

What the Bible says to you...

IF YOU'RE BETWEEN JOBS

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FORWARD

Dear Friend,

Four years ago at the age of 40 I had the job I had always wanted. I was Vice President for Sales and Marketing of a medium-sized company, owned stock and had a lot of people reporting to me. Sales were going up, I was making good money and thought all was well.

Then the unthinkable happened -- I got fired. Somebody had to go, but I had never dreamt it would be me. It was the first time in my life I had ever been fired. It came out of the blue -- a shock.

I was out of work for six months. It was stressful -- I was fearful about the future and thought I might never find another job at the same level. I was in a constant state of anxiety. My stomach was continually tight and churning, like when you have to give a big speech in a few minutes. I searched frantically, making phone calls, networking and writing hundreds of letters. I didn't show my feelings to my wife, family or friends. I was lonely. Few people called.

Finally I found a new job, much like the previous one -- the same title, salary, perks, stock -- I had landed on my feet. Or so I thought. That company had many problems and fell on hard times. Plus, I wasn't a good fit for what they needed at that time. So after a year I was let go for the second time in my life.

I was out of work for 10 months, but this time it was different. I experienced almost no anxiety and enjoyed an uninterrupted sense of peace. I didn't feel the need to strive and kill myself -- in fact, I was relaxed about the job search. I knew everything would be fine. I enjoyed the extra time with my wife -- we became closer than either of us had ever dreamt was possible. Financially, our needs were met and we learned how to manage our money together for the first time in 20 years of marriage.

The difference? Between the two job losses I decided to commit my life to Jesus Christ by praying that I didn't want to continue doing things my way. I asked that God's will be done in my life. I asked Him to take over control of my life. And God actually began to lead me! I began to feel in an intimate way the presence of God in everything happening to me and knew without a doubt that He was in control. I knew that everything would not be just OK, but that I and my family would be better off because this happened. I ended up those ten months in the exact job God had planned for me at the precise moment he had planned for me to have it.

I had asked God to take control. He responded by taking care of me and my family -- financially, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. He used my unemployment to dramatically alter the course of my life.

Why this booklet?

While I was unemployed, God taught me every day through prayer, Bible study and Christian teachers and friends. The accompanying pages contain the truths and principles I learned. Through the application of these lessons in my life God was able to transform what would ordinarily have been a fearful and desperate experience into the most meaningful, decisive and satisfying period of time in my entire life.

The purpose of this booklet is to share those same truths and principles with other men between jobs. I pray that God will work in a mighty way in your life during this time as He did in mine.

Best regards,

Paul R. McGraw

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Chapter 1

THERE ARE NO ACCIDENTS <or> **GOD DOESN'T WASTE ANYTHING**

"Why did I lose my job? What is going on? But my numbers were good! Why me? Did God do it? Why did God let it happen?"

Do any of these questions sound familiar? If you are like most people, you want to know the reason why you lost your job and now find yourself trying to find another. Like most of us, you just can't imagine why something like this would happen to you.

Of course, you were told by your former employer what the reason was -- business was off and required a "down-sizing"; or your job was being relocated; or it was "politics"; or poor performance -- it could have been any number of reasons. Perhaps that is all there is to it.

For many of us, however, once we have explored these causes, we often turn to the realm of the spiritual -- "Why would God want me to have lost that job?" Again, the answer could be one of many:

- God wants to get my attention.
- God wants to have a closer relationship with me.
- God wants to give me an opportunity for salvation.
- God did this so that the work of God might be displayed in my life.
- God wants to humble me.
- God wants to remove me from what is now or could later become a bad situation.
- God wants me to pay more attention to some other area of my life.
- My job was too important for me -- it stood between me and my relationship with Him.
- God wants to build my character.

Looking back on it, I believe that God had several purposes that He accomplished through my unemployment. Only as time goes on am I developing a complete understanding.

For 20 years, I worshipped another God -- success. My idols were status, prestige, power and the money which was my yardstick. I had to lose that job that gave me those things in order to learn they weren't worthy of my giving up myself to them. At the point of losing that job, I still didn't know the true God, but I was beginning to learn this false god wasn't worth bowing down to anymore.

