



“By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:27).

Choosing Life’s Vocation

Central Truth: Your vocation in life should reflect the will of God.

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Topic: Moses; Work.

“What are you going to be when you grow up?” How many times has that question been asked of a child? It is a very important question. What one does with his life is a part of the stewardship of life before God. “What would Jesus do?” is an appropriate question to ask when choosing one's life's vocation. Your vocation must not be determined by how much money you could make or how much authority you could exercise. It must reflect the will of God for your life.

James 5:13-15 rebukes those who make decisions without considering God's will. Instead of saying, “I will move to a certain city, engage in a certain trade, and make a profit,” you should say, “If the Lord wills, I will live and do thus and so.” The Lord's will must be placed before any personal plans.

Let us examine Moses' choice of his vocation. It can give some guidelines by which we can evaluate our choices for the rest of our lives.

Options in Choosing a Vocation

Personal ambitions might determine your choice of your life's work. Is your goal in life to make a lot of money, to hold a position of authority, or to be popular among your peers? Moses had the opportunity to do all of that. He was a prince of Egypt, an adopted son of Pharaoh's own daughter. All the resources of the greatest nation in the world were his. But he realized that there was something else in life of far greater value. He

asked the question, “How can I best invest my life in serving people to the glory of God?” Personal ambitions were slain by that question. Are you living by that principle?

Peer pressure might determine your vocation. What do people (family and friends) expect you to do with your life? Philippians 2:5-8 sets Jesus as your example in your surrender of personal privileges in order to do the will of God. The question is not what people think you should do but what God expects from you. Any of Moses' friends would have urged him to remain a prince of Egypt and not identify with Hebrew slaves. Will you follow the opinions of people or the leading of God in your professional life?

Personal observation might determine your vocation. What needs do you see? What are the areas of your concern for people? Moses felt sympathy for the Hebrews who were suffering abuse under their Egyptian taskmasters. His sympathy for them moved him to seek to relieve their distress. Blessed is the person whose vocation in life provides goods or services which meet people's needs.

It may be too late in life for you to change your profession. But you can influence those younger than you in their choice. Or you may still be young enough to retrain and enter a work that will honor God while it serves the needs of your peers and provides a livelihood for your family. If you are in such a position now, thank God, be content, and work diligently.

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). *“Whatsoever ye do”* includes your profession. You can make it glorify God. What a privilege it is to make a living and glorify God at the same time!

Influences in Choosing a Vocation

What influenced you in choosing your vocation? Was it a person, a need in the community, an opportunity to make a lot of money, your natural talent, an opportunity to help people in need, a sense of God's appointment, or what? When your vocation agrees with your natural talent and God's will, you can be contented.

Parental influence is a great factor for many people in choosing their life's work. The faith of Moses' parents in hiding him as an infant and rearing him as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter made possible his work. Imagine how many times Moses' mother spoke to the baby of his heritage as a member of the Hebrew nation and heir to God's promises. It is no wonder that he chose to visit *“his brethren,”* the Hebrews, that he came to the rescue of one being abused, and that he was used of God to lead them from

Egyptian bondage to their inheritance in Canaan.

Parents influence their children in every generation. Read the Old Testament and notice how many times it records, *“He walked in the way of his father”* (I Kings 22:52). One time it reports, *“His mother was his counsellor to do wickedly”* (II Chronicles 22:3). Parents should influence their children toward an honorable vocation, but they should not make those choices for them. It is enough for the parent to influence the child toward a honorable vocation which agrees with his natural talents and the will of God.

Consequences in Choosing a Vocation

Unpleasant consequences may follow your choice of a vocation. In spite of your best efforts and most honorable intention, it might cost you. Consider what it cost Moses when he identified himself with the enslaved Hebrews.

There may be a rejection by your peers. When I resolved to give my life to serve the Lord in the gospel ministry, I lost some of my associates whose interests were elsewhere. Moses experienced the same. In an attempt to rescue a Hebrew who was being abused, he killed an Egyptian. Knowing the consequences of such an act, he buried the Egyptian in the sand. But the word got out. When he tried to settle an argument between two Hebrews, one of them said, *“Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?”* (Acts 7:27, 28). His peers accepted him as long as he pleased them, but they rejected him the moment he objected to their behavior. You might expect some to be opposed to or reject you because of your vocation.

