



Take this Job and Love it

by Mary Southerland

Our son graduated from college over a year ago with a business degree and the plan to build his own company from the ground up. Jered has been a gifted carpenter since childhood when he built his first “house” in our garage. Completely on his own, Jered gathered every scrap of plywood he could find and created a 10’ x 10’ clubhouse that was the envy of every kid in the neighborhood. When I asked him how he had known what to do, he said, “I just see it in my mind.” I knew right then that his life work was to build. Today he is a master carpenter who recently said, “It is so awesome to get up every morning and love to go to work!”

Do you love to go to work? Do you love being in ministry? Many people never experience satisfaction or success in their work because they are in the wrong work. God is the source of all our skills, gifts, abilities, and talents and he wants us to use them to the best of our ability.

Dan has served as a youth pastor in several churches over the years. As I served beside him, I gained a wealth of knowledge as I watched teenagers try on different identities like they tried on new clothes, discarding some in a matter of weeks, wearing others until they no longer fit. I will never forget the lesson I learned from Laura, a beautiful, talented girl in our congregation. She had trouble finding jobs and rarely succeeded at any job she actually landed. I could not understand how such a wonderful girl could be so clueless about herself – until I met her parents.

It was painfully obvious that Laura’s negative opinion of herself was firmly rooted in her parent’s negative opinion of their daughter. Her room was a disaster because a clean room was important to her mother. Her grades were disgraceful because good grades were important to her father. She only dated guys who treated her like dirt because...well, she believed that she was dirt. When Laura graduated from high school, I invited her to lunch to celebrate.

Over lunch, Laura confided in me that all she really wanted to do was to graduate from high school, attend a local beauty school to become a hair stylist, and maybe one day open her own beauty shop. I was so excited for her, because I could see her doing exactly that! Girls flocked to Laura for help with their hair and make-up because she was so good at it.

When I asked her what was keeping her from that dream, tears streamed down her face as she said, “My parents think that being a hair stylist is a ridiculous idea. If I choose to attend a beauty school instead of a four-year-college, I have to move out and do it all on my own.” When I offered to talk to her parents, she shook her head and said, “It won’t do any good.” She was right. I did talk with them, and nothing changed. But Laura did.

Laura moved out of her parents’ home and in with a man who introduced her to drugs and alcohol. Years later, I heard that she was living on the streets to support her habits. I have often wondered what would have happened if Laura’s parents had supported the gifts and abilities God had given their daughter instead of holding her hostage until she paid the ransom of bowing to their plan for her life.

Finding the special job God wants you to do

In John 3:27, we find a simple but powerful truth, “God in heaven appoints each person’s work” (NLT). God gives each person a special job to do. John explained that because God had given him his work, he had to continue it until God called him to do something else.

Amos raised sheep until God called him to be a prophet proclaiming God’s message to others. If you are following God’s blueprint for your life, your job is part of your ministry plan and you are successful. God can and will work through you to do extraordinary things, no matter how “ordinary” your occupation may be in the eyes of man. Over the years, we have often talked with our children about a life plan. One of the things we always tell them is that if they want to be successful and contented in life, they need to discover what they love to do and then find a way to get paid doing it.

It helps to take a brutally honest inventory of your natural gifts, talents, and abilities – knowing that they are from God and are all part of your life plan. Ask those who know you best for their opinions and perspectives. Make a career choice based on persistent prayer and daily obedience to God. Discover what brings you the most satisfaction and do it. Life here is short. Do not waste it doing something you were not created to do. Choose your work carefully.

We were created by the One who knows us best and loves us most. There are no accidents with God. He wanted, loved, and planned us since before the world began. He had a plan in mind and lovingly, purposefully created us in response to that plan.

I know there are days when the will of God seems completely wrong and we simply do not understand. We are treading water in the storm-tossed sea of life, desperately longing to see God walking toward us on the treacherous waves. It is in those shadowed moments that we must choose to trust the Plan Maker even though our faith is small.

God’s ways are higher than our ways. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. One day, every one of our question marks will be yanked into exclamation points as we see that his plan for our life and work is perfect.



Mary Southerland is the Stress-Buster, helping women manage stress and experience joy in their daily lives. A former women’s ministry director, Mary now serves as a women’s ministry motivator, working “in the trenches” with pastors’ wives and ministry leaders. Mary also encourages and motivates thousands of women through her speaking ministry, her online Bible study, [Light for the Journey](#) and as a member and co-founder of [Girlfriends in God](#).

Mary’s books include: [Hope in the Midst of Depression](#), [Sandpaper People](#), [Escaping the Stress Trap](#), and [Experiencing God’s Power in Your Ministry](#). She also writes for [Crosswalk.com](#) and is a frequent radio and TV guest. In September 2005, she and her husband, Dan, started The Next-Level Church in Charlotte, NC.

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