

A Choice of Commissioning

Revelation at the lunch table
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Perhaps the most curious and earliest memory of my becoming yielded to a foreign land was the day I acquiesced to hold sword, shield, and helmet, as I joined my four-year-old son in his imaginary war at the lunch table.

You see, it was the cucumber bitten into a spear, and the bite out of the peanut butter sandwich that became the perfect finger hold for a trigger, the barrel dripping with the glisten of honey as all the natural sound effects were gleefully voiced over his afternoon inventions. I realized that day, that my first-born son was more prepared for the components of his lunch to be the building supplies for his next piece of weaponry, than to be what fueled him till dinner.

As his fascination for squirrelling weapons cued up from one day to the next, my distaste for his pleasantries grew ever fuller until that very day... that day that God prompted me to see it differently. He helped me to see that there may be a piece of my own success to be discovered, if I were to join my son in his world of battle. What if? What if I joined him?

That was the moment my eyes were lifted from what was known and safe, to the revelation and adventure of foreign territory. Though shocked by my own acceptance of seeing my son's conduct from this new perspective, I lingered with it as a seed of truth was sown in my mind. By choosing to join my son on this battlefield of fertile soil - where my lessons in table manners were uniquely challenged - I was about to be strengthened by one of the most victorious trainings in all of my parenting. ***By joining my son in his imaginary reality, I was accepting the invitation to learn that God created boys to fight for what is right, to press on to***

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the win, and to lead others in overcoming.

By learning to validate the boyish curiosity God had forged within my son, I was earning the privileged position to teach him valuable truths. This was also an opportunity to gain insight into my own curiosities, and the personal growth this exchange would offer.

Though quite foreign to me, it was at that lunch table that I partnered with the Lord's invitation, and accepted my commissioning to a territory that over the next twenty years would train me in the art of raising boys to be men.

Days like these are remembered for the way they exhausted me, and still sometimes do. They turn me inside out. They wreak havoc on my own thoughts for what is nicely researched and planned into both my calendar, and my personal quest. But days like these are still a reminder of my mission that God has made me with gifts, and passions, and talents to be shared. And only by leaning into them does He acquaint me with the magnitude of their significance, as I imprint the lives of my very own... that they, too, would know the rewards of advancing His Kingdom through faithfully walking out their callings.

God's revelation was with me at my lunch table commissioning in 2002! That very afternoon I began to note some inspiration about how we might playfully reenact Ephesians 6 as it details godly warfare. Documenting my ideas, I recognized the very process I would soon use to award a full suit of armor to my four-year-old son. He and I, together, would learn to speak God's Word over each piece of the *armor of God* in his warring and winning hands. It was a WIN! In the years to come, I shared this Armor of God study with his younger brother, as well as with his youngest brother's three-year-old boys' playgroup. It was then that our home became the marching grounds for a band of costumed, weapon-wielding three-year-old warriors singing "BE STRONG IN THE LORD" – new words applied to a familiar tune. As I think back to those little boys living the glory of the Lord's instruction...I know a deep thankfulness for the interception of God's invitation

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that equipped me to set aside my lessons in table manners for another day.

Children have much to benefit from watching the adults who influence them – especially when we’re struggling. Just as we desire that they be forged over the fire for greater purpose, so must we subject ourselves to the same standards. That’s the essence of bearing fruit, isn’t it? Walking at their sides, even yielding our own desires to join their journeys, we earn the opportunity to be influential in their lives. This, dear ones, is the hope of life that often gains us clearer focus and renewed strength for our *own* journey forward.

It’s been upon these foreign soils where I have discovered that the fullest expression of the person you and I have been created to embody, comes from wanting that same life for others. Loving others as we have been loved ourselves. ***Even while aiming to succeed in my own cause of living a life worth living well, I’m discovering that it’s in the times we partner with others far different from ourselves that God cultivates our most significant sensibilities.*** His divine direction transformed those years of my mothering our boisterous band of young brothers into the three purpose-filled adult sons we now know ~ walking humbly at each other’s sides, while they love one another so well. ***Each one of their three extraordinary perspectives and missions continue to train me in the act of defeating, the rules of winning, and the victory that is ours when we step with calculated focus onto territory that has been ordained for us to conquer.***

And so, I invite you to join me in partnering with God’s divine strength as He invites us to walk into the wilderness, of unfamiliar territory where we will learn to know even greater malleability in trusting Him to shepherd us, onto the foreign lands that we have yet to conquer.

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Foreign Lands

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Deuteronomy 33:12 says this: "The one the Lord loves, rests between His shoulders."
The shoulders of the Lord are a place of spaciousness, a place where because He delights in us, He offers rescue and rest as we patiently persevere in His purposes, from a higher plane of perspective. It's been from this vantage point, that I have known my most rewarding journeys with God as I've raised my three boys to know and love Him, too.

I am poured out like water.
All my bones are out of joint.
As the Psalmist said, my strength is dried up.

My life as I knew it
is completely laid down.

I am stripped of all my being.
The only part left of me, I feel, is doing.
I have blended in with the vacuum,
the Diaper Genie, the dishwasher,
the bottle of Windex, the mop.

*A purposeful and sacred trade ~
the Lord reminds me,
as three of your very own call you Mommy.*

Mothering three boys under five
has cracked, chipped and warped
what I knew to be my comfort zones.

Away for another day
are my starched linen blouses
with covered buttons,
and cuffed herringbone trousers
now traded ~
for worn workout bottoms
and a faded, untailored tee,
accented by the one piece -

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the one redemptive string of pearls -
routinely clasped around my neck reminding me...
that extraordinary beauty results
when irritation embraced
becomes a treasured resource.

What am I, Lord? Who am I?
How did I get here?

Then the still small voice:

*My Beloved Daughter, you are Mine,
and I have offered this season
to muddy your own comforts,
that you would know what I have for you.
Did I ever promise you comfort or ease,
or beautiful clothes for this journey?
I have selected you to be a missionary,
in a foreign land.
You are My disciple maker.*

*This is a privileged state, dear daughter of Mine;
a season of plateau, a turning point.
For I have longed for you to travel
a much simpler road.*

*You will keep pace with Me,
as you let go of your own ideals
and the places where you seem to think
your comfort is found.*

*Could it be, that the very cause of your cry
is the material I will use to form the beauty*

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*you will come to know around you?
I have foreign lands for you to travel.
And if you are to go any farther,
you will choose the turn upward
as you open yourself to the road I have for you -
learning to see as I do,
from the constant movement and curiosity held
in the three-foot perspective of your disciples.*

*As you go,
I will lead you and be your Comfort.*

I am utterly challenged to Your call, Lord.
I know in each of my discomforts,
You are revealing purpose.
One by one, each discomfort is covered
with Your perfect redemption.

Mothering three boys under five,
I am teaching them all I know of You.
I am making disciples.

And as I go, You will comfort me...
That I,
may comfort them.

Where You lead, I will follow.
Being more and doing less.
Show me the beauty, Father,
of foreign lands.

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