

Why You May Be Settling for Less Than God's Best

We all go through difficult situations in life that God uses to test us and develop His character in us. These experiences are so important because we need to grow spiritually before God can promote us in His plans for our lives.

Some tests are things we go through to help us become secure and confident in Christ, rather than ourselves and other people. It's amazing how we look for that nod of approval from everybody. We ask questions like, "Am I OK? Do I look OK? Is everybody happy with me?"

But we shouldn't need compliments from people to get us through the day without feeling bad about ourselves. It's absolutely miserable to be an insecure person with no confidence. And it's dangerous because the fear of man can keep you from your destiny.

The enemy will use people to rule you, manipulate you, control you and steal all of your peace and joy until you realize that you're not supposed to be like everybody else. God created us to be unique, wonderfully made individuals, and He has a unique, wonderful plan for each of our lives.

When you come to the point where you don't feel the need to impress anybody, then you're finally free to be everything God created you to be!

When I first started teaching the Bible, I didn't know how insecure I was. At that time, I taught a home Bible study every Tuesday night, and about 25 people came. God gave me this opportunity to teach a small group in the beginning because I had too many problems in my own life to minister on a larger scale. And while I was teaching them, God was teaching me.

For five years, I held this weekly Bible study until I clearly heard God speaking to my heart that I should stop because He was preparing me for something new in His plan for me. I had a dream in my heart to do bigger things for God, and I knew it was His will for me.

Then, for the next year, I did absolutely nothing in ministry. It was like God set me on a shelf, and I didn't understand why He was holding me back. That was such a hard year for me! And I got to the point where I wondered, *Did I really hear from God? Does He really have a call on my life to teach His Word?*

I would look at people preaching on TV and think, "I can preach better than they can." And that was one of my problems. See, it's not what we can do that gets God excited about using us, it's our attitude—having a pure motive in our heart—that matters to Him. God is always looking on our hearts, not our talents and abilities. (See 1 Sam. 16:7; Ps. 24:3-4.)

During that year, I decided that all of my dreams of full-time ministry were just a figment of my imagination, and I just needed to settle down and be a "normal" woman. My neighbor was a great housewife and did things like sew her family's clothes and grow tomatoes. So I tried to be like her, but my family couldn't wear the clothes, and my tomatoes rotted before I harvested them.

That was one of the most frustrating years of my life, and it was also one of the best years of my life! I grew so much as God used the challenges and frustrations to teach me that I could not be somebody else. I had to be the woman He had created me to be and live my life the way He wanted me to live it.

And you need to know the same thing about yourself. God wants you to feel good about yourself and be comfortable in your own skin. In order to get there, you will have to go through some hard things.

For example, if you're going to become secure in your identity in Christ, then you'll have to learn to deal with people who reject you. Everybody is not going to love you or like you, or think you're cute, smart and wonderful all the time. This is true for every single person on earth.

God wants you to know who *He* says you are. If you don't know it already, I'll tell you what that means: You're an imperfect, messed-up, beautiful, amazing child of God whom Jesus died for (John 3:16-17). You are the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17, 21). You have gifts, talents and abilities that God has given you, and He has a great future planned for you (Jer. 29:11).

Refuse to settle for anything less than God's plan for your life. And determine to take every test that comes your way, knowing that each one will make you more confident and free to be the wonderful person He created you to be!

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