During my next job I entered into a new relationship with the one true God. He then used the my second period of unemployment to draw me closely to Himself -- 10 months of getting to know the Creator of the Universe! I didn't know it would take 10 months to find a job -- I just followed Him day by day.

Maybe one of the above reasons applies to you. Maybe it's another reason. The fact is, there are many possible reasons why you might have lost your job. They could be in the spiritual realm, the physical realm, or a combination of both.

Only God knows why you lost your job. The Bible tells us that no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God¹. Therefore, until God Himself reveals the truth to you, you cannot and you will not know the reason.

¹1 Corinthians 2:11

When will God tell you? You don't know that either. He may not choose to tell you for a long time. He may have a reason why you should not know yet.

So if you don't know the reason, what do you do?

Meditate for several minutes on the following verses. Memorize them.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose².

... for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose.³

From the above, you can be assured of the following:

1. God is at work. God is at work in the middle of your circumstances.
2. God has a specific plan and purpose that will be accomplished as a result of your job loss if you submit to that plan and purpose.
3. God's plan and purpose are the ultimate good for you.
4. If you allow God to work in your life, you will be better off because you lost your job than if you had not.

Summary:

Unless God tells you otherwise, don't spend a lot of time asking God or trying to understand all the dimensions of the question, "Why did this awful thing happen to me?". He may not want you to know yet.

Rather, in all humility, sincerity and trust, ask God,...

Now that I find myself in this position, how do You want me to respond?

What do you want me to do right now?

²Romans 8:28

³Philippians 2:13

Chapter 2

FIRST, FOCUS ON YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

As you go through this time of unemployment you have a basic decision to make. Do you want to look for a job with God's help? Or do you want to do it alone? There is no middle ground.

If you want to face your job search hand-in-hand with God you must approach God on His terms, not yours. What are those terms? Jesus gave us the answer.

One day, Jesus was asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" Jesus responded, "The most important one is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.*"⁴

Our "heart" is our innermost being. Our "soul" is our spirit, that part of us that is separate from our physical bodies and lives forever. Our "mind" consists of all of our knowledge and thoughts. Our "strength" describes our physical body and its ability, energy and activity. If you take away our heart, soul, mind and strength nothing will be left. These parts comprise all that is us.

God wants you to love him with nothing less than all of your being. He cares more about your relationship with Him than anything else in your life -- including your job and career.

Everything in your life, everything about knowing Him and experiencing Him, everything about knowing His will, depends on the quality of your love relationship with God. A love relationship with God is more important than any other single factor in your life.⁵

One thing I discovered while unemployed was that God's priorities were very different from mine. In my daily prayers I would ask for guidance, help and direction in finding a job. But I would sense my attention being diverted (by the Holy Spirit) to areas of my life that were hindering my relationship with God; relationships that needed repair, habits that had to be broken, attitudes that had to be changed, knowledge that needed to be acquired.

For example, I had three sons in their teen years who had never had their father sit down with them to talk about the Lord and teach them from the Bible. (As fathers, we are commanded by God to teach our children God's word -- this is not a duty we are allowed to delegate to the church.⁶) God made it clear to me that teaching my sons was a high priority during that time so we initiated weekly Family Bible Studies that required time and effort for me to prepare.

Another example was with our finances, which were way out of control. The Lord led my wife and me to spend time and effort getting our financial priorities straight and developing a budget that we would both agree to. (We are still living according to that budget several years later!)

The point of all this is that we must align ourselves to God's priorities in our lives. When I was out of work, I thought my first priority was to have a job, but God's first priority was to have me. In short, He wanted a close personal relationship with me.

⁴Mark 12:28-30

⁵Henry Blackaby

⁶Deuteronomy 11:18-19

How you can have a personal relationship with God

How do you have a relationship with God? Jesus gave us the answer to this question, too.

Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*"⁷

You can't have a relationship with God except through Jesus Christ. If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, don't wait! Don't put it off any longer. Until you accept Him by faith you will be lost and alone.

