

DISCOVERING YOUR VOCATION

Slowing down to reflect on your future is not easy. You have classes to attend, papers to write, people to see and sports to play. The trick is to find a way to deal with the busyness of school, do well in your courses, but not flunk in your career planning. This page provides a place to start. For more information on these and other career planning areas, see John Krueger's book *Discovering Your Vocation: A Student's Guide to Discerning God's Call*, available in the library, from CELC, and is free to download below.

The Bible and Job Satisfaction

Scripture won't tell you to be a computer programmer, teacher or physiotherapist. The Bible *can* show you three essential needs that you must address in order to have a sense of well-being in your future career. The most satisfied employees are those who are content with their pay, have freedom to express their gifts, and feel they are serving others in a meaningful way. These people are not just earning a living; their vocation gives them *life*.

They've addressed their need for 3 essential aspects of job satisfaction: provision (money), expression (gift development), and mission (love and meaning). Each one of these values is an aspect of God's very character because the Lord is Provider, Creator and Redeemer. And being made in God's image, these needs are inherently bound up with your calling.

The prescription for job satisfaction is to prioritize these needs to fit how God has designed you. Be honest about your preferences. Then you'll be able to make realistic choices.

Try the following exercise as a means to understanding what you may need to find job satisfaction. Write down the appropriate number for each question to indicate how closely you agree with the statements. Based upon your answers, what elements are essential for your job satisfaction? What are the implications for your choice of an academic major and career options?

1. **PROVISION:** How important is your source of income to your comfort level?

I need enough money to live on; beyond that I'm not too concerned about income. I have other priorities.

1 2 3 4 5

A good income is very important to my sense of well-being. I naturally think a lot about money, for my own needs, and how I can use it to help others.

2. **EXPRESSION:** How important is it that you develop your gifts and use your creativity in your career?

I can feel job satisfaction through carrying out the desires of my employer, without giving much expression to my gifts on the job.

1 2 3 4 5

Using and developing my gifts is intricately connected to job satisfaction for me.

3. **MISSION:** Can you be satisfied with serving Christ in what may *seem* to be an indirect expression of love towards others. Or do you need more direct ways to express love and provide meaning?

I'm satisfied to express love at church and volunteer work and do not need my job to provide this.

1 2 3 4 5

Since I will be spending so much energy in a career, I need to have a sense that I'm expressing Christ's love to others by assisting peoples' growth or relieving their suffering.

4. **VARIETY vs ROUTINE:** Most people like some variety in their work, but for some, too much variety takes them out of their comfort zone because they need more routine to feel settled. For others, too much routine bores them because they need variety to feel energized in their work.

I predominately need a set routine at work so that I can feel settled and do my best.

1 2 3 4 5

I predominately need variety at work so I can be energized to do my best.

The First Inklings of Your Call

The word “vocation” means “to listen,” which presumes Someone is speaking. If so, how is God’s call actually heard? What might the first whispers of His voice “sound” like?

1. The Call Begins Simply

Your call is experienced as a simple desire—perhaps through getting to know someone you respect: an effective teacher or youth leader. You may know little about their educational background, but when you think about what they do, a desire is kindled in your heart. When people ask you about your future, perhaps all you can say is that you want to “help people.” Clarifying the best career for this goal should happen as you focus your studies and gain experience.

2. The Call Comes with Peace

When you have an authentic vocational desire, the right academic major or career path strikes you as “good news.” Perhaps when thinking about a particular vocation, you feel

like you have "come home" and experience a genuine sense of peace. This is not the false peace which comes from getting a decision off your back, but a deep intuitive sense that the decision fits with how God has designed you.

3. **The Call Keeps Developing**

You could probably identify phases where a new career idea thrilled you—for a short time. A real vocational call is not so fickle. It may ebb and flow, but if the call is true, it will take on a life of its own. There will be growing momentum as you research essays, access career information and talk to people in your field of interest. You will find yourself saying, "The longer I consider this vocation, the better I feel about it."

4. **The Call May Seem Impossible**

Hearing the first inklings of your vocation can *sometimes* be unsettling, because the Lord may call forth your unrealized potential. It's no wonder certain careers can seem impossible to you now, when you haven't developed the skills they require. Based upon a little knowledge and experience, you *hope* to become a social worker or teacher. The uncertainty is normal because what you cannot do today, you may be able to do five years from now.

What to Do If You Don't Know What to Do

1. **Make Time - Turn the clock into a compass**

Set aside a season of the year—a time to dedicate yourself to finding your vocation. The goal over these three months is to generate lots of R & R (reflection and research).

2. **Write - Look Behind to See the Way Ahead**

Start by simply listing significant memories—those activities you chose to do freely and which you found intrinsically rewarding. Write small vignettes or stories which describe the memory. Be concrete. Read back over your written sketches. Ask yourself, "What was I doing when I felt deeply motivated? What skills did I use? Summarize what you find.

3. **Career Tests - "Vocational Blood Work"**

They provide a basic reading of your interest and temperament through comparing your responses to hundreds of employees in many fields of work. Tests are not a scroll unfurled from heaven. All material must be validated or discarded by the one who has the inside story—you! Redeemer offers the JVSI test - contact us to arrange for a test!

4. **Information Interviews - The Voice of Experience**

Speak with employees who are in professions which interest you. Arrange to talk with a 3rd or 4th year student who is majoring in an area that you are considering. Arrange for a meeting with a faculty member in your department. Ask them what fascinates them about their area of study and what some graduates have done. Ask to see some course syllabuses.

5. **Go to the Campus Bookstore - Get Some Impressions**

Peruse the texts and novels in prospective courses. This will give you a further sense concerning whether the major is a good fit for you.

6. **Expand Your Experience - Service, Learning and Leadership**

The problem of myopic vision—we tend to over-rate background influences. Change often begins with new experiences. Experience allows you to *try on* a prospective career to feel the fit and make sure it does not rub you the wrong way!

7. **Test Your Career Options - Assume Nothing**

What qualifications are needed? What experiences have given you a feel for this career? How satisfied would you be in this job? Do your “motivated abilities” (deepest desires and developing skills) support this career option? Arrange to do a career inventory and personality test to see which occupations received the highest score and validate your desire and gifts. What are the employment prospects for this job?

8. **Bring Your Career Agenda to Class - Use Your Education**

If you know your career options before assignments are given, you can avoid writing a hodgepodge of papers with no career focus. When possible, use your assignments to learn more about your career interests.

9. **Research Career Options - Get the Basic Information**

Visit the “What Can I Do With a Degree In.....?” page for a comprehensive look at majors offered at Redeemer and a sample listing of the jobs our graduates have obtained with their Redeemer degree. Many good websites are available for your research, but a good place to start is the Canadian Government’s official job sites such as the **National Occupation Classification** and **Job Futures**.

John Krueger’s book *Discovering Your Vocation: A Student’s Guide to Discerning God’s Call* links:

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)