

Present Over Perfect by Shauna Niequist

A Book Review by Melisa Turner

I borrowed this book from a friend in March of this year (2018), I finally had the time to read it in late June. The irony is not lost on me that I struggled to find time to read a book about being in the moment because of a too busy schedule! And truly friends I have slowed down intentionally these last few years.

Because I borrowed this book I could not write in it. There were twelve sticky notes some double sided sticking out of the book, marking all of the gems I found. I decided it was a book I needed to own. [thriftbooks.com](https://www.thriftbooks.com)

Present Over Perfect speaks about our true identity and value found in God's love, not our performance.

"...I am learning, essentially,...to stand where I am, plain and sometimes tired. Unflashy, profoundly unspectacular. But present and connected and grounded deeply in the love of God. (20) ...God's view of me, his love for me that doesn't change, that will not change (63)... It is about rejecting the myth that every day is a new opportunity to prove our worth, and about the truth that our worth is inherent, given by God, not earned by our hustling. (128)... It is only when you understand God's truly unconditional love that you begin to understand the worth of your own soul- not because of anything you've done, but because every soul is worthy, every one of us is worthy of love, having been created by and in the image of the God of love."

Shauna also speaks to our desperate need to prove ourselves which almost always costs us the ability to *BE* ourselves.

"This is actually my life, and it doesn't matter a bit if it would be lovely for someone else to live. What does matter: does it feel congruent with how God made me and called me? (102)...I was longing for a life that felt light, right-sized for my strengths and limitations." (149)

But what if you are doing the thing you are good at? What if you have already downsized your responsibilities? Even then we need to be Present to God not trying to Perfect our performance.

"I have a terrible habit of not praying about things that seem too human, to trivial to me...I don't want to pray for anything that I may have caused, or

that I could undo on my own. I said yes...that's my own fault...I am learning to...[invite] God to solve the problems I could solve in my own life with better boundaries and a little elbow grease." (75-76)

So how can we be Present Over Perfect?

"...the best thing I can offer to this world is not my force or energy, but a well-tended spirit, a wise and brave soul.(28)...Christians [should live] a courageous rhythm of rest, prayer, service, and work." (84)