How do you accept Christ? What I did was to pray to God out loud that I was turning control of my life over to Him. God then led me to make a decision to confess that I was a sinner and to believe in Jesus Christ as God's Son and my Savior and Lord. I later read where Jesus said, "Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from Him comes to Me."⁸

If you would like to have the power of Christ in your life, turn to the next page and learn how...

⁷John 14:6

⁸John 6:45b

You can receive Christ by following the steps below:⁹

1. Understand that God loves you and wants you to experience peace and life -- abundant and eternal. "For God so loved the world He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life".¹⁰
2. Admit your need (I am a sinner).
God is perfect and cannot tolerate sin. However, all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.¹¹ Because of our sin we are separated from God.¹²
3. Be willing to turn from your sins (repent and go the other way).¹³
4. Believe that Jesus Christ died on the Cross as payment for your sins and rose from the grave.¹⁴
5. Through prayer something like the one below, invite Jesus Christ to come in and control your life through the Holy Spirit. (Receive Him as Lord and Savior.)

You may ask, "I never prayed this, but I have always believed in God, so why do I need to pray this prayer?" It's one thing to say we believe in God -- it's another thing to confess with our mouths that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. When we pray this and really mean it, something different and wonderful begins to happen. (This prayer is an example -- you don't have to use these exact words, but pray in all seriousness from your heart.)

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died for my sins. I want to turn from my sins. I now invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust You as Savior and follow You as Lord, in the fellowship of Your church.

Date

Signature

5. Begin to grow in your faith and deepen your relationship with God:
 - a. Read your Bible every day to get to know Christ better.
 - b. Talk to God in prayer every day.
 - c. Tell others about Christ.
 - d. Worship, fellowship and serve with other Christians in a church where Christ is preached.
 - e. As Christ's representative in a needy world, demonstrate your new life by your love and concern for others.

Achieving Open Communication with God

⁹Paraphrased and quoted from "Steps to Peace with God", by Billy Graham.

¹⁰John 3:16

¹¹Romans 3:23

¹²Isaiah 59:2

¹³1 John 1:9

¹⁴Romans 10:9-10

When we have accepted Christ we begin to grow as Christians. However, we are not instantly perfect. There can still be hindrances in our life that prevent us from realizing a complete and full relationship with God. One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to tell us about these things in His perfect timing. The Holy Spirit always encourages -- if you are having thoughts that seem hopeless and condemning it's not coming from Him. The Holy Spirit will tell us in an encouraging way that motivates us to change.

Some of the hindrances that block our communication with God are:

1. Sin -- disobedience to God's will. It is anything we do (or don't do) that is counter to what God has commanded us. Un-confessed sin in our lives hinders our relationship with God. However, if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.¹⁵
2. Procrastination -- is also sin. Delayed obedience is the same as disobedience. Is there anything you know God wants you to do that you have been putting off? Perhaps He is waiting for you to obey before He gives you the next task. If so, get it done today! The Creator of the universe is waiting for you to respond.
3. Other gods -- God's first commandment is, "You shall have no other gods before me."

In Moses' time people worshipped carved idols, animals and other crude gods. Today we are more sophisticated than that. We worship things like money, power, career. We put more modern things between us and God -- substances, golf, TV, cars and other possessions. Anything in our life that we put before the one and true God is a god. It hinders our relationship with him.

Summary

Remember, God wants a personal, loving relationship with you more than anything else. He loves you so much that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes (trusts in, obeys and clings to) in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.¹⁶

Assignment:

One day, not long after losing my job, I went up to the mountains for a day to just seek God. I wasn't looking for anything in particular. I just wanted to know God better. He revealed some things that day to me that were absolutely critical to my having a closer relationship with Him and hearing his direction for my life.

One of the lessons He taught me had to do with His Word, the Bible. For many years I had questioned whether the Bible should be taken literally and whether it really was 100% inspired by God. God gave me a strong conviction that day that I am not to water down His word and that He wanted me to accept it as coming from Him without any mistakes or inconsistencies. He told me that there may be parts of the Bible I will never understand, but that doesn't mean He didn't intend for them to be in there.

