

Staff Work

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Consumerism vs. Calling

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Consumerism vs. Calling

Abstract

"Our consumeristic society implies that some professions are more *valuable* than others."

Posting about choosing a career based on our gifts and talents from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/consumerism-vs-calling/>

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service](#) at Dordt College.

Consumerism vs. Calling

 [inallthings.org/consumerism-vs-calling/](https://allthings.org/consumerism-vs-calling/)

Sarah Moss

Everywhere we look, our consumeristic society tells us that we aren't enough as we are. We need to buy more stuff to be seen as acceptable members of society. We need to buy concert tickets to be cool and airplane flights to exotic destinations to be cultured. We need to buy weight loss plans and Botox to be beautiful, or gym memberships to be strong. We need designer clothes to be perceived as well-off, a lovely home in a trendy location to seem cool, a nice car to keep up our wealthy persona.

What do we need in order to afford all this stuff? Money. And how do we get more money? We find the career paths where the money is. I'm no economist, but I realize that we pay certain professions more than others, which in our consumeristic society implies that some professions are more *valuable* than others. So, if you're looking for a financial boost, consider becoming a professional sports player or a famous actress; you likely won't find that same level of pay as a teacher or a nurse.

When it comes to job or career choices, consumerism often makes us feel lesser than because of what we don't possess, and it can tell us that we need to make more money to feel better about ourselves.

Calling: Where we know that money won't satisfy our deepest desires, so we choose instead to use our gifts and talents to do God's kingdom work.

We think that having more money and more *stuff* will make us feel better about ourselves and about the world, but will it?

C.S. Lewis once said, "It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

Yes, we need money to survive. Yes, money can make us happy to a certain degree. But, we shouldn't buy into what our consumeristic society says and prioritize the accumulation of money over other things—things like serving God, helping and caring for others, expanding God's kingdom.

In his book, *What is God's Will for My Life?*, John Ortberg says, "God's primary will for my life is that I become a magnificent person in his image, somebody with the character of Jesus." Instead of choosing a career path based on how much money we will make, consider *who* God is calling us to be. How can we use our skills and abilities to serve him and expand his kingdom through the work that we do by better embodying the character of Jesus?

Recognizing what you're good at and what you enjoy doing will help you to make an impact. Trust that God will take your gifts and transform them beyond your wildest imagination. Life isn't about being in a certain tax bracket—it's about using your gifts in a way that serves God, helps others, and furthers His kingdom.

Consumerism: Where financial fears can trump our actual interests or abilities.

When I graduated from college, the economy had just tanked—there were few jobs to go around, especially for a recent graduate with little work experience. With impending student loan debt and living expenses to pay, I panicked. I frantically searched for a well-paying job, spending hours on my computer scouring job boards and applying for positions.

Now, years later, I'm glad I didn't hear back from some of those companies where I applied. After months of rejection, I'd stopped focusing on positions that would utilize my unique skill set and started applying for jobs that I knew would pay the bills. Would they have been a good use of my God-given skills and abilities, and would they bring me happiness? Not really—they would help me financially, but ultimately I would have been miserable if I'd taken those positions. I was applying to positions out of fear spurred on by financial needs. I knew my work as a consignment shop girl and barista wasn't going to cut my lifestyle. I wasn't trusting God to follow through on his plan.

I let my financial fears get in the way of my calling, and I know I'm not alone in this—others have picked jobs out of fear of the future or uncertainty about what to do next.

Calling: Where we trust God will use our skills and abilities to open doors and opportunities into the future.

Eventually, I landed a job that utilized my interest in writing, editing, speaking, and event planning. After years of also doing a little teaching here and some administrative assisting there, I took a job that has in many ways become my dream job. As Career Development Coordinator, I help students and alumni take steps toward their career aspirations. I use my public speaking skills in class presentations; I use my editing skills to review students' personal statements and cover letters.

I love my job: I use my creativity to help others every day. To me, that's what calling is about: Using your gifts and talents in a way that benefits others, God's kingdom, and yourself.

Allowing our financial fears to paralyze us won't get us very far. Even if you feel paralyzed by uncertainty now and are unsure of what to do next, don't allow consumerism to win the battle. Instead, trust that God will open doors for you into the future and will provide.