

# The Storybook of Life

My 2-year-old toddler currently is in love with a Little Golden Book Classic titled Little Mommy. We read the story over and over again almost every night. I smile at these classics and love her passion for story time and how she enjoys this darling story of a little girl playing mommy and imitating the daily tasks she assumes of a mommy. While published circa 1967, I find myself getting wrapped up into how simple, yet unrealistic this hum-drum storyline seems as the little girl goes joyfully from task to task, her baby dolls obediently doing as she says, while the house gets clean, the meals get made and all is done in a seemingly neat, tidy and orderly manner. My current life stage seems comical in comparison to this storybook “little mommy.” Yet this simple book has allowed me to reflect on what God wants and expects out of me through my day-to-day tasks and more importantly, in my day-to-day heart.

## SELF-AWARENESS

Each day I am given 24 hours-no more, no less. Often it can feel as culture is screaming at me for the need to multi-task, juggle multiple roles, have a degree (maybe even two), all the while having a clean house, orderly kids, and trying a new recipe or two a week. My self-awareness of what each 24 hours does look like and should look like can either lead to a constant encouragement or a constant stress. More important than the daily tasks or challenges ahead of me is where I find my purpose in each day. Being aware of what is at the heart of my daily purpose and what is “perfecting me” (*Psalms 138:8*), helps me self-reflect on what is and is not important. Awareness also means understanding my daily needs vs. my daily wants. A need would be described as essential to daily life and a want can be described as a desire that would be ideal to have or realize. Thoughts to consider regarding self-awareness:

- What pressures do I internalize? Which pressures are real and which ones are imagined?
- What life-stage am I in and what priorities are somewhat determined by this life-stage?
- Are there wants in my life that I have defined as needs? If so, what are they?

## SELF-CARE

Self-care is such an important but often neglected area in our lives. Culture can twist self-care into an individualistic and humanistic ideal and thus, believers tend to be hesitant to embrace it. Self-care can be described as attending to one’s physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. Self-care can vary and mean anything from taking a walk (physical) to completing a project (mental) to quiet devotional time (spiritual) to friend time (social). In general, good self-care is anything that is thought to be energy-giving and moves toward health rather than something that is energy-draining in our lives. As schedules and desires change, the frequency and practice of realistic self-care will continually need to be evaluated. Often an important aspect of self-care is found in the safety and accountability of community such as church gatherings, mentorship, Bible study groups, potluck groups or the like. Self-care through the support of others grounded in the Word is vital in a believer’s life (*Prov. 20:5*). Questions to consider regarding self-care:

- What is energy-giving in your life right now?
- List some areas that are draining or quite stressful for you.
- How frequently does self-care happen in your life? What is realistic? Will this ever change?

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## GIVING OUR SELF FOR CHRIST

As believers we are given the best and greatest commandment: “*Love the Lord thy God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind*” (Matt 22:37). This great commandment is easy to read and yet seemingly difficult to live out in our daily attitudes and tasks. Do I live my life, prioritize my tasks, and encourage others through the attitude of loving God with my heart, soul and mind? We have been created as image-bearers (Gen. 1:27) and thus have a charge to model his example of healthy purpose, healthy focus, and unending love. Sanctified believers are called to not just be doers of the Word but also have a heart of godliness and attitude of gratefulness (Col. 3:17). Thoughts to consider regarding giving our self for Christ:

- What does it mean to you to be an image-bearer?
- Describe what daily tasks can show the identity and purpose of Christ in your life.
- What is my heart attitude towards day-to-day life?

Life will not look like the idyllic storybook pictures and words of Little Mommy, nor should it. Yet, the challenge and opportunity of a sanctified believer is to still find the delight of that darling girl, joyfully playing mommy, while engaging in the pressures, roles, and reality of life as we rest in the promises and identity of the One who writes our storybook of life.