I encourage you to find a quiet place where you can get alone with God and allow Him to speak to your innermost being. Spend some time (at least an hour) to take a walk with Him. Go somewhere that is quiet where you will be alone and not be interrupted. Talk with Him, out loud, about your relationship with Him. Focus only on God and dedicate this time only to be with Him. Maybe you've never done this before, but do it anyway in faith.

¹⁵1 John 1:9

¹⁶John 3:16

What The Bible Says to You if You're Between Jobs

- Think about how much God loves you.
- Tell God how much you love Him.
- Thank Him for Jesus Christ.
- Reaffirm your commitment to serve and love Him with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.
- Ask Him to show you how you can be even closer to Him and know Him better.

Chapter 3

ACKNOWLEDGE GOD AND HIS ROLE IN YOUR SEARCH

Looking for a job can be a humbling experience. Even though we read books and get good advice from experts and friends, we quickly learn that the process is often a hit-and-miss series of efforts. We operate in seeming darkness in a trial-and-error fashion as we implement all that we know to do, but have no idea how long the process will take or where the job will come from. We don't know which of our efforts will pay off and which are a waste of time. We are like the mouse or rat in the maze -- we see only in two dimensions -- we can't see the maze from above.

But there is someone who can see the whole maze -- the path through it -- both the beginning and the end of that path. Listen to what the Bible says about some of the characteristics of this Person:

1. He created everything -- heaven and earth (Genesis 1:1)
2. He created me (Psalm 139:13)
3. He sees the future (Psalm 139:15)
4. He knew your future before you were born (Psalm 139:15)
5. He knows everything about you -- even every hair on your head (Matthew 10:30, Psalm 139:1-4)
6. He sees everything that is happening on the earth (Psalm 33:13)
7. His power is greater than any other (Psalm 33:10, Matthew 19:26)
8. His love is infinite (Psalm 36:5)
9. He is faithful (Psalm 36:5)
10. He is everywhere (Ps 139:7)
11. He is inside you (John 14:23)
12. He has a plan for you and it is already perfectly thought out (Jer 29:11)
13. He wants to work out the best for you in your life (Romans 8:28)
14. He wants to take you out of the darkness and into the light (John 8:12)

This person is the triune God -- the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Why should you follow Him in your job search? Because He knows everything -- the past, present, future, everything about you. He sees the big picture -- the whole maze. He loves you more than you can even begin to understand. His purpose and plan for you are perfect. He wants to lead you. He wants to help.

The benefits to getting His help are joy, contentment and the peace that comes from knowing deep inside that everything will be ok.

So what is the key to getting God's help?

The Bible tells us that God will keep your paths straight if you will "in all your ways acknowledge Him".¹⁷ Your "ways" refer to the road you are on, your course of life or journey. To "acknowledge" Him means that you know and recognize Him as true and valid. It means that you are always mindful of Him and serve Him with a willing heart. There is a cause/effect relationship here -- if you acknowledge Him, He will keep your paths straight.

The first step in acknowledging God is to accept His son, Jesus Christ, as your Savior and Lord. You must believe that the only way you can approach God is through Jesus.

Next, you must believe what God tells you in His Word about Himself, His son and the Holy Spirit. The degree to which you acknowledge God in your life demonstrates what you believe about God. What you believe about God will determine how willing you will be to turn to God for help.

In the early days of my unemployment, while spending time alone with God, He revealed to me that my understanding of Him was too limited. What He told me, basically, was, "Acknowledge who I am!" The Holy Spirit then led me in telling God, out loud, who He is. I proceeded to describe a God who is truly all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving -- a God with all the attributes described above. I acknowledged Jesus as my Savior and the Holy Spirit's presence in my life as counselor, teacher and empowerer. I acknowledged the Bible as His complete, infallible Word. In short, God's Spirit led me in telling God what He wanted me to believe about Him!

Take another look at the above list -- do you believe everything it says about God? How big is the God you believe in?

Assignment:

Spend some time talking with God about all of this. Tell Him all that you believe about Him ... what you believe about Jesus ... what you believe about the Holy Spirit. Don't just recite the Apostle's Creed. Speak from your heart, not what you have been taught to say. Make a list or tell Him out loud, whatever works for you. Ask God to help your unbelief¹⁸, whatever it may be.

