

Moms: Finding Satisfaction When You Feel Invisible

Sometimes, it seems as if motherhood is about settling for less.

We want to stay in shape, but we don't have time, so we settle for buying an aerobics video and working out with it three times before we consign it to obscurity in the DVD cabinet.

We'd like to travel the world, but we settle for going to the grocery store by ourselves.

We want to develop our intellectual abilities, but we wouldn't be able to get to a class, much less fit study time into our schedule or pay tuition. So we settle for memorizing the drive-thru orders for four different children at each of three different restaurants.

We're frustrated, particularly when we feel we have a gift or ability in a certain area but no opportunity to develop that talent. We chafe under the limitations imposed on us by our circumstances.

I understand that feeling. I've been there too, wishing I could further develop the area of my gifting. I love the feeling of accomplishment that comes when I've done well and performed at a high level. But right now, furthering this interest is simply not possible due to, well, life.

I was thinking about this the other day. I felt frustrated that I wasn't able to progress to the level of which I am capable. Sure, I'm working on the subject at a lesser level now, and I'm doing my best at it, but it's not as good as my "real" best. At least, that's how I saw it at the time.

I was wrong.

What God taught me when I was longing for what it's not possible to have right now is this: there are two kinds of best. The first kind involves doing the best of which I am capable, considering my God-given abilities and interests. The second means doing the best of which I'm capable, considering the circumstances God has placed in my life.

The first kind is what I had wanted, what I had thought would excite me. The second kind, I learned, is what will satisfy me.

I know it can be disappointing not to be able to pursue an interest or skill. Sometimes, it's extremely disappointing. But we make a terrible mistake if we assume that doing what God has said is not possible right now would be more satisfying than what He has said is possible.

We're wrong if we think that doing our best at what we want to be called to would be more satisfying than doing our best at what we are called to.

How can I say this? How can I claim that pursuing distinction at a once-a-week class is more satisfying than excelling at full-time study? Or that making an awesome PBJ sandwich can be more fulfilling than going to culinary arts school?

Because if God's design for your life right now is sandwiches made to the specifications of a 2-year-old, you will experience His presence more fully when you get out the peanut butter than you would by going beyond His boundaries and enrolling in school. And that's what satisfaction is: God Himself. Not better skills, increased knowledge, or more excitement. God Himself.

It's not wrong to want to learn more or pursue a favorite interest. Not at all! The problem comes when we assume that God has given us the less-satisfying portion and denied us what would really make us happy. If that's what we think, we're finding happiness in our circumstances rather than in

God's presence.

Where do you find your happiness? In participating in things you enjoy? Or in being in God's presence? If it's the former, you'll be disappointed every time things don't work out or God says no. If it's the latter, you'll never be disappointed. Ever. Because His presence is always available to you, regardless of the circumstances.

This is what Jesus was talking about when He told the Samaritan woman that she should be asking for living water, not just the regular stuff in the well. He was making the point that earthly things do not ultimately satisfy, but that God's presence does.

Do you want certain circumstances, or do you want God Himself? Do you spend more time praying that He will give you certain things so that you can be satisfied? Or do you spend more time praying that He will give you Himself?

For me, it's often the "circumstances" option. But I don't want that to be the case. I want God's presence to be more important to me than anything else in life. I want to draw my satisfaction from a well that will never run dry. I want to experience true fulfillment, not just temporary excitement.

I pray this is what you want too.

Hebrews 13:5—Be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Psalms 142:5—I cry to you, O LORD; I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living."

John 4:10—Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

*Adapted from **Megan Breedlove's** blog, *Manna for Moms*. Megan is*

the author of Well Done, Good and Faithful Mommy and Manna for Moms: God's Provision for Your Hair-Raising, Miracle-Filled Mothering Adventure (Regal Books.) She is also a blogger and a stay-at-home mom with five children.