



NOW WHAT?

CONSIDERING CALLING, PURPOSE AND DIRECTION

A resource for parents and youth leaders

OVERVIEW

The process of figuring out what you want to do can be confusing. High school and college students face questions about work, education and the future but as we grow older, many of us discover that hearing and responding to God's call on our lives doesn't end at graduation, it's a life-long process. Adults are often quick to ask students about their plans for work or education but they don't often share their own stories or provide other resources that can help young people.

ThereforeGo Ministries is here to provide resources and advice for parents and youth leaders. We want to equip you to have rich and impactful conversations about calling, purpose and direction with the youth and emerging adults in your life.

TODAY'S SPEAKER



Pastor Willemina is an ordained pastor in the Christian Reformed Church and has been called by Immanuel CRC, Simcoe as the missional pastor of a new summer ministry initiative for young adults called the South Coast Beach Project (SCBP). Her ministry experience includes six years campus ministry with the Coalition for Christian Outreach and almost 17 years CRC congregational ministry—most recently at Good News CRC in London, Ontario. She moved this past October to Port Dover along with her recently retired husband, Kelly Sibthorpe, who previously worked in CRC campus ministry at Fanshawe College. Her passion is to walk alongside young adults as they discover more deeply the person of Jesus Christ and the adventure of living out a kingdom shaped life.

VOCATIONAL REFLECTION

¹Read

1 Samuel 17: 20 – 50

Reflect

Take some time to reflect on David's story. Pay special attention to the reactions of those around him when he suggests that he takes on Goliath.

“Roles and Rules” compared to God's Grace and Call

- Can you recall an experience in which person(s), family, or institutions were “defining” what you could or could not do AND ways that seemed to run against the call of God or the freedom you have in Christ?
- What are some of the effects this may have had on you?
- How are you learning to enjoy the unique gifts and call that God has given you?
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Three Appreciative Questions

The foundational concept around Appreciative Inquiry is that we do best when we pay attention to our natural strengths and the activities that give us energy. More than likely, these strengths and activities can suggest how God has uniquely created us and the shape of his vocational call for our lives. Using the David's story, reflect on these questions.

- Think about a time when you experienced God as encouraging, challenging or surprising. What were the circumstances in which this happened? How was timing a factor? Were other people involved in some way? Were there lasting effects?
- In the context of that experience, what happened within you? How did it affect your thinking, feeling or perception of yourself? Anything else that happened within you?
- Based on that experience, what do you want more of?

VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

Learning yourself and your work style

Introduction¹

In Romans 12:3, Paul writes:

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

This is in the midst of the chapter in which he urges us that our lives—every part of our lives—are to be offered to God as a living sacrifice (vs. 1). And as we are being “transformed by the renewing of our minds”, we WILL be able “to test and approve what God’s will is” (vs. 2). God’s will for us, both individually and collectively, is available to us! Then, in the middle of the chapter, Paul explains that in Christ we are one body, with each of us contributing different gifts. In order to know what gifts we have to offer, we need to know ourselves. We do this through “sober judgment”. Notice what Paul DOESN’T say. He doesn’t say, “do not think of yourself”. What he does say is not to think of yourself “more highly than you ought”. A key piece of Christian discipleship and moreover, vocational discernment is to reflect, soberly, on who God has and is creating you to be! Listed below are several exercises along with additional resources to assist this journey of “sober reflection”. Take time to pray that God, by His Spirit, will reveal to you who you are in Him, what gifts you have to offer, what limitations you need to live with and to do this with joy, knowing you are unconditional loved by Him. So, have fun!

