

**FOLLOWING A WINDING VOCATIONAL PATH**  
**By Rick Boxx**

There once was a time when people would get a job and remain in the same employment for decades. It would literally be the job of a lifetime. But that is rarely the case today. For the most part, the days of retiring from the same company with gold watches and hefty pensions are relics of the past.

In my case, I never became entrenched into any specific business or organization. My career has made many stops along the way. When I pause to examine the course of my career, on the surface it seems to be winding and disconnected. However, it is more like a tapestry – the back appears chaotic, but the other side displays an elegant design or image. With the benefit of hindsight, I can recognize God’s divine purpose and direction.

My work history resembles a meandering river, moving from CPA to car rental entrepreneur to banking, then to consulting, and finally non-profit ministry. My diversity of vocations might seem strange, but God had a plan. Today, because of my varied work background, I have the privilege of serving and ministering primarily to small business leaders, especially entrepreneurs.

Through my winding path, God has given me experience and insights I never could have gained if I had remained employed in the same industry or with a single company. I understand accounting and financial management struggles. I have started a business in the worst economy. And have learned to lead and grow small businesses God’s way, following principles from the Scriptures.

The Bible tells us this is typically how God works. As Proverbs 16:9 teaches, “In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.” We might think we have things figured out and that we are in control of our future, but the Lord is faithfully orchestrating details behind the scenes to accomplish His divine purposes. As another passage states, “Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails” (Proverbs 19:21).

For some people this might seem disconcerting. They want to feel the course of their lives is completely in their own hands. For me, knowing that God is establishing our steps to fulfill His divine purposes is both encouraging and reassuring. Experience has shown each of us that we have no idea what tomorrow holds for us. It is comforting to trust that the Lord not only knows the present but also the future. Here are two truths from the Scriptures that can give us peace in a chaotic, unpredictable world:

**God wants the best for us.** For those who seek the Lord and desire to serve Him, He is eager to respond. “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. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:11-13).

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**God promises to guide us.** The direction of our careers – and our lives – can make sudden, unexpected changes. We can resort to worry and fear, or we can have confidence that God is not caught by surprise. He will ensure we are going the right way. “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” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

God knew what He was doing when He charted a course for me vocationally. He does for you as well!

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### Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How would you characterize the path your career has taken to this point? Has it been in a relatively straight line, proceeding much as you expected, or has it taken a series of twists and turns, going in directions you could not have anticipated?
2. In what ways have you responded when significant events in your career have occurred, abruptly changing or even upsetting your plans and expectations?
3. The Bible states that God establishes our steps and, despite our own plans, it is His purpose that prevails. Do you find this encouraging and reassuring, or do you find it troubling, as if He were meddling or interfering with your life? Explain your answer.
4. Do you really believe God desires the best for your career and your life? Why or why not? Can you think of any examples of times when you were surprised by the way you sensed the Lord leading you – and later discovered you were pleased with the outcome?

### Challenge for This Week

As you have read and considered God’s role in determining the course of your working career, has it strengthened your trust in the Lord – or have you realized that you have been trusting in yourself instead?

Take some time this week to meet with a close friend (or two) or a trusted colleague and share your feelings about how you sense God has guided you to this point and where He might be leading you in the future. If you are in a CBMC group, that might be a place where you can discuss this honestly and openly.

#### NOTE:

For more about what the Bible says, consider the following passages:  
Psalm 37:1-7; Proverbs 16:2,4,33, 20:24, 21:30-31, 27:1; Matthew 6:25-34

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