

WELCOME TO CAREERS 10

To the Student:

So, you've been handed this resource and you might be feeling any number of emotions ranging from apathy to excitement; fear to joy; apprehension to jittery. It is, after all, about your future. It's about beginning to unpack what God might have in store for you as you join Him on this journey called life with less dependence on your parents, and more reliance on your own decisions, discernment and faith. You have every right to be either scared out of your wits or chomping at the bit to get started- or both!

Let me introduce myself. My name is Matt Bean. I have had many roles through my life and career, and I have learned lots through the amazing journey that God has called me on. I have taught for more than 12 years in elementary schools and high schools, been an adult educator, a tutor, a career coach, an entrepreneur, a university career advisor and internship coordinator. Add to that my many other roles: author, graphic designer, social media producer, website designer, husband, father of three growing children, church elder, community event planner, sound technician, singer, landscaper, gas attendant, camp counsellor, and the list could go on and on. Believe it or not, I'm not even 40 yet.

The great thing is that I'm still growing and learning. Adults don't have it all figured out, but we do have a bit more experience to draw from to inform our decisions and responses. Similarly, you're not going to figure out your whole future in an instant... or even in an amazing course (if I may say so myself). Therefore, be patient and hold loosely to any plans you make, because God could call you in a different direction at any point. Will you be ready to respond?

You are about to embark on this journey to prayerfully reflect on how God has uniquely designed you and investigate where God might be calling you to in your education, career and life. Whether you have detailed plans for your education and occupation(s) or you do not have a clue where to even begin, you will have the opportunity to learn, be challenged, and take the next steps into your future work and life.

The intention of this resource is not to give you a prescribed list of occupations for you to roll the dice and jump into; rather, you will be equipped to make more informed choices when the time comes regarding post-secondary pathways, taking into account your unique design, the changing nature of the workplace, work-life balance, planning and goal setting, managing finances, and securing employment.

I hope that you find the materials found both in these pages and in the resources online to bring you one step closer to determining what God might be calling you to: in your learning, working and living the Christian life to the fullest.

- Matt

Chapter 1

Personal

Development

Learning Goals

Students will understand that...

- career development is a life-long process involving planning, reflecting, adapting and decision-making
- maintaining a work-life balance is essential to personal wellness
- our individual identity is multi-faceted, God-designed, and worthwhile discovering as we develop a fulfilling career

Success Criteria

Students will be able to...

- describe the significance and complexity of career development
- explore and communicate career development learning through self-discovery and reflection
- demonstrate an awareness of skills, attitudes and strategies that contribute to career/life 'success'



1.1 Career Development

BIG IDEA:

Career development is a life-long process involving planning, reflecting, adapting and decision-making.

Career

A progression of roles and responsibilities at work and beyond throughout one's lifetime.

Career Development

The lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure, and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future.

Procrastinate

To put off important tasks to a later date, often because they are overwhelming or unfamiliar.

What is Career Development?



*This symbol means there are additional resources available on this topic in the student portal.

Career: it's a word you might have seen or heard often, but it's often not clear what is meant when it is used. Sometimes it is a synonym for a *job*, *occupation* or *profession*. For the purpose of this course, it is so much more: it encompasses the progression through various roles- both at work and beyond- throughout one's lifetime. It incorporates your education, work, volunteering, leisure, relationships, and your faith.

Career development, then, "is the lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure, and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future¹." By being a life-long process, it is far more than a one-time decision about 'what you want to be when you grow up.' It is a series of decisions and actions- intentional or unintentional- that inform your future reality.

Misconceptions about Career Development



One common misconception among Christian youth is that by planning and making decisions there is no room left for you to express faith in God that He will call you to specific roles and responsibilities. Often, however, it is a pious way to **procrastinate**. We have a responsibility to live out our faith: one that maintains a relationship with Jesus through spiritual habits, but also where we use our God-given brain to investigate, explore and make plans.

On the other side of the spectrum, some Christians form and hold onto their education and career plans so dearly that when God is calling us in another direction they are too stubborn to heed His calling or are oblivious to it altogether. This is not fitting either.

