

CAREER CHOICES

Calling & Compass

Baton Exchange



For some, deciding on a career path can feel like playing tag in the dark: frantically chasing after something elusive while crashing into unseen obstacles. For a few, some knew what they wanted to do since childhood and do it.

God gave humankind the potential to create all sorts of things. As people specialize in those things and others are willing to utilize what's been created, they lend themselves to career paths. No individual possesses all the aptitudes, talents, or skill sets to do all careers out there. If you live in a thriving economy and haven't been directed by parents or government which career to pursue, you likely have many career options. Choosing which one can be daunting. Developing a strategy can be like using a flashlight while playing tag in the dark.

God created people to be His coworkers, each with a different design, to help Him accomplish different tasks in managing the creation. Your Work Matters to God, Sherman & Hendricks

Discerning Career Calling

Important factors that should be a part of discerning career calling include the wise counsel of godly people, God's providence (existing opportunities and His leading), prayer and scripture, your gifts and motivations, and tools such as assessments.

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:10)
Understanding your design will help you discern your calling to the type of work in which you might flourish. Look for overlap in your gifts and passions, the world’s needs, and God’s priorities.

A variety of personality and giftings assessments such as Strengths Finder 2.0, Myers-Briggs, Predictive Index, Career Direct, Discovering Your Giftedness, and others can be useful. We prefer the SHAPE assessment, which is more rounded, and includes Spiritual gifts, Heart motivations and passions, Abilities and aptitudes, Personality, and Experiences.



Some realities of career.

- 1. The first reality is that your journey may take longer than you thought.** In his book, *The Making of a Leader*, Robert Clinton, looks at the stages of development of a leader. The framework has rough application for career journey expectations. The big idea is that for most people, our age ranges somewhat correspond to career advancement and effectiveness. The 20s are about building character and establishing a good root system for growth. You are answering the question, “Who am I becoming?”
- 2. Putting in the time.** A second thing you need to know is that it typically takes thousands of hours in a field to become an expert at something. That is of course if you have the aptitude for what you are doing and a good work ethic.
- 3. Pay the bills.** You also need to think about your current responsibilities. Part of being an adult is meeting your responsibilities, which may include working in jobs you don’t like.
- 4. Experimenting.** You may need to explore various occupations to get an idea of what you like and don’t like. Don’t, however, quit a job at first frustration. God often uses unpleasant contexts to develop endurance, patience, and contentment. “Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.” (Romans 5:3-4)
- 5. Obstacles to Career Paths.** Life happens. Things may not go as you planned. We live in a fallen world where things often don’t happen as God designed them. You may experience obstacles to working in a career that best fits how God made you. Some obstacles may be able to be overcome, some may not. Before giving up, press into God’s will for your life now. He’s a big God and no barrier is too big for Him to overcome. Some barriers include parental pressure, injustice, poor choices by you, lack of opportunity, or inexperience.
- 6. Faithfulness.** You also need to be faithful to do your best where you are with what you have. For Whom are you working? Also, how can you faithfully contribute to those around you?
- 7. Choose something.** God may not call you to a specific job, but instead let you choose from various options.
- 8. Follow your passion. Or not!** Contrary to popular culture’s advice to follow your passion and do what you love, life’s responsibilities of paying the bills may require doing work that you aren’t passionate about. Sometimes people simply don’t want to pay for what you are passionate about doing. You may need to pursue a job that meets your responsibilities (and learn to excel at it both in attitude and aptitude) and pursue your passion as a hobby or avocation (something you feel called to do but don’t get paid to do.) Dr. Bill Hendricks notes in his article, *Please, DON'T Follow Your Passion!*, the pitfalls of using passion as a career guide. He instead recommends considering your giftings and motivation as a better reference point for career decision-making.

9. *“Secular” occupations reflect God’s image and what He wants done.* No virtual signaling here! Don’t believe the lie that spiritually meaningful occupations are found only in the Church. In his book, *Faith Goes to Work*, Robert Banks, notes categories of work that reflect God’s image.

Redemptive work: God’s saving and reconciling actions. Occupations include: pastors, counselors, writers, artists, producers, songwriters, poets, actors, novelists.

Creative work: God’s fashioning of the physical and human world. Occupations include: artists and craftsmen

Providential work: God’s provision for and sustaining of humans and the creation. A lot of blue and white collar jobs fall into this category.

Justice work: God’s maintenance of justice. Occupations include: judges, lawyers, policy researchers, diplomats, law enforcement, and so on

Compassionate work: God’s involvement in comforting, healing, guiding, and shepherding. Health care, pharmacists, non-profit workers, etc... are in this category

Revelatory work: God’s work to enlighten with truth. Occupations include preachers, scientists, journalists, scholars, teachers, and so on.

Finding a job that is a good fit for your giftings, and working hard at it, can bring many benefits. *The “right” job for you is one in which there is a good match between the way God has designed you and a job requiring someone with your abilities.* *Your Work Matters to God*, Sherman & Hendricks

Ask Your Mentor

Mentee: Use the below questions or draw from others at this link: [occupational informational interview questions](#).

1. How did you choose your career?
2. What aptitudes most one have to do well in this job?
3. What do you like about your job? What do you dislike?
4. What are some things you wish you would have known when you started your work career?
5. What’s “the day in the life of” for you in this occupation?
6. What’s it looked like to trust God with your career journey? Any advice that you can give to me?

Go Do

Action step. Learn more about this occupation. Ask your mentor, “who are other people in this occupation that you know that I could interview?” Then go interview them.

Go Deeper: Further Conversation & Study

1. What advice would you give to students or young professionals starting their career?
2. What have been the difficult parts of your career path and what have you learned from them?
3. To mentor: did you experience any of the obstacles mentioned. For protégé: are there any obstacles you are currently facing?
4. The link under Ask Your Mentor gives a lot more great questions.

Sources & Resources

- How Do You Know You’re In the “Right” Job?, www.BillHendricks.net

- Mike Rowe: Don't Pursue Your Passion. Chase Opportunity, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KF0AN4H3U8>
- Your Work Matters to God, Sherman & Hendricks,
- Kingdom Calling, Amy Sherman