

## God's Will & Work

### Discussion Questions:

1. What would make a job a dream job for someone?
2. What would make a job, a God-given calling for someone?

### Recapping: Some biblical wisdom on seeking God's will in general.

The content of this lesson follows upon previous lessons. The Bible teaches that the idea of seeking God's will for a job is simpler and more successful *after* you have considered all that we've discussed previously, including:

1. Becoming a Christian – If you want to know what Jesus wants for your life, that's the first thing: that we believe in the gospel and put our faith in Him.
2. Seeking the Scriptures – God has already revealed so much of His will that helps us narrow the field significantly.
3. Seek wise counsel – Getting input from others who have sought the Scriptures and have experience.
4. Pray – Ask God to have wisdom and faith to follow Him.

For the rest of this lesson, we'll do 3 things:

1. Look at the three steps for selecting a job.
2. Look at the three tests for selecting a job.
3. Look at the three further insights on selecting a job.

### Three Steps for Finding a Job

#### Step 1: Search the Scriptures

*Remember, you're not looking for a verse that says, "Take thou the cashier position at the Piggly Wiggly." You are looking for principles. So for starters you want to know whether the job is righteous. Assuming you're not considering a gig as a hit man for the mob or a photographer (or model!) for Playboy!, most jobs can be God-glorifying (but not all are, so do ask this question.)*

While there may not be many Scriptures that address "what job I should get", there are many principles that helpfully inform such a decision.

- a. Get a job that allows you to support your family. "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (1 Timothy 5:8).
- b. Get a job with your spiritual growth in mind, especially about proximity to a good church. *Before taking a new job, we look at salary, benefits, school districts, commuting time, and cultural amenities; but if everything else falls into place and there's no good church in the area, it's hard to imagine how God's revealed will—your sanctification—will be well-served. (Kevin DeYoung, Just Do Something, p.100)*  
*Don't think only about safety or the resale value of your house or the school system. Think about what ministry you can do and what church you can be a part of and whether you can there in a reasonable car drive. The more you read the Bible, the more your thinking will be transformed, and the more these kinds of issues will matter to you. (p.100)*

We live in a world that is opposed to the gospel, and many jobs support those

entities. But consider how these jobs were in institutions that were opposed to God

- i. Daniel and his 3 friends working for the Babylonian Empire (Daniel 2:46-49)
- ii. Esther working in the harem of the Persian King (Esther 2:10-18).
- iii. Naaman serving the King of Syria in the temple of Rimmon (2 Kings 5:15-19a).
- iv. Slaves in the NT instructed to serve their masters well, even if they were opposed to the gospel (Titus 2:9-10)

Yes, there were instances in which employees or servants made conscientious dissents, such as Daniel and his three friends not wanting to defile themselves with unclean foods (Daniel 1:8-21). There were also instances of flat out civil disobedience such as the apostles unwillingness to stop preaching about Jesus (Acts 5:27-32).

Thus, for Christians in contemporary times it may not be as easy to only work for Christian entities, or to shun working for entities that espouse beliefs that go against the Bible on many issues. For example, if a certain political administration has differing views from you on certain issues, could you still work for them? If a certain corporation donates funds to causes you disagree with or has certain business practices you disagree with, could you still work for them?

The thoughtful Christian will wrestle over this and pray continually through this.

### Step 2: Get Wise Counsel

- a. Talk with people who have diligently sought the Scriptures and live exemplary and godly lives.
- b. *Talk to people who know you well. What skills and abilities do they see in you.* (p.101)
- c. I found it most revealing to ask someone about who they've talked to about finding a job. Not just who they did ask for advice from, but who they *didn't* ask for counsel from. Often who they didn't ask was more insightful, such as the following:
  - i. When a younger person, especially students, has not asked their parents or teachers.
  - ii. When a person has not asked their discipler or spiritual mentor.
  - iii. When a married person has not asked their spouse.
  - iv. When a dating person has not asked his/her significant other.
  - v. And so forth...

