to the lord and talking to him. reading his word and letting him talk to you. You can't have a relationship with somebody once a week at church. it's an everyday thing.."

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