



# Helping Your Kids Find a Career that Fits!

BY RICK COWMAN

**P**erhaps the most important decision we will ever make in life – next to following Christ and choosing a life partner – is our choice of a career. And as parents, we can feel ill-equipped to help our kids in discovering a career that is a fit for them.

Let me begin with a foundational truth. Our kids need to understand that when God created them, He placed within them certain natural abilities and a leaning to do certain things, do them well, and enjoy doing them! Each of our kids are shaped uniquely, and this shape is intended to direct them toward certain areas of work and ministry, both to serve Him and to provide for their families. God has placed tools in our sons' or daughters' tool box, and these tools work together to determine the career they should choose – specifically the type of work they should be doing and the kind of environment in which they will thrive. It's critical we reinforce this truth to our kids and help them discover a career which fits how God has already bent them.

As our kids begin the process of discovering what career to choose, it is helpful to have them honestly answer some basic questions regarding how they see themselves. It is also important for us to share what tendencies we see in them! Let me explain.

People rarely succeed in business or work unless they enjoy doing it! God has placed within our sons and daughters the natural ability to do some things well! This is sometimes referred to as aptitude. Some of our kids are naturally good with mechanical things, some are good with computers, some with numbers, some with words, and some with drawing or designing. Skills still need to be developed, but these areas of natural ability come easily and bring enjoyment. Ask them, "What can you do with little effort?" "What have you done that you really enjoy?" "What activities energizes you?"

Another thing to consider is the unique personality of our sons

or daughters. You could call it their own personal style, how they are wired. It relates to the way they think and how they react to different situations. This is important as it relates to the type of work environment that fits them. Ask them, "In what surroundings do you feel most comfortable?" "Are you an outgoing person or prefer being alone?" "Do you enjoy working with people or with things?" "Do you thrive with variety or do you prefer routine?" "Are you an outdoors person or would you rather be sitting behind a desk?" You see, their personality defines the God, designed way they are to plug into work and ministry! We must help our kids answer the question, "What is the real me really like?" If we have been paying attention as parents, we likely have an idea, but they need to recognize it themselves.

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So how do we do that? How can we help our kids answer these questions and discover a career that truly fits the way God put them together? By providing opportunities to be exposed to a variety of activities and vocations, enabling them to experience and try new things. They will never discover what they love – or hate – to do if they never try anything! This might involve experimenting with hobbies, going on field trips to different workplaces

or spending the day with someone whose work interests them. When they find something that piques their interest, encourage them to pursue a job in that area. A small business would be the best venue to pursue something part-time. Even if they have to sweep the floor, they will be exposed to the work being done. If they discover it's not what they want to do, nothing's lost! They just mark it down as "not for me" and continue the search!

Something important to note at this point is that some careers offer a wide variety of options. For example, a career in the welding trade has at least a half dozen tracks. There is manufacturing, fabrication, pipeline, boilermaker, construction, maintenance, and others. Each of these tracks involve different skill sets as well as very diverse work environments. If your sons or daughters finds themselves in a rut in one lane of a career path, they may just need