Planning & Faith

Finding the common ground of planning and faith aligns to a certain degree with a secular career development theory called, '**Planned Happenstance**.' At the core of this theory is the fact that unpredictable social factors, 'chance events' and environmental factors are important influences on your career decisions. It highlights the importance of the need to be active in career development, and being open to taking a step of faith when we sense God is calling us in a different direction than we are headed.

Often when discussing education and career decisions, teens feel anxious about making a ‘wrong decision.’ There is a fear that one misstep will put their ideal career out of reach. In reality, there are many paths to any one particular goal; and furthermore, there may not be one ‘ideal’ career for you. God may well be pleased with you in any number of occupations. How you put your faith into action within that occupation matters far more than what job title you have. Take this message to heart.

“**God may well be pleased with you in any number of occupations.**”

Purpose of Career Development

So why are we exploring this when you are still in the first half of your high school years? Planned exploration. Adolescents are susceptible to making rushed decisions in part because of their continuing development, but also as a coping strategy to deal with stress: put it off until it’s an urgent matter to deal with. At 17 or 18 years old, many teens, having put little or no serious thought into their post-secondary pathways, are selecting a program of study in a similar fashion to the way they choose what activity they want to do in their spare time.



What may seem like big scary decisions to you now can be made with confidence when you have been tackling that decision one step at a time, particularly when those steps are spread out over several years. Planning is instrumental in reducing anxiety, but holding onto those plans loosely allows for God to direct your path and be prepared to make informed decisions about your future.

Planned Happenstance Theory
A career development theory that recognizes that opportunities can be somewhat unpredictable or circumstantial.

Scripture
Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established
-Proverbs 16:3

Reflection

1. When someone asks you “What do you want to be when you grow up,” how do you respond?

2. How do you feel when you are asked, “What do you want to be when you grow up?”

3. Where do you stand on your career development (*circle one*):

a) I have a firm plan b) I think I have a plan, but it could change c) I’m exploring lots of options

d) I have put almost no thought into what I want to do for my career e) other: _____

4. My plan is... OR My options are... _____

5. What are you hoping to gain from this course?

Check Your Understanding

1. Career development is a decision you make once and are stuck with it: True or False?

2. One wrong decision, and your desired career could be out of reach: True of False?

3. We are responsible to plan, but are to hold on to our plans loosely: True or False?

Activities

1. Talk to a young adult you know about their education and/or career decision-making journey. Ask them what they would do differently if they could do it again. Record a summary of his/her responses.

2. Research John Krumboltz’s “Planned Happenstance” career theory, and create a 1-2 minute presentation to discuss from a Christian perspective the idea of ‘chance events.’

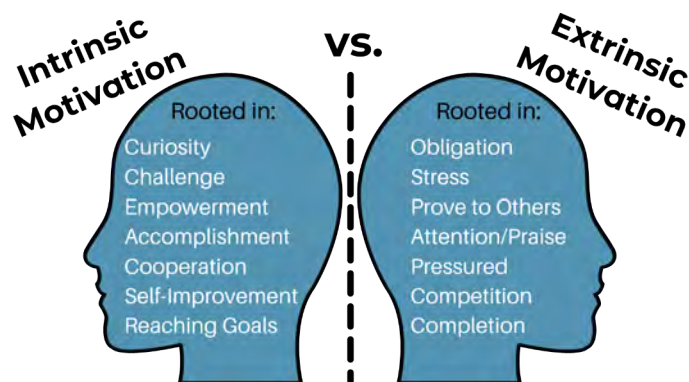
3. In a journal, reflect on how you feel about future education and career decisions.

4. Write a letter to your future self in which you commit to being active and intentional in your career development throughout this course and beyond.

1.2 Motivation, Aspirations and Success

What Motivates You?

Consider what motivates you to get out of bed each day. Chances are there is a combination of both internal and external motivators. **Intrinsic motivators** are reasons that originate within yourself: your wants, dreams, needs, emotions, etc. **Extrinsic motivators** are reasons that originate beyond yourself: someone else says, does or thinks you should or must do so. External motivators can either be negative (i.e. criticism or punishment), or positive (rewards, praise, recognition, money, etc.).



