

## A Calling From God - Giving Everything Up and Taking Everything Back

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Joining the church back in 1978, there were some things I had to give up. I loved acting, dancing, reading books and being by myself for long periods of time. From the time I joined, there was no reading books except for the Divine Principle or speeches, no acting, a little dancing in Oakland and none on MFT. And from the time I joined I was around people constantly, unless I was at a workshop which had meditation time. So there was a lot to give up. Not to mention going from vegetarian meals with herbal tea to Big Macs with Coke.

There were also things I was happy to give up. My relationship with my parents? Happy to, you can have it! My hometown? Can't stand the place. It's yours, God. Material things? Yes!! I didn't really want them in the first place. The handmade sweater my grandma got for me? Can't I keep it? Not after it came back from the camp laundry shrunk to half my size.

But then comes the point when it's time to take things back again. Marriage? Blessing? Thought you'd never ask, I'm ready. Live with her in-laws?? Please, no. A loan for a minivan!?! Do I have to? House payments? Really? Work my butt off so I can pay for all this? Isn't there some other mission I could have? No? Ok...

Maybe the hardest thing is to occupy my own life. I didn't know what to do with it when I first joined, was happy to give it up to God. Kind of like handing someone else the steering wheel when your car is about to hit a brick wall. But when God is asking me to do something that really matters to me, like telling my own story, and helping others to tell theirs.....I get scared. Very scared. This will either work or it won't, and it'll be my face on it.

And to put myself out there so that everyone can see when I fail at this? Or when it starts to succeed and then more people are looking at me with expectations? Even worse. I'd rather go off into the woods and talk with the chipmunks, thank you very much. But I can't deny the calling.

I have tried. Did the "If I ignore it, maybe it'll go away" condition. Didn't work. Every time I prayed, there it was. Tried the Prayer of Escaping Responsibility – "God, maybe someone else can do this". Which was answered "Well, maybe, but this is what I am asking you to do. And as long as you keep asking me, I'll keep answering. But you will notice I'm not changing my answer."

So here I am.