

How Do You Know the Meaning of Your Life?

We finished going through the song a second time, and I asked if she had a voice teacher. When she said no, I asked if I could make a few suggestions before we ran through her solo again.

“I think you need to sing these two words loud and forcefully because of what they’re saying,” I said.

“Well, I don’t really know what this song means,” she said. “It’s hard to know what dynamics to use when I don’t get the lyrics.

So we talked through the story the songwriter was telling. It was sad, and I made a mental note to bring Kleenex to this district music festival performance.

As this young woman needed to interpret the song she was singing, so she would know how to perform it, so we need to interpret the story we are in, so we know how to live.

Paul David Tripp, in *Instruments in The Redeemer’s Hands*, says this:

We need a framework for generating valid interpretations that help us respond to life appropriately. Only the words of the Creator can give us that framework.

Yesterday I received this brief email from the editor of my book: “I sent Gretchen the manuscript.” That means there are only a few short steps left, for my book to be assembled by the publisher and ready for purchase. Soon I will be able to say to you, “Here it is.” Then yesterday afternoon a friend shared one of my blog posts, and so many people visited my website that it crashed several times in the afternoon.

How do I interpret a day like that?

The words “editor” and “publisher” could make me feel puffed up—like I am really something. A crashed website could make me feel like I have arrived.

Now you are valuable. I hear this tempting whisper in my ear.

How should I interpret these experiences I have as a writer?

I think of this passage of Scripture I memorized many years ago, in which Jesus gives me an exact framework for my writing life:

Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, “Come along now and sit down to eat?” Would he not rather say, “Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink”? Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, “We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.” (Luke 17:7-10 NIV)

Who am I, if I have a book being published and a popular blog post?

An unworthy servant.

Is the Lord applauding me and thanking me for my writing work? No. He is telling me to get busy on the next tasks at hand for the day. I am to continue, in humility, whatever duty he has put in front of me. Time to empty the dishwasher.

Paul David Tripp goes on to say:

We need God’s perspective to interpret the facts of our existence.

We all interpret what is happening in our lives, but are the stories we tell ourselves correct?

Now I ask—do you understand the story you're in? How are you explaining your experiences? How do you know the meaning of your life? What does the Bible have to say about your situation, your relationships, and your value?