Generally, internal motivators are more likely to lead to action. That's simply a fact from our self-centred human nature: we act most strongly in self-interest. External motivators can be quite powerful in the short-term, but over the long haul, their power to successfully motivate us changes. Consider when you were a child: a sticker for learning a new skill may have been considered a significant reward, whereas now you are less inclined to think so.

The same is true in all avenues of life: education, practicing spiritual disciplines, involvement in sports or activities, and even work.

Changing Aspirations

Our **aspirations**, or dreams, are what we are hoping and longing for at some future time. You may have some aspirations you have been holding onto since you were very young: a desire to be a professional sports player, doctor, actor, firefighter, missionary, mother/father or any other role. You may be latching onto a new aspiration. On the other hand, you may not have a strong desire for any particular role. In any case, know that aspirations can and likely will change.

BIG IDEA:

Understanding our motivations and aspirations are valuable tools in career development.

Intrinsic Motivators

Reasoning to behave in a certain way for its inherent satisfaction, rather than external rewards.

Extrinsic Motivators

Reasoning to behave in a certain way due to the rewards or incentives offered by others.

Aspiration

A hope or ambition of achieving something in the future.

Co-workers

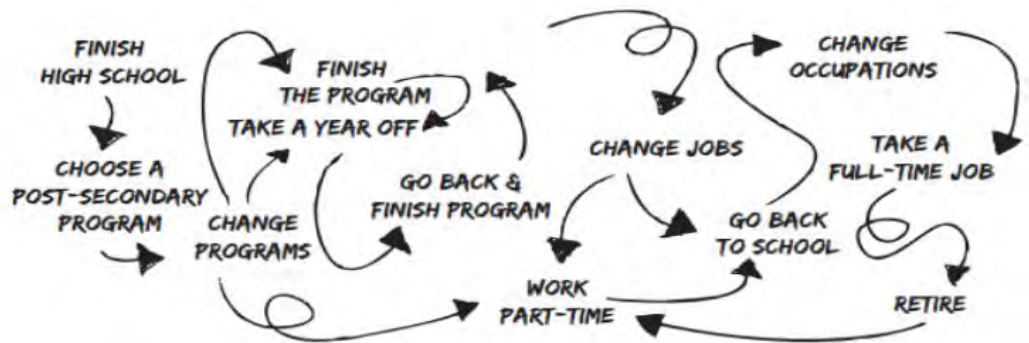
The people who you work alongside at your place(s) of employment.

Scripture

Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man.

-Proverbs 3:3-4

The main reasons they change is because you are constantly discovering or exploring new aspects of how God designed you. In addition, you are still changing and developing: physically, emotionally, cognitively and spiritually. If, or when, your aspirations change in the next ten years or so, know that you are not a failure for neglecting to 'stick with the plan.' If anything, celebrate that you are more closely aligning with who God has designed you to be.



Defining Success

Being successful in terms of career development is not necessarily getting a high-paying, high-status job; nor is it making 'all the right decisions.' From a Christian perspective, it includes being a strong witness to your classmates, **co-workers**, family and community. It's not about the destination or job title; it's about being faithful with the opportunities to point people to Jesus.

Finding education and work that is a good fit for the way God has designed you provides an environment where you are energized and engaged at work, rather than being drained of energy and longing for the end of the 'daily grind.' How likely are you to be a strong witness for Christ if your attitude towards your work stinks?



"THE FIRST DAY AFTER SUMMER VACATION."

Illustrated by Adam Stook

Reflection

1. What are the strongest intrinsic and extrinsic motivators in your life? _____

2. How have your dreams or aspirations changed since you were young? _____

3. How would you define success in your career? _____

Check Your Understanding

1. Give two examples of intrinsic motivators:

2. Give two examples of extrinsic motivators:

3. As a Christian success means getting a high-paying job: True or False?

Activities

1. In a journal describe your strongest motivators (internal and external) and your aspirations.
2. Talk to a parent, mentor or another trusted adult about how their aspirations or dreams changed. Record a summary of his/her responses.
3. Read Proverbs 3:1-8, and write a 1 paragraph reflection on how this scripture relates to career exploration and career development.

1.3 Attitudes Toward Career Development

BIG IDEA:

A positive, resilient attitude is central to career exploration and development.

