

# I Sold My Birthright

by Leah Marie | Aug 4, 2017 | Empowerment, Featured, Feminism, Mormonism | 1 comment



This is about my birthright. This is about my potential. This is about what I was made for. This is about what I gave away when I was convinced it wasn't worth anything.

I grew up knowing I was meant for one thing. I was called to the highest, holiest, most noble calling. I was going to be a mother. Being a mother was, in fact, the most important thing I could be. I had been prepared for it from the beginning of time. I was to partner with God in the act of creation. The expectations for how good I was supposed to be at this were very, very high but I was promised that I would be magnified and be able to rise to the sacred duty of motherhood.

I was raised in an environment where "Homemaking" as well as "Home Environment" and "Creating a Spiritual Environment in the Home" lessons were included in the "Women's Divine Roles" section of the lesson manual. I also had lessons such as "Prepare to Become an Eternal

Companion” to help me decide what to do with my life. There was also a “Choosing a Vocation” lesson, which began by explaining that I should have two priorities: “first, being a homemaker; and second, doing something that will allow them to earn money to support a family if that should become necessary. Many women also find that before they are married or after the children are reared, there is time to be productive in a vocation.”

It is no wonder really that throughout college I felt as though I was biding my time. I searched around for a major that I was interested in, getting a degree that would be useful just in case, but I put very little thought into a career. I talked about things I'd love to do. I wanted to work in DC, I wanted to work in the White House, I wanted to work with the NSA or the CIA. I day dreamed about a lot of this, but, really, I put very little thought into making any of it a reality. I didn't need to plan the future. It was all decided. I was simply waiting to find a husband and then my real life would begin. I remember when I was 22, my visiting teachers came over to talk to me about the nobility and joy of motherhood and I just thought, “when will it finally be time for me to get started?” I was so anxious to find a husband and get to the work that I was put on the earth to do.

I graduated from BYU single and worked for a year. Still not married yet, I applied for grad school. Happily, I married my husband two months before we both started our Master's programs at the same school. Women I loved and trusted had encouraged me to wait at least a year before getting pregnant. My program was only two years so I thought this was perfect. I would wait a year to start trying to have a baby and finish this degree just in time. I'm sure I would be glad I'd done it, I told myself, because I would be an example to my children about the importance of education. I still wasn't putting much thought into a career.

It was right around this time that my husband and I made, what we look back as now, one of the biggest mistakes of our lives. He started applying to Ph.D. programs and I, by default, did not. I really thrived in my Masters of Public Administration program and, not to cut myself too short, talked about how I'd love to go back for a Ph.D. after my (not-yet-existing) children had grown. But neither of us really gave it a second thought. My husband wishes he'd pushed me to apply and that we would've chosen a school that would've suited both our doctoral aspirations. I wish I hadn't been so caught up in what I was supposed to be so I could consider what I wanted to be.

You know, the day I graduated with my MPA I was pregnant. I hadn't told very many people because it was very new, but I thought everything was just working out just like it should. Devastatingly, I miscarried that pregnancy. So, I started working. I had a degree but no clear career path. I'd never put any thought into developing my resume. I did find work, but it wasn't thrilling and I was way over qualified for it. Again, I felt like I was just biding my time. I struggled with infertility for three years which, given all the lessons I laid out above, was a time in my life filled with despair and darkness. I only wanted to fulfill the measure of my creation and my body was falling short. But, what to do in the meantime?

I found a Ph.D. program I could do mostly online, applied, and began. Don't be fooled, I still didn't have any real aspirations. I just knew it was killing my mental health to keep *waiting* for the thing I wanted that I had no control over. I was a year and a half into my coursework when I got pregnant. Once it was clear the pregnancy was healthy and sustainable, I dropped my schooling like a hot potato.

THIS WAS IT. It was everything I'd been waiting for. I was the happiest I'd ever been... for about three weeks. And then the Postpartum Depression (PPD) set in and things got real hard. It was about 6 months in that I began to really regret leaving the Ph.D. program. I was getting lost. I was becoming an auxiliary to my own life. So, consumed I'd been with filling my body up, my mind and heart had emptied out without me even noticing. I got pregnant again when my baby was 14 months old (on purpose!) and quickly decided I would just have these two. Part of that was how very, very sick I get during pregnancy... but a lot of it was realizing that I couldn't make motherhood my whole life. I developed a new plan. I would wait through the early years and as soon as I could get my youngest into preschool, I would resume my Ph.D. work.

And then just after he turned three I got pregnant again (surprise!). I was deathly ill for the duration of the pregnancy so I didn't put a lot of thought into the way this altered my plans. But after my third beautiful son was born, and the PPD was setting in for the third time I thought, "I can't do this again. I can't just wait this out." And I re-enrolled in my Ph.D. program part-time when he was just a few months old. He's about to turn four and I'm still not finished. But, I'm closer! I've set new goals for myself and established a career path that will work for me.

I feel like I'm getting a second chance. Nevertheless, I'm still angry I sold my birthright in the first place. I'm angry about how hard motherhood is and how ill-suited I am for it. I'm angry that the Heavenly help I was promised never showed up, and I was left to white-knuckle it on my own. I'm angry that motherhood doesn't fill me with the joy and satisfaction I was promised.

Don't get me wrong, there is joy. I love my children, and I want so much to be the best mother for them that I can be. But that was never going to happen, for me or for them, with the roadmap I was given. I cannot enjoy or embrace motherhood as *my whole life*. What it is, is an amazing *part* of my life. Because I am meant for more than just filling myself up with other people. My potential is much more than that. I am made for so many things. I'm taking my birthright back.

**Share This Post! Because Sharing Really is Caring!**



## Leah Marie

Leah Marie earned a BA in Political Science, and a Masters in Public Administration. She is currently working towards her PhD in Public Policy. She is wife to an English professor, and mother to 3 beautiful boys.

All posts by Leah Marie

## 1 Comment



**STW** on August 4, 2017 at 11:03 am

No one is meant for just one thing

<http://aspiringmormonwomen.org/2015/09/10/more-about-embraceyourand/>