

Self-Inventory Questions for Clarification

Your career plans and vocational decisions are shaped by past, present, and anticipated future events. In all of these the Holy Spirit is at work in your life. Out of these experiences you form an image or picture of yourself in a particular type of career. It is a part of your total self- image of yourself as a Christian in God's world today. In this context you make your decisions about your career. As you reflect upon each of the following areas, answer the questions in relation to your current or intended career. You may want to keep your answers in the form of a journal to share with your pastor or other mentor.

Your Relationship to God. Understanding God's activity affects a person's values, priorities, and attitudes about life.

- What are my ultimate allegiances or basic assumptions I make about life?
- How do I identify God's presence in my life'? In the world?
- Am I fully committed to God? How do I express this?
- How can I use my career to express God's love in today's world'?
- What have I been taught about God? How does this relate to my experience of God in my life'?
- How is God's purpose (will, intention) related to my career decisions? Am I really able to decide what I will do?

Your Relationship with Others. A person's motivations, goals, interests, and life perspective are greatly influenced by the ways that others have responded to her/him from infancy through the present. We tend to move from dependence, to independence, and then to interdependence (cooperation) with important persons in our lives.

- How do I react to members of my family, such as mother, father, sisters, brothers, and . other relatives'? Why?
- What kind of persons do I most enjoy? Most dislike? Why?
- How do others see me? Do I like or agree with their perceptions?
- How do I deal with .persons who have authority over me, such as employers, group leaders, teachers, or governing authorities?
- What happens when other person disappoint me? How do I react? Do I prefer being with people, or being alone? When?
- Do I feel that certain relatives or friends expect me to enter a particular career or do certain things? Is this encouraging or oppressive to me?
- If I could take three persons on a trip to Mars, who would they be? Why?

Motivations. Motivation is the drive that keeps a person going through life. Motives usually combine past experiences and future goals to implement important values and beliefs of the person. Describing and clarifying one's motives may be a way to discover God's grace in one's life.

- What do I want to accomplish in my life?
- What gives me joy, pain, encouragement, fear, hope, confidence?
- When I must choose between two desirable tasks, which do I choose? Why?
- What rewards or results do I most want from my career?
- If I could shape a career to fit me, what would it be?
- What do my family and friends think of me? What do they like or dislike about me? Why?
- How do I define success in a career? In life?
- What do others (whose opinion I value) think of my career plans?
- What would I like to be doing five or ten years from now? - What makes my life worthwhile? What keeps me going?

Interests. Interests consist of one's likes and dislikes (preferences) for activities, work settings, and relationships. When a person says that something is interesting, it means that there is some inner thrill or reward that is somehow related to that activity. Usually being able to do well in an activity will make it more interesting, so one's abilities and interests are often interrelated.

- What concerns me most about today's world? What would I change if I had opportunity I to do so?
- What school subjects have I enjoyed most? Disliked most?
- When I have free time, what do I do?
- Do I stay with certain interests, or am I bored easily? When does this happen?
- What is my pattern of interests? Do I balance active and quieter activities, or am I always active or always quiet?
- Do I enjoy being with a large group, with a few close friends, or being alone? When?
- How often do I enjoy each?
- What subjects do I read? Which parts of the newspaper or magazines do I read? Which do I ignore? What special topics do I try to learn about?
- Which fields do I know most about? Which would I like to study?
- What kinds of people do I prefer if I have a choice?
- Do I like to be the leader, the follower, or a member of the team?
- What hobbies, sports, fine arts, etc., do I enjoy most? Which of these do I like least? Why?

Abilities. There are many types of human abilities. Some are more easily seen in academic and educational settings, while others are observable only in one's relationships with other persons, in physical performance, or in times of stress or crises. The judgments of others also are involved in determining ability or talent in many areas.

- What do I feel good about doing, in the sense of knowing I can do it well? What strengths and resources do I have?
- Am I able to lead groups to complete a task? Can I keep harmony in a group while we accomplish the task?
- In which school subjects have I done my best work? Which subjects were unusually difficult. Why?
- What awards have I earned? When? What are my talents?
- What have others told me about my abilities? Were they correct in their judgement?
- When?
- What abilities could I develop if I decide to work at it?
- What are my limitations or deficiencies? How do I feel about them? Which ones do I need to overcome? Why?

Work Habits and Work Style. A person's work style is the way she or he puts motivations, interests, and abilities together to accomplish specific results.

- What work schedule do I prefer? How and when do I do my best work?
- Can I work independently, or do I need to have a supervisor to keep me working?
- Must I see immediate results of *my* work? Am I able to continue doing good work although results may be slow, delayed, or partial?
- How much of my work success is due to my ability, my determination, my personality, :)", and "circumstances?" Due to other factors?
- Am I able to adjust to unexpected changes in my work plans? How?
- How I resolve conflicts between important assignments or between competing authorities (managers, teachers, etc.)?
- How are work and recreation related for me?

Goals and Values. Goals represent a person's intentions about life and give direction to his/her activities. Goals may be general or specific and both long-range and short-range. Goals, purposes, and values involve the ordering of a person's priorities about life and careers.

- What are the three things I would most like to accomplish in my lifetime? In the next year?
- How does my commitment to Christ relate to other goals I intend? What secondary goals do I have?
- How do I know when I have accomplished a goal that I set'?
- What values and considerations are important to me as I set goals for myself?
- Can I set my own goals, or do others set goals for me? How do I relate these two sets of goals?
- How do I choose between competing claims on my time and resources?
- If I had only one week (or one year) to live, what would I do in that time?

Reactions and Feelings. Feelings of joy, love, gratitude, and well-being guide us to repeat (as much as possible) the behaviors that resulted in positive outcomes for us. Feelings of anxiety, fear, guilt, and sadness usually make us want to avoid whatever seemed to cause these painful results. Labels (words and phrases) help us to identify and differentiate our inner reactions to what is happening in our lives. Emotions are a very important part of our feedback system enabling us to become aware of the meanings of events for ourselves and for others.

- How do I cope with emotions relating to hunger, sex, power, loneliness, frustration, or leadership?
- What are my feelings about a specific event? Am I fully aware of all my reactions, both verbal and nonverbal?
- Am I afraid of any of my feelings? Of the feelings of others?
- What do I learn from my feelings?
- What are the relationships between my feelings and my physical functioning? For example, does anxiety produce headaches, nausea, or other physical reactions?
- Do I try to place emotions against thoughts, or are both different but equally important parts of the same person, me.
- Can I easily and appropriately express both positive and negative feelings, such as joy, sadness, appreciation, anger'?
- How do I react and respond to the feelings that others express?

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