

An Opened Door

Moving into our home in July of 2000, we were ready and willing to tackle remodeling. Yes, a ton of work still needed to be done, but renting was now in the past. We just had one little problem... a lack of money and no job! Another paycheck was coming from my previous job, but it wouldn't last us very long. Time was ticking and a new source of income was a top priority. I put in applications to be a substitute teacher, but little work was anticipated in August and September.

The new school year started. I subbed a few days with a district nearby, but finances required something more reliable. Personal satisfaction with the job was a luxury we couldn't afford. A random retail job was not my preference, but it was no longer a matter of what was wanted. I went to K Mart and filled out an application. A few days later, a call resulted in a scheduled interview time for the following week.

A few days later, news revealed that a grant had been awarded to my local school district. Even though the school year had already started, two full time job openings were advertised. One opening was to teach first grade. Desperately wanting to teach first grade again, a letter of interest was sent immediately. I had four years of teaching experience with that exact grade level. The other job was for an alternative education teacher. A teacher was needed to support in school suspensions and to reduce out of school suspensions. I had just taught two years for Cleveland City Schools and had experience with some challenging students. To my delight, the school administration called and invited me to an interview. Now I had a chance with two different employers!

Not quite! When told the time for the interview, it was nearly impossible for me to go to both. They were scheduled about an hour apart. If everything went perfectly, the interview was short, and traffic was good, I could probably make it

to the second interview. That was a big risk. There were too many variables. Everything in my gut told me to go to the interview for the teaching job. My passion was for teaching... not retail business.

A message was respectfully left notifying K Mart that I had a scheduling conflict and wouldn't be able to attend the interview. The other interview resulted in a job offer for the alternative education teaching position. Because of my prior experiences, I had a much wider perspective on deviant behavior and how to intervene to prevent future classroom disturbances. The teachers at the little rural school had no idea how bad behavior could be. To me, there was a huge difference between throwing mashed potatoes at a friend and stealing a lollipop from the hand of a Kindergartener. Most of my students that year just needed a little redirection and accountability.

As the alternative education teacher, no preparation time was required outside of the school day. As a first grade teacher, numerous hours would have been spent outside of the school day working. My little one was just three months old. In hindsight, the alternative education job was much better for me. God gave me more time to spend with my own family.

The "good money" made from working in Cleveland was gone, but so was the stress. Comparing my new job to my previous one, the salary was about half. The little lull in income made me appreciate any income that kept the lights on. Humbled and mentally accepting of a job with minimum wages and no emotional connection, I was extremely grateful for an opportunity that went above my expectations and used my strengths. It was a bonus.

Thank you, Jesus for opening the door for me. For 19 years, my classroom remained my home away from home. Now, I am left wondering. Where is the next door? When will it open? What will it look like? Faith and hope give me encouragement. Love will grow.