

Help; I'm not in my vocation. What do I do now?

By: Dick Copeland

You have a clear theological understanding of vocation, have followed all the steps to knowing your true vocation, and you're convinced that God really wants you to live the life He's planned for you.

There's just one small problem . . . your job isn't in your vocation. A quick look at your savings account says you think you can't afford to quit your job and wait for God to drop the new one into your lap. Transitions are always difficult, but this one — moving into your authentic vocation — is one of the most frustrating.

So how do you go about changing vocations when it requires changing jobs? Let's see if we can find a solution by dispelling a myth that is a stumbling block to living the "perfect life."

MYTH: "Vocations are in the church; jobs are in the world."

This is one of the oldest legends in my memory bank. It used to read "get ordained." Now, thanks to the development of authentic lay ministry, that's been put to rest. However, its new incarnation is, "get a job in the church." That's a wonderful strategy, and I heartily endorse it, except for one thing: vocations come not only with jobs attached, they come with calls to special environments. Just playing the odds, your environment is probably in "the real world." Most churches can't afford large staffs with specialized skills. So, to use an old phrase, "Bloom where you are planted."

Convinced? Congratulations! You've just become a career Christian.

Now the new question is, "How do I become not just a career Christian, but a successful career Christian."

Ten Steps to Living Your Vocation

1. Begin a program of extreme self care. Stop tolerating things that distract you from your true mission in life. You are a child of God with infinite value. Start treating yourself that way.
2. Assess your current situation. By changing your attitude or some aspects of your current situation you may be closer to living your true life than you think.
3. Silence your Inner Posse. Get rid of old voices in your head that block your progress.
4. Do a fearless and searching self inventory. If you've ever been around a 12-step program, you'll know this is one of the key steps. However, this one is about your strengths, gifts and talents.

5. Transform your history. Do an assessment of all you've learned in your journey with God. How has He used you in the past? He'll probably use you that way in the future.
6. Have a clear and compelling vision. Know where the promised land is. Write a personal vision and mission statement.
7. It's a journey not a destination. Enjoy the trip. Fear is a normal reaction to change. Tap into your faith and overcome it.
8. Be all you can be right now. Practice the principles of attraction. Live up to your personal values.
9. Develop a Barnabas team. Gather good friends who are willing to give you honest feedback coupled with massive doses of encouragement. Get a coach. Get some good books on career changes.
10. Go for it! Don't get caught in paralysis by analysis. Put your plan into immediate action. Finding your vocational job has just become your full time job, and whatever you're doing now is a "bridge job."