



THE NOBLE HEART™

Live Like an Artist

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Several years ago, I awoke in the middle of the night worried by the uncertainties in my life... Am I doing what I'm supposed to do? Am I where I'm supposed to be? Am I doing life the right way? Are my motives right? I decided to go into another room so I could pray out loud and journal my thoughts with God. After forty minutes of mumbling and stumbling my way into the issues of my heart, God answered me with one sentence – “Live like an artist”.

I pondered and journaled what that meant. I believe that living like an artist means to create (to bring into form) that which is on your heart for the pure joy and curiosity of its potential beauty and benefit. I realized that there were moments throughout my life when I lived that way, especially when I was younger – drawing, building, doing gymnastics. Pablo Picasso wrote, “Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.”

I realized that God was telling me to “*live*” differently, not just “*do*” differently. For the most part, even though I was engaged in doing what I loved, my motivation had become contaminated by concerns about interest and income, acceptance and appreciation. Living the “*way of an artist*” would mean I would create and offer simply because I am compelled to create and love to offer what God has given me. “Art is not a thing” Elbert Hubbard wrote, “it is a way.” I understand more deeply now what the Apostle Paul meant when he said, “To this end I labor, struggling with all His energy, which so powerfully works in me.” (Col 1:29)

To live as an artist is to allow whatever it is that “works so powerfully” in you – to come out. To refuse to let your glory (your particular splendor, brilliance, abundance) be defined, valued or constrained by others. To live as an artist means to develop your art through study, training and experience with whatever time and resources you have, because you love it – not because others are asking for it or you

are getting paid for it. Terri Guillemets wrote, "Art is when you hear a knocking from your soul - and you answer."

The term "art" comes from the Greek work "technē" which actually implies the mastery of any sort of craft. In Latin "art" is "ars" which means, *skill* or *technique* with the connotation of beauty. So art is something that you master to the point of beauty; be it photography, questions, music, organization, engaging, speech, colors, encouragement, structure, writing, conciliation, systems, envisioning or a thousand other things.

We are after all, God's masterpiece - "For we are His masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared long ago to be our way of life." Eph. 2:10 (ISV) We were created to be an artist, to create "good works". This is why the Apostle Paul writes, "We pray...that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power. (2 Thess. 1:11) "Art is a collaboration between God and the artist..." said André Gide.

Seth Godin, in his recent book; *Linchpin*, said that serious artists distinguish between their art and the stuff they have to do when they're not doing their art. This is a good fantasy buster – no one gets to do what they love all the time, no one gets to only do their art. There is our art, our "good works that God prepared long ago to be our way of life," and there are the things which create and sustain the environment of our artistry, our good works. We can confuse these two things to the point of thinking that we love nothing, life is simply about obligation and duty and artistry is unattainable. To break through the "unattainable" barrier, Godin suggests we finish this "if only" statement: "I could find the time and energy to do my art if only...." Try this...really! It's very revealing. The answer(s) to this question will help us to see the real issues at hand so that they can then be addressed.

One of the secrets of our artistry (our calling), is that we possess a surprising forbearance with the mundane tasks of life when we know that they are simply a means by which we enrich our artistry.

Your fellow artist,

Gary