Exercise #1: Personal Reflection and Past Experiences

Reflect upon and answer the following questions:

- As you think about your life up to this point, write down at least three experiences that you would describe as “fantastic”. These can include work, volunteer, hobbies, outings, etc. As you remember and reflect on each one, answer the following question: what made this experience “fantastic”? Once you’ve completed that for each, do you notice any common themes or characteristics of those experiences? What might that reflect about who you are and what you enjoy?
- Now, in the same way as the first question, think about experiences that were “downers”. That is, what experiences to date did not go the way you expected and really drained energy leaving you feeling “down and out”. What made the experience a “downer”? Again, any themes or characteristics in common between the experiences and what might that suggest about what you don’t enjoy?
- What are your strengths? That is, what things come naturally to you and that you like doing? And what your limitations? That is, what things drain you of energy and are difficult for you to do?
- Where are you most aware of the brokenness in the world? What makes your heart break and leaves you feeling sad?
- Can you think of times when others have remarked on what things you are good at and what positive characteristics you have? Don’t be shy! Write them down and be as specific as possible! And give thanks to God for them.

¹ The information and exercise on this worksheet originate from “Vocation, Work and Career” taught by Professor Gordon T. Smith and Norman E. Amundson at Regent College, June 2001. See also “Courage and Calling” by Gordon T. Smith, InterVarsity Press, 1999.

- If money weren't an object and if it was guaranteed that you couldn't fail, what would you want to do or be?

Exercise #2: What kind of Worker are You?

Often when considering what vocation might be best suited, we focus on what we are going to do—that is, the content of our work. However, there are also work styles. Knowing your work style may also help you discover what type of work is a better fit. Consider these three work styles. Which one best fits how you like to work? And also note the positive and downsides of each type of style.

Style #1: Careerist

- passionate about the field of work and on-going learning about that field
- the distinction between work and free time is blurred
- often brings work home; may take reading about work on vacation
- Examples: teacher, doctor, pastor
- +ve: bring passion and mastery; -ve: possible burn-out

Style #2: Wage Earner

- love the job AND it needs to end at 5 p.m. (or have some quitting time)
- taking determined breaks throughout the day; train during work time
- leave work at work—strong delineation between work and home life
- Examples: office administrator, many trades, lab technician
- +ve: work/life balance; -ve: lack of productivity

Style #3: Entrepreneur

- love to build and create new things (ideas and/or inventions)
- a self-starter; often an autonomous worker
- willing to risk failure in the hope of cultivating something original or better
- Examples: small business owner, inventor, research & development department
- +ve: new ideas/imagination; -ve: doesn't master anything

Exercise #3: Twenty Things You like to Do

Take a piece of paper. On the top, put the following headings: Activity, Free/Cost, Planned/Spontaneous, Alone/With Someone, Body/Spirit/Mind, Last Time. Under the "Activity" Column, write twenty things you like to do. Then mark accordingly in the subsequent columns. For example, if you like reading novels, the row would look like this:

- Reading Novels: Free, Planned, Alone, Mind, last Wednesday

After you've completed the twenty things along with marking the columns, note any themes. What

might this tell you about yourself and the things you enjoy to do? How might that translate in what type of work and career you pursue?

Exercise #4: The Wisdom of Others²

Of course, at the end of the day, it is your responsibility and privilege to discern where and how God might be calling you. However, He gives us significant people in our lives who can assist us. Often others can name our gifts and point out our blind spots better than we can ourselves. Or at the very least, they can confirm what we believe to be true about ourselves. Take these questions to at least three other significant people in your life. Have them answer the following questions about you.

- In your opinion what do you think are the person's major interest areas?
- What do you see as this person's strengths?
- How has the person changed over time and what changes might you see for him/her in the future?
- Do you have any specific career suggestions?
- In what ways might this person's career decisions affect you?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Personality Tests:

- DISC leadership style: <https://www.123test.com/disc-personality-test/>
- Strength Finders: <https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/strengthsfinder.aspx>
- APEST test: <http://www.fivefoldsurvey.com>
- Myers-Briggs: <https://www.myersbriggs.org>
- Enneagram: <https://www.enneagraminstitute.com/type-descriptions>

Books:

- Visions of Vocation: Common Grace for the Common Good by Steven Garber
- Courage and Calling: Embracing Your God-Given Potential by Gordon T. Smith
- The Gift of Being Yourself: the Sacred Call to Self Discovery by David G. Benner

Videos/Websites:

- ReFrame 10 video session Bible Study: <https://www.reframecourse.com>
- Made to Flourish: <https://www.madetoflourish.org>