Attitude

A settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior.

Self-Image

The idea a person has of their own abilities, gifts, appearance, and personality.

Attitudes

Our **attitude** is determined by a combination of our emotions and thoughts that are underpinned by our values and beliefs. Your natural posture may not be excitement and anticipation towards your future, and that's okay. It will take some time to navigate through the muck and mire of adolescence, but you will be okay. Remember that we have Christ to lean into when we are not strong. We can ask God to help us with our attitude. There are several key attitudes that are valuable in career development: valuing people, resilience, perseverance and a positive outlook.

Valuing Ourselves and Others

It is essential that we have a proper view of ourselves because an improper view leaves us vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy. An improper view of ourselves may include being boastful or proud of ourselves, but a healthy **self-image** is not self-deprecating either. You are your own harshest critic. Since God created you in His image (Gen 1:27), you are valued and you are loved. As such, God has given you the tools that you need to fulfil His will in your life: at school, at work, at home, at church, and in the broader community.



In valuing others, we need to recognize that God loves us all unconditionally. He loved us while we were still sinners. In response, we are called to love each other as fellow believers and to love non-believers as well: no matter how they are different from ourselves. Those who are far from God are victims of the enemy, not our enemy. As such we love the person, not the sin. Therefore, we can work and be in community with everyone, despite any differences in culture, ability, beliefs, ethnicity or lifestyle.

Resilience & Perseverance

There will be challenges, dead-ends, u-turns and bumps through your career and life. The concept of having a job for life is nearly as mythical as the unicorn. There

are times when you will need to **persevere**: to keep going, even when the circumstances around you may be suggesting to do otherwise.

There will also be times when you will need to change direction, but know that your identity is not in your job title, or relational roles, nor is it circumstantial.

Resilience from a Christian perspective is knowing in whose hands we are in, and that our identity is in Christ. A non-Christian worldview would be express resilience as ‘being true to yourself,’ as though you were the ultimate authority in your life.

A part of wisdom is knowing when to persevere, and when to shift direction while maintaining resilience. Our prayer life will provide Godly guidance as we discern these key moments, as well as what Scripture reveals to us.

Positive Outlook

Positive psychology has been all the rage for several decades, and it has been the main cheerleader of optimism. The language of positive psychology and the Bible do bear some resemblance (character strengths, social relationships), but the lens through which each peers is dramatically different.

“From the secular perspective, the end goal is relative in nature, defined by the individual, motivated by one’s values, and enabled by individual strengths. From the Christian perspective, the end goal is to fully live out God’s intention for one’s life to the most complete sense that it can be determined. The end is defined by God, motivated by a close and growing relationship with God, and enabled by the Holy Spirit,” (Kern & Benecchi, 2019 p.28).

In a single word, we have hope. We know that God is all-powerful, but He also knows us intimately. We can hope in Him to be our guide, our protector, and our deliverer. It won’t always be easy, but remind yourself of the truth: “I can do all things through him who strengthens me,” Philippians 4:13.



Perseverance

A continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition.

Resilience

The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties or setbacks.

Scripture

For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

-Hebrews 10:36

Reflection

1. Do you tend to think too highly of yourself, or too lowly of yourself? Explain. _____

2. How do you tend to respond when you make a mistake? _____

3. How resilient do you think you are? Explain. _____

4. Are you filled with hope, or are you more pessimistic? Give an example to illustrate.


Check Your Understanding

1. Why do we need to value ourselves and other people?

2. Describe how a Christian worldview identifies resilience differently than North American culture.

3. Many people are optimistic, but how do Christians frame our hope differently from those around us?

Activities

1. Write a journal entry, reflecting on how you have been challenged to maintain a healthy self-image. Feel free to include some of the influences (positive or negative) on your self-image.
2.  Read the secular viewpoint of Kern & Benecchi found in their periodical titled “Intersection of Positive Psychology and Christianity” and summarize some of the key similarities and differences in your own words in a video/audio presentation.
3. Do a word study in the Bible about where the word ‘persevere,’ noting the context of each of the verses, and how it applies to your faith and career development.
4. Create a list of tangible ways to love our neighbour, despite any differences we may have. Share your list with some of your Christian friends and invite a dialogue (in-person or via social media).

