

Why You Don't Have to Be Perfect to Become a World Changer

Uniqueness is a powerful thing. It's a wonderful thing. The thing we often think is a liability to the world is the very thing God can use to change it.

Right now, focus on the greatest liability you think you have. Not smart enough, not talented enough, not creative enough. Stop right there!

If you feel disqualified—in any way—to be used by God, then you need to know right now that your feelings of inadequacy are actually a qualification of usefulness. The Bible is a book of misfits. It's what intrigues us, inspires us and allows us to see God at work through people who were totally unqualified. We can often identify with people's failures even more than their success.

Everything about my life screams, "Misfit!" The neighborhood where I pastor had been abandoned for years. I came right after the 1992 Los Angeles riots, so things were still very intense. Also, many churches had moved out of the urban community for the safety of the suburbs, creating a void in the community. At any given moment there were more people in the bathroom at the church my father pastored in Phoenix than there were in my entire church on a great day.

"God, I can't do this! I can't relate. I don't have any experience with the needs of this community. Why did you send me to the one place where I have no foundational knowledge of what to do?"

I hated that about my life then.

“Why did you send me, God, to a place where I clearly don’t understand the culture, poverty or community?”

But then God began to speak to me: “I didn’t call you to the inner city to be relevant, but to be revolutionary. You can honor Me in a greater way by being simply available than if everything came easily for you.”

When I showed up in this city of millions, I had it all planned out. I would preach great sermons and people would come to hear me. If I could just do things perfectly, God could use me to build a great church. There was only one problem. God never wanted that. He didn’t want my perfection. He wanted my availability.

I struggled for years trying to figure out if momentum would ever come my way. Have you ever felt that way? That the wind is constantly in your face, in the face of your family and in the face of the vision God has given you? It’s a dangerous place, a sad place and it can sometimes feel endless. It took me five years being a failure of a pastor to realize that God never wanted my perfect plans. He wanted me, the imperfect me.

Brokenness is the greatest gift we can give God. It’s a gift that God can work with; it’s a gift that moves His heart.

One day I stopped trying to figure out how to *crack the code* of reaching a city and realized it was time for God to *crack me open* and reveal the beautiful, rough edges that were in me. What I found was beyond astonishing. I began to discover that embracing the unknown in myself was a wonderful thing that unleashed creativity and vision.

Embracing our misfit status is realizing we don’t have to be perfect to be used—just willing to be uniquely who God made us. Life doesn’t have to be predictable to be wonderful.

Often there are quirks about our lives that we see as weaknesses or even embarrassments. Maybe it’s a big

personality that dominates a room; maybe it's a quiet personality in the midst of a big room. Maybe it's a discouraging past that won't let you go; maybe it's a future that seems elusive. Maybe it's taking on a task that is greater than your understanding.

In my case, it was being a kid from Phoenix who had no clue how to reach the cold, urban streets of Los Angeles. One night changed all that. I decided I would give God my inabilities and allow Him to reshape this flawed kid with no street ministry experience. I presented my clueless self to God, and in the middle of rock bottom I discovered rock bottom is not where people go to die, but where people go to be recreated.

Suddenly I didn't have to figure out how to get through my limitations. I decided being out of my comfort zone was perfectly fine. The greatest prayer I prayed was, "God, use this kid who has no idea what he's doing."

God delighted in the fact that He had a young man who didn't have it all together but was flexible enough to allow God to send him on a journey that would radically change his life. When you feel that all you have left is to rely upon God, get ready for the journey to take you anywhere the Master chooses.
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