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...Be Painted a Masterpiece

A little girl stands amidst a mess of crayon and paper. Splattered from head to toe in splashes of brightly colored paint, she gleams holding her masterpiece to the sky for her mother to examine. The mother chuckles at her daughter's appearance, but the little girl's smile drowns out the messy table and the array of splattered stains. This little girl just happens to be me. My mother, the art teacher, never withheld any creativity I might have wished to express even if the clean up was at her expense. Some of the fondest memories of my childhood stem from her stuffy paint filled art room. For there, I never felt stifled. I was always free to be just as I wished, in a place all my own, with a blank sheet of paper to create my own masterpiece. My love for art branches into all sectors of my life, and I have discovered that painting a masterpiece requires the same creativity, skill, ambition as the laws that govern a fruitful life.

As I stand over a blank canvas ready to paint, I imagine all of the wonderful things that could flow out of the end of my brush. I have the ability to convey a somber mood, a flashy celebration, or the serenity of still life. The design symbolically represents the way that God "paints" our lives. God is the ultimate artist, able to create anything and everything that His heart desires on the blank canvas of our lives. Although each artist is unique, I feel that God is prone to choose a mosaic style of art. The individual dots on the canvas, though they are minute, all work and come together to form an amazing mosaic masterpiece when viewed from a distance. I truly believe that God uses the small, minute things in life to shape our masterpiece; every "dot" has its own place in the painting, and every brush touch is a conscious one.

The movement and shading of a piece of art are what give the canvas its depth. In my life I've come to see that my "painting's" movement has its fair share of ups and downs. As a painting moves the viewer's eyes back and forth observing the highs and lows of the paint shades, so do my thoughts move from the happiness to the despair in my life. For every "shade" there is a remedy. Is there too much darkness? Simply add a little "light paint," or more faith in God, to the mix. Is the overall theme too boring? Why not try thickening the paint or lines with more "joy and friendship"? During my junior year of high school, after years of being a volleyball "starter," I was at a loss as to how I had become a "bench-warmer". Suddenly other girls on the team overshadowed my spiking ability, and I had become passé. I had my fair share of moments full of confusion and self-doubt. But I knew that God presented me with the "dot" for a reason. Even though I was not a "starter," I was still a team captain. I chose to add "light paint" to my dreary circumstance by being a comforter and source of encouragement to my teammates, and the season ended very well. The artistic remedies I've learned in altering the movement and shade of my "canvas" have brought me through many hard times in my life.

The final ingredient to any great work of art is the use of color. Color can make a person smile, it can make a person cry, and it best conveys the overall mood and personality of its painting. The color in my "canvas" comes from those whose love is dearest to me. I've learned to fill my life with the people who bring out my best "colors". The color of my masterpiece comes from my parents, my church, and my best friends. These people enrich the quality of my "paint" with support and unconditional love. They bring me energy and passion, which is something that I truly desire the person viewing my "canvas" to see within me. I believe both as a person and as an artist, it is "color" that can make the smallest details of my heart or painting come to life.

Although the little girl's days of splattered paint and crayons are over, mine have just begun. As I continue through my life, I don't think that I will ever forget the lessons my love for art have taught me. Being true to one's self is always a must, for a person can never paint a masterpiece if one's heart is not

holding the brush handle. Allow God to fill your life with “little dots,” for they will surely depict the correct path for your life. Always allow wiggle room for faults in “movement or shading”, for they can be modified in time. Some of the best works of art are based in mistake. Fill life with vibrant colors, those that bring out the life and beauty in *your* “canvas.” And finally, as a masterpiece,” don’t forget that true art makes a statement and takes a stand, no matter how much criticism it receives. True artistic masterpieces withstand the test of time; I, myself, need to live up to the same standard. Following these basic guidelines for art, these basic laws of life, *anyone* has the potential to be a masterpiece.