“When I look at the stars...”

Reflection by Elia King, Estes Park, CO

When I was a kid, I used to stand in my grandparents’ driveway (now my parents’ driveway) and look up at the stars. Even before I had any concept of astronomy, there was something overwhelming about looking up at the night sky and thinking about my place in the cosmos.

These days, when I look up at the stars, I get that same “small” feeling that I remember from my childhood, but also I can’t help but think of the story recorded in Genesis, when God called Abram out to look at the night sky, with the promise that his offspring would number like the stars. For Abram, who had no children, it must have been comforting to know that God had a plan for his life to be really significant in the grand scheme. For me, now a father of two, the thought of that many children is terrifying.

Still, I can’t help but wonder if God doesn’t call us to “number the stars” in our lives. When I look at my own kids — when I hear my daughter singing the songs we sing at church about the love and grace and wonder of Jesus — I think maybe I understand a little bit what God was trying to tell Abram, that real significance is found in pouring our lives into future generations, teaching them to love and follow Jesus with all they have.

One of my favorite bands, Switchfoot, puts it like this in the chorus of their song, Stars:
But when I look at the stars,  

When I look at the stars,  

When I look at the stars I see someone else  

When I look at the stars,  

The stars, I feel like myself.

In other words, there’s something about looking at the stars that calls us beyond ourselves, and helps us to recognize how small we are in the big picture. In similar fashion, when we find our identity in pouring ourselves out for future generations of Jesus followers (my friend Allan calls this being door-holders for the Kingdom), we gain new insight on the significance of our lives. Suddenly, we recognize that really, truly following Jesus’ example turns everything on its head, as some of the “big” issues that take up so much time and energy in our lives start to appear much smaller than they once did.

When we look at the “stars” in our lives, may we be humbled at the number of opportunities we’ve been given to pour our time and talent in to future generations, and may we spend everything we having teaching them to make Jesus All.

Recalibrate

Is there anything that you feel particularly talented, gifted, or proficient at? How might you leverage those gifts to invest in the next generation?

Who in your life represents a new generation? How are you holding the door for them to be part of the Kingdom of God?

Feel free to send any thoughts or comments to Elia King.