### Step 3: Pray

- a. Pray not so much for God to "show you" what job to take, but pray for honesty in your interviews, decisions based upon faith rather than fear, and for greater trust in God's goodness and timing. With boldness, pray that God gives you the job you actually desire (while be open to God changing your desires).
- b. *Let me give an example that may give you some ideas of what to pray for when considering a job change. I mentioned earlier the decision I faced as to whether to come to University Reformed Church or stay at the church in Iowa where I was quite content. I prayed a lot about the decision. But I didn't ask God to tell me what to do. So what did I pray for? I prayed that God would make me honest in my interviews. I prayed that I would see a true picture of this church and that they would see a true picture of me. I prayed mostly that my*

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*heart would be right, that I wouldn't be motivated by pride--either to stay because it was a big church or to move because I could be the senior pastor. I prayed that I wouldn't make a decision based on fear: "What if I fail as a senior pastor?" "What if everyone in Iowa gets mad at me for going?" or pleasing people: "I don't want to let down the search committee that's been working at this for so long." ... I prayed that I would make a decision based upon faith, hope, and love--and not the praise of man and greed and selfish ambition. (DeYoung, pp.101-102)*

### Three Tests for Selecting a Job

Convergence: Affinity, Ability, Opportunity

A common and helpful approach to discerning one's calling (assuming vocation is related to calling) is considering three areas.

1. Affinity - What are we interested in, passionate about, and good at.
2. Ability – Do people who know us well say we could do this job? (Our friends, family, those who know us well. This is similar to Step 2 above on getting wise counsel.)
3. Opportunity – Do opportunities open up? Do doors open up?

### Three Further Insights on Selecting a Job

#### 1. God doesn't just call the equipped, God equips the called.

Seemingly contradictory to the above 3 tests, we must remember that at times, God calls us to some vocation to which we doubt we can do. Often it's more a reflection of a lack of faith, but at times, it may also be we have not yet developed any abilities in this. In fact, those who know us well may think we're being deluded or foolish!

Think of Moses called to lead the children of Israel, David called to be the greatest king of Israel (next to Jesus), Peter the uneducated fisherman called to be the mighty preacher.

This takes thoughtful discernment and perhaps even a strong subjective sense of the leading of the Holy Spirit. But it would be verified and affirmed probably.

#### 2. God may have different vocations for different seasons of life.

Some people seem to think that God has one job for life for people. But where is that in Scripture? In fact, many people changed vocations in midlife, including:

- Jeremiah went from priest to prophet
- David went from shepherd to soldier to king.
- Amos went from shepherd to prophet.
- Even Jesus went from carpenter to full time preacher.

People may betray this modern myth with the following sentiments:

- Pick a job you believe you could do for the rest of your life.
- I'm trying to find my calling for my life. [Note "calling" is singular, often referring to a single calling for one's entire life.]
- People say to someone who's set on their career path, "It's so good that you know God's calling for you..."
- It would seem a waste to not be a doctor for at least a few years after investing so much into medical school." [Or replace with any other graduate program or preparatory work.]

If you use the terms “calling”, it’s better and more biblical to use more like this:

- “I think God’s calling me to medicine for this next season of my life...”
- “Well, I am an accountant today, and will continue so until I believe God wants me to do otherwise.” [Replace with any other job title.]

**3. Relentlessly discern your deepest motives for why you desire a certain vocation. It should be nothing less than for the glory and joy of God.**

- b. Beware of hidden motives when picking a job, such as these. (1 John 2:15-17 and numerous of other passages)
  - i. You’re afraid of not having enough money to live on.
  - ii. You’re trying to impress anyone.
  - iii. You’re trying to prove your smart enough, hard working enough, good enough, etc.
- c. Ask, “How will the work I do, the people I interact with, and the organization I work for glorify God?”

Next Week: Living in God’s Will Peacefully and with No Regrets