

OPEN UP

1. In your present circumstances and career, what are the things that makes you happy?
2. Did you have a hard time knowing your “calling?” or are you still searching for it up to now? Share your struggles.
3. What are the “deep hungers” ing your workplace or community?

WORK OUT

Start focusing on your relationship with God and knowing what could be so fulfilling on your present job. Be keen enough to know the deep hungers in your workplace or wherever you are.



Lesson 3 : JOB OR CALLING?

GET STARTED

If your career did not turn out as it is today, where (field) would you prefer working at? And what could be so interesting about it?

REFLECT

Many of us have a transactional view of our jobs. We do this, we get paid. There’s nothing wrong in working for wages. After all, we do need money to meet our needs. Some can even take jobs they would rather not do, if given a choice, for the sake of their loved ones. But money alone doesn’t guarantee job satisfaction.

Consider this:

Would you rather be handsomely paid but miserable, or adequately paid but happy?

I suspect we would choose the latter. But the reality is that many people choose a college course and profession based on how lucrative they are perceived to be. Then when boredom or stress takes its toll, the paycheque loses its luster. The employee then endures the daily grind of his job, consoling himself with “at least when I get paid, I can buy whatever I want.”

One who feels this way may “jump ship” to another employer. He experiences the initial thrill of having a new job, higher rank, and bigger pay check. Eventually, however, he realises the greater pay and positions carry heavier responsibilities and pressure, Boredom or stress the creeps in again.

Calling breaks this cycle. It quenches our heart-thirst for personal significance in a way that money never can. But

1. Calling is a grand adventure.

This concept may conjure up expectations of meeting high-powered people, exploring exotic places, or creating world-shaking events. But calling does not have to be spectacular. It can thrive even in what others would disdain as mundane tasks. A factory worker may grumble about his repetitious work in the assembly line. But if he sees his job as a calling - for example, to provide his fellowmen with excellent products, then he will delight in being the most productive worker he can be.

2. Calling first before career.

The second misconception is that we must identify our calling before we choose our career. Well, that would be the ideal case. There are indeed the fortunate few who take a thorough inventory of their values, passions, skills, and opportunities. Then they pursue the career that best fits that inventory. This may seem too late for many people, especially those who have been in their professions for years and would not find it easy to shift. The good news is that it is possible to find your calling within the job you already have. Calling is not some elusive, magical element. But we must pay the price of pondering over it and stepping forth in courage.

How do you find your calling then?

1. Focus on the best foundation-a relationship with God.

This is the first step in finding our calling and is the best foundation because we all long for a purpose much grander than simply making money, pursuing fame, or indulging pleasure. We want our lives to count. Most important, we want our calling to come from Someone transcendent, all-wise, and all-loving.

2. Find fulfilment in knowing your strength and in helping others.

You may have heard of a pastor or priest who said he was “called” to the ministry. Interestingly, we seldom hear someone say that he is “called” to be a businessman, accountant or a call centre agent. The basic principle is that God, in His sovereign wisdom, has given us our particular personalities, experiences, and talents. Then He puts us where we are now. One does not need to hear a booming voice from heaven to know what one’s calling is.

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

-FREDRICK BUECHNER

As yourself, what tasks or roles give you the deepest gladness? What are those “deep hungers” within the people around you? In your present circumstances, where do you find the two intersecting? The answers to these questions can be the birthplace of your calling.

3. Be concerned on how you can give a positive impact.

Pay attention to the advertising of some companies. What are they really selling? For example, real estate developers do not see themselves as merely selling a roof and four walls. Rather, they emphasise that they are offering safe and beautiful communities where one can raise a happy family. Similarly, what do your products or services really offer? Therefore, how can your work make an impact on other people’s lives?

A very good example of this is the story of Joseph the dreamer, found in the book of Genesis. What seemed to him as dead-end jobs turned out to be valuable training ground for a God-orchestrated career path.

4. Seek wisdom from the experienced ones.

Consult people who are known for their wisdom, success, and integrity. How did they find their calling? What advice can they share with you? One note of caution though. They should never tell you what your calling is. Your calling is for you to discover and own. What they can do is to guide, comment, and affirm.

5. Write insights from your experiences.

Write down whatever insights you have gathered. Your calling may reveal itself in an “a-ha!” moment. More likely, though, will appear as a vague notion. Don’t be discouraged. Keep thinking about your calling, and it will take on recognisable shape until it comes into intense focus.

The happiest workers are not necessarily the richest or most powerful. Rather, they are the ones who know what their lives are really all about. They are the ones who embrace their work as their glad offering to a kind and wonderful Master.