

## MONDAY MANNA

26 June 2017

### WORKING THROUGH VOCATIONAL TRANSITION

By Jim Langley

Several of my friends have been dealing with new directions in their work life. These are not individuals just starting their careers, but mature workers who have given much to their respective companies for a good part of their lives. Some received substantial severance packages appropriate for their time of service, but even “golden handshakes” cannot take away the uncertainty of what lies ahead.

None of these men is ready to leave the workforce to stay at home and live an unproductive life. Yet, until they find a new place to utilise their vocational skills and gifts, I imagine at times they will feel somewhat lost and will not know which way to turn. This happens when we become comfortable in our careers and fail to give thought to what God has planned for that next stage of our lives.

Having enjoyed a long career as an insurance agent, I can relate. Early on I realised my job was on the line frequently, since I was continually asking for permission to work with new prospects. I have come to cherish that uncertainty over the years, trusting God will provide the clients who are willing to work with me and entrust to me their financial matters. In recent years, I have also experienced God directing me to hone my writing skills, even though it takes me away from income-generating activities. Yet through it all, He continues to provide for my family – and I must remain obedient to His call.

The Bible provides one of the best examples of patience in waiting for God’s direction in 1 Samuel 16, where a young shepherd boy named David was anointed king of Israel by the prophet Samuel. From that day, the Spirit of the Lord was with David, but he had to wait many years before formally assuming the role of king. In the years between, he was hunted by King Saul and his men.

After Saul’s death, David became king of Judah first, and later king of Israel in Jerusalem. In all, he reigned over God’s people for more than 40 years. The Bible tells us David was a man after God’s own heart, and even though he experienced times of great failure, he remained obedient to God until his death.

Just as David patiently awaited God’s perfect timing to begin his reign, we must patiently await whatever God has planned for our lives. In Jeremiah 29:11 we’re reminded, *“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

I am confident He has a plan for each of my friends, whether they will go to work for another firm, start their own businesses, or devote their time to some special passion God puts in their heart – even if it means having to tighten their belts to make ends meet.

Do not be surprised to one day find yourself in a situation similar to what these friends are facing, wondering what God has planned for your next chapter of life. My advice for them – and for you – is to trust He does have a plan for your future. Isaiah 60:22 states, *“The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the Lord; in its time, I will do this swiftly.”* That phrase, “I will do this swiftly,” has made me realise God’s timing is not my timing. But I have learned His timing is perfect, and we all need to be patient and strive to listen for His voice as He carries out His wonderful plan in our lives, for His glory.

As Proverbs 3:5-6 instructs us, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”* We are promised that God knows His plans for all who trust in Him. Our job, even though it is not always easy to do, is wait for His perfect timing!

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### Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. When was the last time you were confronted with a significant career transition? Maybe you are in the middle of such a transition right now. How are you dealing with it?
2. Why is a major change in job responsibilities, assuming a totally new job, or even changing careers, among the most challenging and stressful times of our lives?
3. Is there anything we can do to make this time of waiting easier? What are some reasons God may choose to make us wait on His answer to our prayers for direction, whether for our work or for other areas of our lives, rather than responding immediately?
4. Do you believe, as Mr. Langlely suggests, that God truly has a very clear, perfect plan for your life? Why or why not?

If you have a Bible available, here are some other passages you might consider that relate to this discussion:

Psalm 25:4-5, 27:13-14

Isaiah 60:1-2

Matthew 6:25,31-34

Romans 8:28-30

2 Timothy 4:7-8