

Life Affirmation 2 - Beauty and Value

My life is of great beauty and infinite value. God has a plan for my life that is meaningful, purposeful and joyful. There is a work for me to do today that will bless others and give me deep satisfaction.

In the Bible's story of creation, it says that **"God looked over all He had made, and He saw that it was excellent in every way"** (Genesis 1). We are all part of God's creation, made **"in God's own image"** and **"patterned after Himself"** (Genesis 1). God is pleased with how each of us is made and considers each one of us highly valuable. Our value is not due to our wealth or our education or our social standing. We are valuable because we bear the image of the Creator.

God is perfect. God loves beauty. God gifted the finest artists throughout history with vision and skill to paint and sculpt beautiful pieces that awaken appreciation and imagination in us. God is the ultimate artist and He has marvelously expressed that beauty in us. With care and love and attention to the finest details, God crafted us. **"[God], You made all the delicate inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb...Your workmanship is marvelous...You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book...How precious are Your thoughts about me, O God! They are innumerable! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand.** (Psalm 139). God has even counted the hairs on our heads (Matthew 10).

God's attention and artistic skill did not end the day we were born. In the same way a weaver takes many threads and weaves them into intricate patterns for a wall hanging or a rug, so God continues to weave beauty into our world as He brings together the details of each day of our life. Every detail is recorded and God's attentive presence in each of those days is clearly seen by the vast number of times He thinks about us. One handful of sands contains thousands of grains. How many grains of sand cover every beach on earth? God's thoughts turn towards us more often than that. Which details of our life are left to chance and error? None. God is making something beautiful of our life. Bill Gaither wrote a beautiful song that reminds us of this. **Something beautiful, something good. All my confusion He understood. All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife. But He made something beautiful of my life.**

Not only does God love and value us but He also has a special plan for each one of us. He wants to bless us and use us to bless others. **"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope" ... "We are**

God's workmanship (His work of art, His masterpiece). He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things He planned for us long ago" (Jeremiah 29:11 & Ephesians 2:10).

God's plan for us is suited to our unique personality, talents and abilities. God's plan is for our lives to be meaningful, purposeful and joyful. Our task is to believe God when He says our lives are valuable and then to put our lives into His hands so He can use us for His purposes. We long for complete fulfillment and deep satisfaction. We can experience that meaning and joy only when we live surrendered to God's plan for us. When our every-day prayer is that we would know and do whatever God intends for us, then we can expect to do well and to enjoy our life. Wanting God's will is the first step towards that full life. However, satisfying joy and a sense of well-being comes only as we act in obedience to what God shows us. **In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.** (2 Timothy 2:20-21 NIV)

God's plan is that each of us will participate in work each day that blesses others and gives us deep satisfaction. There is an old saying that "idle hands are the devil's playground." How often we fill our free time and overcome our boredom by turning to our addictions and dependencies. Time can be our friend or our enemy. God wants to help us use our time wisely as we engage in fruitful ministry. That might mean looking for paid employment. It might mean becoming involved in volunteer work and offering our gifts and talents in that way. It might mean exploring what training to prepare for a work that expresses my gifts. It might mean doing something for my kids or cleaning up in my house or taking care of errands that I've been procrastinating about. It's often a combination of activities.

If I'm feeling bored and my day seems empty, I'm living my own plans rather than God's because God's plans are promised to be pleasing and good and perfect.

"Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, you will know how good and pleasing and perfect His will really is" (Romans 12:2).

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What kind of value does God place on my life?
2. What can I do to begin to change my mind about my worth as an individual?
3. How can I begin to know God's plans for my life?
4. What does it mean for me to do work that "will bless others and give me deep satisfaction?"