1.4 Approaches to Career Development

How we approach career development is about the actions that we take. They flow out of our attitudes and more broadly our character. These behaviours are particularly valuable in career exploration and career development: ethical behaviour, adaptability, initiative and risk-taking.

Ethical Behaviour

The fact that we value other people means that we recognize that our actions impact others.

Ethics are moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity. As such, we are to treat others with honesty, respect and equity. We do this as Christians because it is the moral standard that God has called

us to, not out of a perceived need to earn some otherworldly 'brownie points' or because it makes us feel good. It simply is what we are instructed to do. So we respond in obedience.



Adaptability with a Firm Faith

This world is constantly changing, requiring **adaptability**, as expressions of our resilience. Whether it be technological, social, environmental, economic or political changes, they are a reality we are all facing, and will continue to face. Most changes will be inconsequential to our faith, and we need to be prepared to shift and pivot; to adapt to the ever-changing realities through **lifelong learning**. However, in this life, you will be asked to make sacrifices as a direct result of your faith.

Standing up for your beliefs may cost you friendships, jobs, money, and more (see 2 Timothy 3:12). You don't have to look far in the New Testament to find examples of individuals making such sacrifices, so it shouldn't come as a surprise for us. As much as this world



BIG IDEA:

A range of character traits are valuable in how we approach career development.

Ethics

Moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity.

Adaptability

The quality of being able to adjust to new conditions and situations

Lifelong Learning

The use of both formal and informal learning opportunities throughout people's lives in order to foster the continuous development and improvement of the knowledge and skills needed for employment and personal fulfilment

Initiative

The ability to judge what needs to be done and take action, especially without suggestion from others.

Proactive

Making decisions and taking appropriate action in anticipation of future problems, needs, or changes.

Risk-Taking

The act of doing something that involves danger or risk in order to achieve a goal.



Scripture

Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

-James 2:17b

expounds the value of being ethical in the workplace and in our communities, the reality is unethical behaviour is everywhere: often carefully hidden but sometimes in plain view or even celebrated. You may be confronted to make unethical decisions, or tempted to behave in an unethical way. Persevering in our faith through spiritual disciplines is our strongest defense against such attacks.

Initiative and Risk-Taking

Having a positive outlook enables us to take **initiative**, rather than holding back because of fear. You can start something meaningful, whether small-scale or large-scale. In terms of career  development, taking initiative means to be **proactive** in exploring  educational and career pathways, and going beyond the thought of, "I'm doing a career assignment because I have to," to, "I want to dig deeper and explore further because I am curious and motivated."

A positive attitude also enables risk-taking. **Risk-taking** often has negative connotations, as in recklessness, but there is an element of stepping out in faith, beyond your comfort zone to take action. That is one of the ways that we grow and learn: to do something not knowing exactly how it is going to turn out. Of course, we can do our due diligence to make informed decisions, but all the research and preparation in the world won't provide an exhaustive list of how your action will turn out, nor should all the 'what ifs' hold us back. There comes a point of faith that needs to be put into action, whether that means starting a conversation with an interesting person, applying to a particular program, accepting a specific job, or talking to your boss about an issue. The risks are often worth the reward.



Reflection

1. When have you been challenged to act unethically? How did you respond?

2. Describe a situation when you have taken a positive risk.

Check Your Understanding

1. Provide three examples of unethical behaviour. _____

2. The Bible promises that life will be easy for Christians: True or False?
3. The Bible promises that Christians will have lots of money: True or False?
4. Risk-taking involves a step of faith: True or False?

Activities

1. Research what the consequences of unethical behaviour could be for an individual or company.
2. In your journal, write about a situation when you had to be flexible or adapt. Describe the setting, the circumstances, and how you felt.
3. Research online for stories of Christians, both within Canada and abroad, who have lost out on a job opportunity, or lost their job for taking a stand of faith. Examples can be from previous historical periods or present day.
4. Talk to a parent, mentor or other trusted adult about a time he/she had to take a risk (could be a positive or negative risk). What was the situation? How did it turn out? How did he/she feel? What did he/she learn? Describe one thing you learned in hearing the story.