

I grew up in a Christian home, and have been a believer all my life. In high school, I really started to make my faith my own, a process that continued through college. I majored in Biblical and Theological Studies, wanting to do something “valuable and meaningful” with my life. As it turns out, I graduated with a Master’s Degree in Higher Education. I was intent on pursuing a career in campus ministry or residence life at a Christian college.

I spent an entire year applying for literally hundreds of positions at universities across the country. I even tried volunteering my time – and was met with only closed doors.

I was heartbroken. I felt like God had rejected me. I had offered everything to Him to serve him, and all I heard was “No.” Then I wondered, “What is wrong with me, that I am not good enough for Him to use me to advance his Kingdom?” I was either not valuable to Him, I didn’t have it “together” enough for Him, or He simply wasn’t a good God. Why else would he let me hurt so much?

I moved to Alaska for a change of pace, and that was 4 years ago.

I lost hope that I would have the career I’d been pursuing. I worked my way into higher education, but never into a job that seemed purposeful. I “accepted” that maybe God’s plan for my life looks different than my own, and that seemed to be enough for a while. I was earning promotions at work, enjoying my life and my friends here, and branching out in music. But I never fully understood the hurt and disappointment I experienced, and it left me little faith that I could truly hope for things I desired in my life.

In the past year, God really started to shake things up for me. I felt loneliness and heartache in a way that I couldn’t pinpoint or link to any events in my life. I reached a point where I couldn’t deal with it on my own. I longed to be understood. The more I talked about it with friends, the more pain I discovered bubbling under the surface. I realized that though I believed with my mind all the good things about God, I felt something totally different, and it was ripping me up inside.

I know being a Christian does not remove hardship. But I guess deep down I never thought it would be THIS hard. I knew there was nothing in the world that could fill this void except God. But that was just the problem! If He was supposed to be able to fill me, why didn’t I feel it?

In the process of exploring my own heart, I learned a lot about myself. I learned that I have spent most of my life “accepting” and “dealing with” disappointment, but I never really allowed myself to grieve them. I felt that if I was lonely, hurt, or scared, I needed to find a way to make those feelings just go away. I thought feeling lonely, hurt, or scared meant I wasn’t letting God be enough for me. But I have learned that I will feel all those things, and that God is simply with me through them.

I have started to see the majesty of God this year. He really is “The God of the Big Picture.” He is faithful to me, not in preventing disappointment or avoiding pain, but in showing his faithfulness over time, weaving together pieces and parts of my experience to bring me to a place He wants me to be: FULLY DEPENDENT ON HIM.

There is a vast difference between the world I live in, and the life I will have in Christ for eternity. No matter how much I grow in Him, I live in a broken world. Through it all, I know God created me because he wants relationship with ME, and not because he wants me to serve him in something valuable. I am valued simply because I am. – it’s so simple, and yet they have never meant more to me than they do now.

The enemy used events in my life to accuse me, to accuse God, and to cause disbelief in my heart. I learned that I never really allowed space for failure in my life. I have grown to understand that I have been living my life evaluating my value based on what the world says, instead of in Christ alone.

And I learned all these truths with my heart, not with my head. And God has revealed his goodness to me where I can feel it, more than just know it. I have experienced a lot of healing there.

I don’t have all the answers, and I’m certainly not “cured” from heartache and fear, even today. But God is still the God of the Big Picture. I have much hope, because I know that He is in it with me. Because of this, I can have courage to pursue the deepest passion of my heart