



# Alabama's Seahawk, **SHAUN ALEXANDER**

realized how that was the way it was supposed to be done.” Alexander also credits his mom with nurturing his faith. “My mom emphasized to me that in a relationship with Christ there are triumphs and victories and trials and struggles but that is how relationships are.”

When Shaun Alexander realized he was blessed with an incredible athletic talent he did not forget whom the blessing came from. As a freshman at the University of Alabama, Alexander made scripture memorization a priority. The first verse he chose was Psalm 37:4, “Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.” Alexander memorized the verse right before the ominous Alabama vs. LSU game in which he ran 291 yards for 4 touch downs in a little more than a quarter of the game! “The first time I ever gave God a shot at my life, He showed me what He could do. After the game my friends said, ‘that’s what He’s talking about,’” smiles Alexander. It was just the beginning of an outstanding college football career that led to professional football opportunities.

Alexander admits being the 19th pick in the 2000 draft did not seem at first to be a blessing. “During the draft I felt disappointed because I was not one of the first draft picks. Three running backs were picked in front of me. When the 19th pick comes up and it’s the Seahawks I’m thinking wow, I’m going way across the country. Why am I going there?”

It did not take Alexander long to answer his own question. He performed well on the football field and discovered a mission field. “Seattle is the lowest church going state in the country. I have an opportunity to have a huge impact on a lot of kids lives right now and I think that is going to glorify God’s kingdom.... You sit back and look at what God’s done and you can see a perfect puzzle being put together

**Shaun will marry his fiancée Valerie May 18 in his hometown of Florence, Kentucky.**



**At the University of Alabama, Alexander became the school’s all time rushing leader and achieved academic All-SEC honors.**

**Winning on the field and in the game of life**— that is Shaun Alexander. The University of Alabama star running back and Seattle Seahawks’ striking newcomer lives his life in response to a series of blessings. “The back bone of everything is being blessed and going out and blessing others.”

The blessings begin in the town of Florence, Kentucky— just across the river from Cincinnati. Born the second son of Carol and Curtis Alexander, Shaun Alexander saw early in life the importance and priority given to helping others. “My mom is just an awesome person. In my neighborhood growing up, if someone had a problem, they went to my mom. If they needed a hug, they went to my mom. If they needed lunch money, they went to my mom. My mom is such a person that gives of herself and I

**Alexander begins spring practice this month as he prepares for his third season with the Seattle Seahawks.**

so I can do some damage to Satan's work." It was also in Seattle God answered Alexander's prayer of finding a wife. A Seahawk teammate introduced him to Valerie, a former college basketball player for Seattle Pacific. "I heard about this awesome, virtuous woman of God who was also gorgeous... I meet Valerie and there is no doubt in my mind that God sent me to Seattle!"

Alexander did not leave his love for Alabama behind. He and his brother Duran started the Shaun Alexander Family Foundation two years ago in Tuscaloosa. Since then, they have hosted dinners, golf tournaments, and softball games to raise money for charities in Alabama such as the Rise Program at the Stallings Center in Tuscaloosa and John Croyle's Big Oak Ranches in Gadsden and Springville. "During my years at Alabama I went to the Rise Program and the Big Oak Ranch. Coach Stallings would say, 'When you are feeling bad about yourselves,



why don't you go visit one of these places and really see what a problem is.' I realized we whine about simple stuff. You might be upset with your parents for not picking you up from school on time, what if they said they were going to drop you off for good?"

Through the foundation Alexander also feeds needy Alabama families at Thanksgiving and at Christmas. In addition, he sets aside time to personally lead youth rallies in Alabama, Kentucky and Seattle.

"I want to let young people know that struggles and temptations are a part of the walk but it is Christ like not to give into them. You have to decide 100 percent if you are going to give yourself to Christ. If it's everything except this, it's not 100 percent...I think the biggest thing is to get kids to decide who they are with and once they do that, big things can happen."

Whether he is leading a youth rally, raising funds to help families or in Seattle preparing for his next NFL football game, 24-year-old Shaun Alexander is running to make a difference. He smiles and says, "Don't miss the blessing of helping other people's lives. It always comes back."

— Laurie Stroud



**Shaun Alexander with his older brother Duran who helped him start the Shaun Alexander Family Foundation based in Tuscaloosa.**

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