

Vocation or Job?

If a poll was taken of who history's greatest leaders are, Moses' name would appear prominently. Scripture tells us that Moses was a larger-than-life person, with fascinating life and work experiences. Much can be said about him. But, for our purposes, let us focus on a workplace experience, which changed his life and the course of history. Moses learned the meaning of *vocation* and *job* (see Exodus, 3: 1-15).

Vocation means **being** with God, and then **doing** (working) with God, in that order. By contrast, a *job* is what we **do**. With *vocation*, we carry out God's plans for us and other people. With *job*, more often than not, we take what we can get, and pursue our own needs. *Vocation* brings meaning, joy and fulfillment. A *job* can be satisfying; but, it can also be tedious, boring, insecure and awful.

Exodus tells us that Moses had two jobs while he was in Egypt. First, he was as an Egyptian prince, commanding the construction of great monuments and cities. This job helped Moses learn leadership; but, his job did not last long. One day, Moses was discovered to be the son of Hebrew slaves. Immediately, he was thrown out of Pharaoh's palace. He lost his job, prestige and freedom. He was sent to live with Hebrew slaves.

Moses' second job was as a slave, laboring where he used to command. But, this job helped Moses develop compassion. When he saw an overseer abusing a Hebrew slave, he murdered the overseer. Pharaoh was furious, and banished Moses from Egypt.

Moses' job experiences in Egypt taught him how vulnerable we are in the workplace. Life is capricious. Our jobs can be snatched away by circumstances we cannot control.

Moses' next job was in the wilderness as a shepherd. In that dreary workplace setting, God came to Moses, and offered him a *vocation*. God wanted Moses to liberate the Hebrew slaves, and lead them out of Egypt. God would be with Moses and help him every step of the way.

Moses struggled with this. It contradicted everything he knew. Our lives and work are in our hands. As Pharaoh's second-in-command, he had learned that rewards come through what we do. The more we do, the more we get. The more we get, the happier we'll be. We define ourselves by what we accomplish, and what other people say.

God was persistent, explaining that Moses could continue allowing life to control him, or allow God and him to take control. He could embrace self, and never experience anything greater than self, or embrace God - by turning and listening (which Moses was doing) - and experience reality beyond anything that he had dreamed of.

At the core of what God was trying to teach Moses about *vocation* and *job* is how we respond to life's purpose. The purpose of life is to be with God. Our decision to be with God enables us to experience life as it can be - not as the workplace or anything else

dictates. With God, we will do more than we dreamed possible - precisely because we are responding to God.

Moses listened to God, learned from God, and then worked with God to make the 'impossible,' real. Like Moses, we will do greater things than we imagined as we respond to God. Economic cycles, government policies and employers need not control us. God offers us Moses' example to assure and inspire us.

What is your vocation? Ask God. Then, listen and wait. God will answer.

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