¹⁷Proverbs 3:6

¹⁸Mark 9:24

Chapter 4

SEEK GOD

Now that you have come this far, you know that God has a plan for your life that includes this job search. Let's assume that you want to know His plan, you want to have a closer relationship with God through Jesus Christ and you want to increase your belief about God. What should you do? How do you go about it?

If you want to find God you must look for him. The Psalmist says it best --

*Look to the Lord and His strength; seek His face always.*¹⁹

Throughout the Bible we are told scores²⁰ of times -- *SEEK GOD*. This isn't just friendly advice from God. It's not a suggestion. It is a command.

God does not give this command just for certain people. It doesn't just apply to non-Christians. It doesn't just apply to new Christians. It applies to ALL -- including long-time Christians. God wants and commands us to seek Him.

Like most people, when I lost my job I set out to seek a new one. If you had asked me what I was doing, I would have answered, "I am seeking a job." What God taught me, though, was that I should just seek Him. So that's what I did -- I sought out God Himself and His will for every area of my life. I put my eyes on Him and where He was leading me. In His timing He eventually led me to the job He had planned for me all along. I got there by seeking God, not by seeking a job. I'm not saying that it was always easy. There were days when I or my wife would get worried and want to take things into our own hands. But when we would eventually turn to God in prayer and Bible study, the Holy Spirit would calmly reassure us and remind us just to seek God and trust Him.

What does it mean to seek God? It means we want to be closer to Him. It means we want to hear His voice more clearly. That we want to know His will for our lives. That we want His direction. That we want to understand His wisdom. That we want to walk in His ways. In short, it means we want to surrender our lives to Him.

The Bible tells us there are many benefits to seeking God:

1. We will receive life (Amos 5:4)
2. We will find Him (Proverbs 8:17)
3. We will be provided the basic necessities of life -- food, clothing and shelter (Matthew 6:33)
4. God will reward us (Hebrews 11:6)
5. God will forgive our sins (2 Chronicles 7:14)
6. We will lack no good thing (Psalm 34:10)
7. We will be blessed and happy (Psalm 119:2)

¹⁹Psalm 105:4

²⁰Acts 17:27, Isaiah 55:6, Amos 5:4, Psalm 14:2 are a few examples.

So how do you go about seeking God? The Bible answers this for you also.

1. You must go through Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."²¹ Notice that He didn't say that He is *one* way, or *a* way. Jesus is the *only* way. You will never find God unless you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior and have turned your life over to Him.
2. If you want to find God, you must really want to find Him. God says, "If you seek me you will find me, *if you seek me with all your heart.*"²²
3. You must confess your sin and turn away from a life of sin. Sin blocks our communication with God.
4. Pray to God. Talk with Him The apostle Paul said, "Pray continually."²³ James, the brother of Jesus, said, "Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray."²⁴
5. Read God's word, the Bible²⁵. Spend time in the Word every day. Don't just read books about the Bible -- read the Bible itself. Get a translation you are comfortable with. Try using a study Bible to better help you with the translation, such as the NIV Study Bible.

Don't just start from the beginning of Genesis, but read from different parts every day. The Psalms help to understand how we should approach God with our heart, our attitude of mind and our emotions. The Gospels tell us about the life and teachings of Jesus. The New Testament letters instruct in how to lead the Christian life. Proverbs teaches us God's wisdom. Spend time in all these sections.

Remember, you aren't just reading any book. This is God's Word. Meditate on something when it "hits" you. It may be the Holy Spirit trying to get your attention. Stop and respond to God about what you think He is telling you. Ask the Holy Spirit for help when you don't understand something.

6. Spend time with other believers.²⁶ Involve them in your seeking. God will speak to you through them, too. Attend a Bible believing church²⁷ -- one that accepts the Bible as God's inerrant, inspired word and which freely speaks about Jesus Christ and worships Him as Lord and Savior.
7. Have patience and be persistent.

Remember, if you seek God, you will find Him and His plan for your life -- that's a promise straight from God.²⁸

²¹John 14:6

²²Jeremiah 29:13

²³1 Thessalonians 5:17

²⁴James 5:13

⁸² Timothy 3:16

²⁶1 Thessalonians 5:11

²⁷Hebrews 10:25

²⁸Jeremiah 29:13

Chapter 5

TRUST GOD TO PROVIDE FOR YOUR NEEDS

What do you worry about?

