

Potentially Possible Promise by Laura Shaw

This morning I woke up singing an old Gaither song, "I am a promise. I am a possibility. I am a promise, with a capital 'P.' I am a great big bundle of potentiality..." Why this song? Even though I haven't heard it in several years, I can only believe the Spirit turned the music on inside my mind for a reason. I'll never forget belting out this song in church with a handful of other kids singing beside me. It has taken me many years to capture its real meaning, and even capturing it has not leant itself to a full grasp of it...

As a young kid inside a broken and hurting family, this song meant that I could still be somebody someday, even if all the strikes were against me. I held on to the hope of this promise by being the best I could be at everything. I worked for straight "A"s in my academics. In high school, I was literally in ALL of these programs in the same year: choir, show choir, theatre, football cheerleading, basketball cheerleading, marching band, concert band, school newspaper, track & field, cross country, student council, ALPHA (group speaking to peers about drugs and other teen issues) youth group, AND I held a job at the local pizza place. All of this while making the honor roll, maintaining friendships and almost always having a boyfriend on my arm.

I'm tired just looking back at this. All of these activities and relationships gave me such great satisfaction at the time--I can't even describe it...I thrived on them. What is, oh, so strange is that even with all of those accomplishments, I still never felt like I was reaching my full potential at any of them. Somebody always had it more together than me or sang more beautifully, or aced more tests than I. The boyfriends were easily ripped off my arm, and I got to the point where student council gave me ulcers from all the conflict. Where was all that promise and possibility now?

It truly was there all along, but I just misunderstood how I was to achieve it. If I'm not careful, those old habits can sneakily creep their way back into my thinking. The Lord has shown me that I only have capital "P" potential when Christ is behind and IN what I'm doing. HE is my capital "P" Promise. When I lose myself in Him, when I give up my own hopes of being somebody important--that is when my life has capital "P" possibility. Here's the truth of the matter:

**"I can do everything THROUGH CHRIST who gives me strength." Philipians 4:13**

**"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in Him, he will bear much fruit; APART FROM ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING." John 15:5**

**"For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God." Colossians 3:2**

**"For IN HIM we live and move and have our being. Acts 17:28a**

As believers, where do we find our identity? What trophies would we like to have on our shelves and how many? What fulfillment are we chasing outside of Christ? Our motive and our object of trust really DO matter. Longing for earthly success or gain of any kind will never lead to true fulfillment. Whether it's being a good parent, writing the best story, juggling and multi-tasking at the amazement of everyone else, leading the pack spiritually, maintaining a great career, staying physically fit, having more money or status.....all of it--apart from Christ having His way with it--is rubbish.

So, let's press ahead together, with Christ as our Promise, remembering that confidence is misplaced if it is found in our own abilities. It is in losing ourselves in Him—His kingdom and His righteousness--that we understand our amazing potential to do what the end of the song says: "And I am learning to hear God's voice, and I am learning to make the right choices. I am a promise to be anything GOD WANTS ME TO BE."

*"But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.*

*What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith."*

**Philippians 3:7-9**