

## Career Dilemmas

**I'm going into the 10<sup>th</sup> grade this year and I'm at that point in life where I have to start making some decisions on what I'm going to do after high school. Thing is, I don't have a clue what I want to do for a career. Is there any advice?**

You are wise in asking for advice. There are so many opportunities available to us in America that it can be overwhelming. There are so many teenagers at a crossroad where they are being encouraged to determine a career path for the rest of their lives. Some young people that I talk with have known for a long time what they want to be, but to be quite honest, you are not alone. Many, if not most students are in the same boat as you are when it comes to planning their future.

There are many practical things you can do to help determine what direction you want to go in. Talk to your school counselor and do a career assessment or aptitude test to show where your natural interests and abilities are. In our area there is a technical college that actually offers a course to help gauge your interests. Plus, many local colleges offer the same services. From there you can research what kind of education you may need.

Each person is created to be unique. A friend of mine loves creative writing, the arts and photography and she writes newsletters, comes up with marketing ideas and does event planning. Still, her brother is totally the opposite: a whiz at math, science and has gone on to be a pilot. One career is creative, unstructured and is constantly changing, while the other is very structured. Let's face it; there's not a lot of creative liberty when you're flying an airplane!

Because of these differences, there are many things to consider when looking at career paths: Do you like working in groups or alone? Do you like more technical projects like fixing things or solving mathematical problems, or do you prefer those that require more creative liberties like writing or graphic arts? Are you more satisfied working in a structured atmosphere or one that is constantly changing with new challenges? These are things that a good career counselor or program will use to help determine the most suitable career path for you.

Still, there are other things that we suggest you try, and they are not only good for you, but provide valuable information for future resumes or college applications. Plus, you'll be helping others around you at the same time. It's a win-win for everyone involved. Volunteer! There are many organizations looking for people who are willing to help out. Is there a group that you're passionate about and respect their mission? Volunteer and find out more about different types of jobs within the organization and what education the various people have.

Most of all, find something that you are passionate about. I am saddened every time I hear of someone who pursued a career with money as their only motive. They are often the most unfulfilled people I know. There's nothing wrong with pursuing a career that earns lots of money, but it shouldn't be the primary goal. A career is not meant to only fulfill your own desires; more importantly, it is meant to be a service to others and your community. Find who the people are that you want to serve, and chances are you will find your career there as well.

Seek the counsel of others in your life. Speak with your parents, your friends and your youth pastor. Ask questions like, "What do you picture me doing in ten years?" Or "What type of job do you think I'd be good at?" Many times, others are more perceptive at seeing our gifts than we are. Another really good idea is to ask your youth pastor about taking a spiritual gift analysis. This will often reveal things that might not show up on the aptitude test.

And lastly, do not be discouraged. There is a beautiful path ahead of you that no one but God could know. He has plans for you that are beyond your own, and he will use your life experiences to form who you are becoming. Yes, He will even use our mistakes to teach us incredible lessons about life. Trust that no matter what direction life takes you, he will be there to guide you. There are a lot of plans that we can make, but to be all that God created us to be means holding on to our plans loosely and letting Him direct our paths. He has plans for your future that are good! (Jeremiah 29:11) Seek Him and be obedient to Him and your life will leave a legacy of beauty and righteousness.

"In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps." – Proverbs 16:9

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