

Clunk. The short black screw hits the floor, falling from its perch on the tip of the sheetrock gun. I pick it up off the hallway runner and hand it back to Mom, who is waiting at the top of the ladder to put yet another screw into the new wall that is slowly but surely turning into a maze of black dots. The whirr of the drill once again resumes, resounding in my ears as I head downstairs to cut another piece of ceiling tile for the bathroom. But down here all is not silent either; the tap of Dad's hammer as he fine-tunes the new furnace, occasionally interrupted by my brother's inquiry "What next, Dad?", reminds me that work is going on. Work. After the importance of a relationship with God, if there is one thing that I have learned from my fifteen years of observing my parents, it has to be the importance of diligent and thorough work.

Renovating our house has not been the only window of opportunity to see the advantage of learning to work diligently. Throughout my childhood and teenage years, there have been countless instances in which I have seen this principle acted upon in the lives of my parents. From starting a mission, to homeschooling my siblings and me, to simply earning the money to put food on the table, my parents have shown me that diligence is a characteristic worth striving for.

A notable church theologian and bishop from the 1800's once said, "The devil quickly finds work for idle hands and an angel quickly finds work for diligent hands."¹ I have witnessed this idea many times reflected in the life of my dad. Having spent years devoted to serving God through founding and leading churches, my dad has impressed upon me the value of service. Work is not always easy, but I have learned that though there may be struggles, difficulties, and obstacles to overcome, knowing how to do a job thoroughly is a necessary skill to have in life.

"Aim at nothing and you'll hit it every time," I often hear my mom say. But this is not merely a motto of principle; it is a motto of action, a motto that I continually see played out in her own life. From

¹Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic, *The Prologue from Ochrid*.

sitting on the living room couch with my brother teaching him how to read, to helping my older sister with her college applications, I have seen my mom dedicate countless hours to the task of homeschooling my siblings and me.

My parents are far from being slave masters; our work is equally balanced with the pleasure of a Sunday afternoon's rest, or church camps in the summer, along with an occasional canoe trip or hike through the mountains. But through the lens of my parents' lives, I have seen how the principle of diligence is one of the keys to a fruitful and happy life. Seeing is believing, the old saying goes, and growing up watching my parents put this concept into action has influenced me in more ways than words can tell. Every time I see my dad lead a church service, I am reminded of the importance of using our talents to glorify God. Every time I watch my mom explain a puzzling algebra problem to my brother, I once again realize how useful diligence is. With every scrape of the mudding knife smoothing over drywall, this principle sinks in even further. And every little black screw so tediously drilled into the wall does not merely hold the sheetrock up; every screw is another catalyst that drives this rewarding work ethic into me.