There may be a misunderstanding of your motives. Moses supposed that the Hebrews would recognize that God had placed him in Pharaoh's palace so he could be influential in releasing them from their slavery (Acts 7:25). He was so sure that he was doing God's will that he was surprised that his peers did not realize it. It is possible that some will not understand your choice of a vocation. But remember that your life's work is a decision between you and God.

Another cost in your choice of a vocation may be the loss of privileges you otherwise would have. The Bible reports, *“Then fled Moses . . . and was a stranger in the land of Madian”* (Acts 7:29). Consider what he lost. He lost the privileges of the palace: care by servants, the luxury of being a prince of Egypt, comforts of a house, wealth beyond estimation, the opportunity to exercise power, and the prestige of being the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He fled into the wilderness and endured the privations of a

shepherd's life in a semiarid region. Do you suppose he ever had second thoughts about his decision to identify with the Hebrews?

Thank God for faithful men and women of God who have entered professions with less salary and prestige because they knew it to be the best. It is no great sacrifice to make such a choice if, like Moses, you consider the end result of your life.

There will be pleasant consequences in your choice of a vocation. Look at what Moses experienced from his choice of a life lived for God. (1) He experienced a personal call of God at the burning bush (Exodus 3). You can expect to meet God when you resolve to walk in His way. (2) He received a personal revelation from God (Numbers 12:6-8). God said of Moses, "*With him will I speak mouth to mouth . . . and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold*" (Numbers 12:8). God promises to reveal himself to you as you follow Him. (3) He received a personal ministry from God to deliver his nation from bondage into their promised land. You will find no greater work in the world than the work God has assigned to you. What a privilege it is to serve God as a plumber, farmer, merchant, teacher, or other honorable worker. (4) He has received the respect of multitudes through the ages, and he still does today. We remember the people who have blessed us. People will remember you if you serve God by serving people in His name.

You will lose something by living for God. But what you lose is so much less than what you gain that it is not worthy to be compared. Make a decision to pursue your profession as not only a means of livelihood but also a way to honor God.

Elements in Choosing a Vocation

How should a young man or woman go about choosing the vocation he will follow? Here are four guidelines to follow.

Identify your qualifications. First, consider your natural talents. Are you gifted in a particular area that could be related to a method of making a living? Then, consider your spiritual gift. Your natural talent and spiritual gift can combine to enable a wonderful life's work. Next, consider what acquired skills (training) you will need for the work toward which you are attracted.

Identify the human needs which you can fill. Your income should be based on how well you provide goods or services which meet the needs of people about you. Whom will you serve and what will you supply to people in your chosen field?

Identify the financial rewards of a chosen vocation. You must make

money enough to provide for yourself and your family. You must make enough money beyond your needs that you can give to help other people in need. There is nothing unspiritual about seeking a profession which will provide sufficient income.

Identify the will of God for your life and follow it. Tell God, “Father, I want to do Your will in all of my life. I am attracted to so-and-so vocation. Show me if that is Your will for me.” Trust Him to make your direction clear, and He will do it. *“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths”* (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

Our secular society considers a person to be a “success” only if he makes a lot of money or wields great power. Jesus said the great person was the one who served others (Mark 10:44). Most of you who read these words have already chosen your vocation. Some of you may be retired. But you can influence those younger than you and use the rest of your years in the will of God.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is a vocation?
2. What is the profession you have followed in your adult life?
3. In what way did you serve God in that vocation?
4. What influenced you to enter that line of work?
5. What pleasant consequences followed upon your choice?
6. What goods or services have you provided people by your work?
7. How does natural talent relate to the choice of a vocation?
8. How can a person be counted a “success” even if he does not make a lot of money?
9. How can you influence young people in the choice of a vocation?
10. How does asking, “What would Jesus do?” influence a vocational choice?
11. How has this study helped you personally?