

Faith in Action: Serving God at Work

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the top three common considerations in deciding a job?
2. What was one thing you wished someone could of told you before you started your part time job/work study/internship?

“Our choice of occupation, then, is to be made on the same basis as every other decision within the moral will of God: wisdom that seeks the greatest spiritual benefit. The question we should ask is: given my aptitudes, abilities, gifts, desires, and opportunities, **which vocation offers the greatest potential for my service to the Lord and my obedience to His moral will?**” emphasis added (*Decision Making and the Will of God*, Friesen p. 345)

Recap! God’s will for our Job

Step #1 – Read the Bible

The Bible does not point a specific position and company we should choose. The Bible does give many principles that guide us to make informed and practical decisions for choosing a job. These principles aid us in choosing a job that will honor and glorify God.

1. Allows us to fiscally provide for ourselves and/or our family (1 Timothy 5:8);
2. Be lawful to God’s commandments and the government (Ephesians 4:28);
3. We have to be willing to find work rather than unproductive work or being idle (2 Thess 3:10-11)

Step #2 – Ask for Wise Council

Don’t be afraid to seek council from other people you know who are older who are living a life reflective of their spiritual maturity. These people may be your parents, mentors, Sunday school teachers, and friends. It is very important to involve the people who will be directly impacted by your job choice such as family members.

1. People who understand your strengths, weaknesses, tendencies and other stuff helps in the decision process.
2. Wise council helps in clearing potential clutter in the decision making process. Their input may push you through possible mental blocks that could prevent you from making a decision.
3. Involvement of trustworthy people increases the support network you have during your job search.

Step #3 – Pray for the Right Focus

It is more important to pray for growth and change of our mindset as we look for a new job than a specific job or company. Praying in this way helps keeps us focused on what God values instead of material wealth, authority and creature comforts. We will begin to focus more holistically in choosing which job will serve God the best with our gifts and skill sets.

Things I Wished I Knew...

I was very naïve entering the workforce 10 years ago. I didn't have many people outside of my family to ask for wise council. I was unprepared for the work environment. These challenges hampered my work efficiency and relationships. It hampered my obedience and service to God by causing tension in the work environment and poor integrity with my work relationships.

God slowly revealed during my times of prayer and reflection my mistakes and misconceptions about work. I ended up with a list of "if I only knew..." regarding my work experience. I would like to share my top three with you.

⁹ *Slaves are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, ¹⁰ not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. (Titus 2:9; Titus 2:10 ESV)*

1. *The stuff I learned in school is only half of what I need in the working world.* Education is important but it must be balanced out with practical work experience. This is not just the application of information but the communication skills, decision processes, and adaptability/flexibility at work. The lack of experience can cause a tense work environment and potential arguments.
2. *What kind of boss you were.* I never considered what type of manager I would answer directly. Working for a reasonable and ethical employer is indeed a blessing. Many companies require you to work under multiple managements with different standards that you have to balance. Working for an unscrupulous manager will create tension between obedience to God or work.

¹⁸ *Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. (1 Peter 2:18 ESV)*

3. *I still have to earn my wings.* The most common characteristic I have observed at work is the youthful idealism that has not been tempered by humility. This has led to many of cold shoulders and snubs by fellow coworkers. The lack of humility could create a sense of arrogance that will alienate others from meaningful relationships and opportunities to share the gospel.

How can I prepare to serve the Lord through vocation?

“Knowledge cannot be passed like a material substance from one mind to another, for thoughts are not objects which may be held and handled... Ideas must be rethought, experience must be re-experienced”
John Milton Gregory

College means that you have approximately four years to get prepared for your job. The central way is to keep learning in life including academics. Dr. Howard Hendricks suggests maximum learning means you have to have maximum involvement in what you are learning. He suggests three ways from “Teaching to Change Lives”

1. Well guided practice makes perfect: practice makes what you learn permanent. Proper practice creates memory in our minds and muscle where it changes from a conscious act to a natural intuitive act.
2. Properly evaluated experience is the best teacher: we don't need to experience to know that binge drinking is dangerous. We have to actively use our discernment to evaluate what we know and experience.
3. We learn by doing the right things: we all learn by doing things but we must make sure we are learning the right way. It is far easier to learn the right things than to unlearn the wrong things.

(*Teaching to Change Lives*, Dr. Howard Hendricks p. 56 -57)

“The best university in the world cannot impart much knowledge to a lazy student. On the other hand, an industrious student can gain a good education even from a mediocre school. The self-taught individuals of past generations prove that a disciplined, motivated learner who has access only to a library will be far better educated than a slothful Ivey Leaguer” (*Decision Making and the Will of God*, Friesen p. 353)