



A Terrible Idea



by Antoinette Alba—

As an artist and writer, I go through a process of deciding which ideas are worth making into a completed piece. I brainstorm, I scribble, I make studies, and I choose which ideas I want to pursue. I assign value to those ideas: which are good, which are bad, and which desperately need to be thrown in the trash. Beyond that, I decide which is the most important and which is the least, and often by the time I get to the last on the list I don't care about that idea anymore.



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Other times I try to force certain ideas to work, and because of that force they are more resistant to come to life. I have notebooks filled with bad ideas and maybe five good ones. I scribble thoughts on Post-it notes or in my phone, only to return to those ideas later and realize that I can't remember where I was going with that or why I thought it was a good idea in the first place. For me, ideas are easily discarded because I know there are so many rattling around in my mind that I will have lost nothing by throwing this one away.

Because I experience this in my own process of creation, I am all the more awed that God never did that to us. That He didn't just crumple up the ball and toss it in the bin. That He not only pursued what any of us would consider a terrible idea, He considered it a wonderful idea, an idea worth all the trouble it was going to bring. He assigned a value to us that is more precious than a sea of jewels. He deemed us worthy enough to ransom from the chains of sin.

I am amazed that He let His creation take on a life of its own and made something beautiful out of us, even though we're broken, even though we've been made ugly by a life separate from Him. I am astounded by God's commitment to us, like an artist working through a challenging area of a painting struggling to be born. Better than the Mona Lisa or the Sistine Chapel, God makes masterpieces in the sky out of pollution and golden hearts out of hardened stone.

I am grateful for the identity God clothes us in—an identity in which we are loved, in which we are pursued, in which we are worth being saved. Because without this identity, it is too easy to be what others deem us to be, what others try to make us. Because we are blessed by an incredibly strong, exciting, and empowered identity as the children of God, we don't have to be what people say we are or believe we are. We can simply put that down, walk away, and be who God calls us to be.

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