

THE STEWARDSHIP OF VOCATION

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Vocation

The word, “vocation”, has its origin in the Latin word, “vocatio”, meaning, “call”. A synonym would be, “occupation”. God created individual abilities within people and calls them to pursue specific functions in life. Christian stewardship involves managing those talents in a productive, God-pleasing way.

Choosing a Vocation

“What are you going to be when you grow up?”, is a common question put to little children. “A fireman, policeman, or astronaut!”, is a frequent reply. Teens should be more realistic and seriously ponder the implications of a particular vocation. Arriving at an answer should not be haphazard. Waiting for a special dream, miraculous sign or traumatic vision is not the way to go. Common sanctified sense coupled with prayer for guidance should point the way. The following questions should be answered:

What am I good at?

What do I enjoy and love to do?

Will my vocation be God-pleasing?

It would be also wise to consult mature Christians for advice.

Vocational Success

The goal in one’s occupation, of course, is to be successful. Success does not come easily. It is not automatic. The road to success involves determination, hard work and prayer. Some college graduates optimistically look for immediate success on the basis of a scholastic degree. What jaw dropping disappointment when the job they get doesn’t fit their degree and is somewhat disagreeable. Expecting immediate success is unrealistic. Even when the job position fits the degree, much is to be done. The road to success is paved with *sacrifice, patience and failure*, three words people do not like to hear. A review of the lives of successful people in history will reveal struggles, setbacks, disappointments and failures. The life of Abraham Lincoln, for example, was not an easy one. But sacrifice, patience and facing up to failures led to success. The same holds true for St. Paul, Jan Hus, Martin Luther, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Galileo, George Washington, Einstein and a host of others.

Sacrifice

We live in a command/demand push-button society that loathes sacrifice. Many parents shield their children from giving up things by lavishing them with material things. Is it any wonder that society has to put up with a multitude of selfish, demanding, obnoxious brats who never really grew up be productive assets? Christian children, however, versed in Scripture, learn the beauty of sacrificial living & giving through the sacrificial life and redemption of Jesus. The Christian virtue of sacrifice should prevail to govern the pursuit and fulfillment of a vocation.

Patience

Jesus, fulfilling rabbinical law, waited until he was thirty to enter his public ministry. The normal time of theological preparation is currently eight years for Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod pastors. It takes time and patience to reach a vocational goal. Once reached, there is no guarantee of an easy ride. Once Jesus entered His teaching ministry, he was both adored and despised. He was not a prosperity preacher inviting people to jump aboard a golden chariot full of free-bee goodies pulled by stunning white stallions. He talked about self-denial, patience in suffering and faith-filled trust in God’s will. (Matt. 16:24) Prayerful patience is a must in pursuing and fulfilling a vocation.

Failure

Failures should be stepping stones to success and not a dismal pit of demise. To His enemies, Christ’s agonizing suffering, crucifixion and death depicted ultimate failure. Not so. His divine vocation was perfectly fulfilled. He achieved the goal of eternal life for us through His sinless life and redeeming sacrifice. Our occupations sometimes become roller coaster rides of reversals, setbacks and failures. Their effect, leading to anger, disappointment and depression, can lead to drink, drugs and defeat. Instead of wallowing in the mud of self pity, stand tall. Pick up the pieces. Put the puzzle parts of life together. Construct a beautiful picture vision of your vocation fulfilled to God’s pleasure by meeting challenges and failures with patient sacrifice, prayerful faith and Christian determination.