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Senior Seminar: Vocational Reflection

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Vocation is a term in which many definitions are used to define. Reading Eugene Veith's book, God at Work, really brought insight as to what vocation looks like and how we can try to have a common understanding of a term that is so broadly used. He tells us the purpose of vocation is to love and serve our neighbors as ourselves (p. 39). What a simple answer and yet it is so hard to do. Some would argue vocation is what you do in terms of work and making money. Others would say it is what God calls us to do in order to fulfill his calling in our lives. After numerous class discussions and readings on this subject, I have come to conclude that it is a combination of these multiple approaches. My personal conclusion is that vocation can be any area of your life. It is you choosing to utilize your gifts and talents to serve God by furthering his Kingdom on earth. This is ultimately accomplished through loving your neighbor as yourself. Now, this can look different for all of us. Some feel they can accomplish this through a high business position, church volunteer role, missions work, teaching, being a parent, and so on. I do not feel one area is more important than another, for they all work together to further God's Kingdom on earth. For me, I feel my first vocation is family. If there is one thing I can do on this earth it is be a good sister, daughter, cousin, granddaughter, aunt, wife and mother (eventually). Scripture even tells us that a house divided against itself cannot stand (Matthew 12:25). If my "house cannot stand" how can I serve anyone? Additionally, I want to fulfill my vocation within the church, work, and leisure life. When considering a job to pursue, my ultimate passion currently lies in being a bridal consultant/wedding coordinator.

In terms of personality, experience, and skills, the two self-assessment tests were very accurate in pinpointing my strengths and passions. The Personality Test proved that I am orderly and detail oriented, I like to help others, and take responsibility for my commitments. When considering a job, the test suggests finding somewhere I can combine my insight of details and desire to help others. Examples would be fields like teaching, counseling, human resource management, or health services. Additionally, the Leisure Interest Assessment confirmed I am a "helper", "doer", and "persuader". In other words, I like advising others, hands on activities, and I take leadership. These traits prove true in the experiences I have had. One specific example that illustrates these qualities is my involvement in softball. During my time at Messiah, I have been a four-year captain and starter. With those roles come a lot of leadership, responsibilities, and influence. I have organized and executed practices which require attention to detail. Also, I have a responsibility as the liaison between the team and coaches and vice-versa. I have learned many transferable skills such as teamwork as a result of this experience. The fact that I love to help others show through examples such as the time my friend, Shannon, called me to talk about a frustration of hers. She was upset that another girl at her school had the same wedding dress as her. After allowing her to talk, I went on to explain how she will look completely different in her dress and no one would notice because their weddings are in different seasons and their colors, flowers, and venue are different. Our long conversation resulted in Shannon feeling better and thanking me for all the advice and assurance I gave her. I felt such joy knowing I helped someone overcome a problem. At the end of the day, the most important thing to me is relationships. If I ever ended up sacrificing relationships for a job, I would be acting out of character. Therefore, when looking at a job I want to pursue, it needs to be within a reasonable

distance of my family. However, this is currently a huge struggle with my boyfriend living in Kentucky, my family in Pennsylvania and my boyfriend's family in Maryland. Since it is such a difficult decision to make in terms of where to find a job, I am leaning towards staying near my family until I am able to come to a point where I can accept moving away from them. Additionally, I would love working in the bridal industry because I find enjoyment out of making others happy and weddings are such a monumental experience and event in peoples' lives. In an ideal world, I would one day own my own bridal consulting business and be able to play the role of a stay-at-home mom as well.

Knowing that I want to pursue the bridal industry, I think it would be beneficial to get some basic knowledge and experience by starting out as a sales consultant in a bridal store such as David's Bridal. While there, I would network in hopes of joining an event planning business as a consultant. Once I would learn enough and feel confident in the process, I would begin my own bridal consulting business that I could potentially run from my home while being a stay-at-home mom and being involved in my children's lives. Furthermore, once my children are of age to play sports, I want to be able to coach them because of my passion and experience in athletics. Although I have these plans and ideas, I know there is a high percentage for change and I am open to it. I think it is great to have goals and a plan, but it is so essential to acknowledge the fact that we do not always have control and life just "happens" sometimes.