

When You're Pulled Between God's Call and Life

Yesterday, I filmed some devotions to go with my new book. It was a pretty involved process since we needed lots of them and each one requires several takes. By the time I fell into bed last night, the whole experience was still buzzing around my brain to the degree that I dreamt about it. And in my dream, as soon as I was done filming a video, the tech crew would remove it from the camera and pour it into a feeding tube.

Now, I'm no dream analyst, but it would seem my work life and my home life are colliding.

This dueling focus between my investment in the career that I love and the man and family I adore is a battlefield for me. I have chosen to stay committed to work and writing during Steve's illness for a variety of reasons, but the main one is: I feel certain this is the will of God for my life. I know many spouses who quit their jobs and devote themselves entirely to the care of their beloved. Others walk away from the marriage entirely (and I have to assume that's a result of preexisting issues in the relationship and not just because of the diagnosis.) This decision to embrace both caregiving and career is the most difficult thing I've ever done and some days I feel my toes dangling over the edge of that great and terrible cliff called *burnout*. Some days I feel certain God has overestimated me. So when I want to call in sick to my life, I have to keep reminding myself of a few primary truths and they are thus:

1. The call of God comes bundled up with the resources we need to accomplish that call. He equips us in the same way we equip our kids with the right backpack on the first day of school.
2. I don't have to do this perfectly to do it well. Screw

ups are part of the landscape and that's okay. In a season of life when the watching world is being so generous with their approval (i.e. we hear a lot about how inspiring we are), I am living in undeniable proximity to my own inadequacies. My dumb mistakes and obnoxious self-centeredness smack me in the face on a daily, sometimes hourly, basis. It is built-in humility. And I'm grateful because I am old enough to have seen the profound impact humility makes on those who hope to change the world.

3. He will not be in debt to me. I can easily play the martyr ("I just give and give and give...") but sometimes when it's quiet and I'm surveying the blessings our great Creator has piled on my life, all I can do is whisper, "You're outrageous." His love has been lavished over me in handfuls and heaps and I will never be able to pay Him back. He will not be in debt me. Not ever.

So, I'm thankful today to serve the One who came to bring ever-increasing levels of peace into our collision-course existence. He is God at the intersection of too much and not enough, of sorrow and celebration, of beauty and ashes. He is God at the corner of Saturday work and Sabbath rest. He is. And we are His.

Bo Stern is a blogger and author of *Beautiful Battliefields* (NavPress). She knows the most beautiful things can come out of the hardest times. Her Goliath came in the form of her husband's terminal illness, a battle they are still fighting with the help of their four children, a veritable army of friends, and our extraordinary God. Bo is a teaching pastor at Westside Church in Bend, Oregon.