Do you worry about how you are going to provide for your family without a job, or how you are going to pay the bills? Are you worried about where the job will come from, what tomorrow may or may not bring? Or are you just anxious about your circumstances in general? If so, you are not unlike many others in your situation.

Worry can cause negative consequences for you during this time. Worry saps your energy, makes you irritable and mean and can damage your health. Worry will take your attention away from God, His direction for you and the task at hand. While you are busy worrying, you may actually miss something God is trying to tell you.

But you say, "I know all these things, but I just can't help it. I can't stop myself from worrying."

God knows that you have this tendency to worry and in His Word gives you specific, concrete and pragmatic instruction about how you can deal with it in your life.

Matthew 6:25-34

Jesus spoke directly about worry in His "Sermon on the Mount":

25 "Therefore I tell you, ***do not worry*** about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?

26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.

29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

31 So ***do not worry***, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

34 Therefore ***do not worry*** about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Jesus says plainly, "***Do not worry...***" This is not just a friendly suggestion or helpful advice. It is a command from our Lord. Would Jesus command you to do something that you are incapable of? Of course not. With His help all things are possible.²⁹

²⁹Matthew 19:26

Jesus goes on. He doesn't just stop after telling us what not to do. He goes on to tell us what we should do -- "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness..." He wants us to devote our energy to seeking a closer relationship with Him. When we do, our focus is on Jesus and not on our worry.

Seeking God is one primary antidote to worry.

Philippians 4:6-7

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Paul plainly tells us not to be anxious about anything. Paul, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, would not tell us to do something we are incapable of. Rather, he tells us several things we should do instead:

1. Pray in every situation. When you start to worry, do you pray?
2. Be thankful. Have you thanked God for your present circumstances? If you believe good will come as a result of your situation, then it is something to be thankful for.
3. Present your requests to God. Have you turned your job search over to God? Have you presented it to Him? If so, have you let go of it? Once you turn something over to God, it's not yours anymore.

JOHN 14:1

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.

Here Jesus gives you another antidote to worry -- TRUST. The Greek word here is "pisteuo", for which there is not a simple English translation. It means, "to believe in, rely on, adhere to and trust in". "Pisteuo" is the same word translated as "believe" in John 3:16 ("For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.")

In short, Jesus is calling for nothing less than a full commitment of your life and will to Him. When you have submitted yourself to Jesus, when you are actively trying to follow God's direction for your life and are obeying His commands, He will take care of your worry by replacing it with a sense of peace that transcends all understanding. Your family and friends will be amazed!

Proverbs 4:5

Trust in the Lord always and lean not on your own understanding...

Here the Hebrew word for "trust" literally means to "hide for refuge in". When we seek protection under and rely on the mighty hand of God we receive a new level of confidence that defies our circumstances.

We are also instructed not to lean on our understanding. Why? Because there is a strong likelihood that our own understanding of things is incomplete, inadequate or incorrect. The fact is, we don't have a correct understanding of our circumstances until God reveals it to us.

Many times worry comes from relying on your own view of things. You may think the future looks bleak, but God sees the future and knows differently. Don't trust your own limited understanding. Rather, seek God for His understanding of your situation.

Suggestion:

Occasionally during my time between jobs I would start to worry and feel anxious. It was usually accompanied by a churning in the stomach. For you it may be a tight neck, sleeplessness, shortness of breath or some other symptom. Anticipating those times I carried a slip of paper containing Bible verses which I would read out loud, meditate on and discuss with God. The worry would go away every time. Following are some of those verses: Matthew 6:25-34, Matthew 19:26, Philippians 4:6-7, John 14:1, Proverbs 4:5-6, Philippians 4:19, Romans 15:13, Romans 8:28.

Summary

Turn your worry over to God. He has told you how to do it -- trust in Him; seek Him; rely on His knowledge and understanding; pray; be thankful; turn your situation over to Him. Above all else, make Jesus the Lord of your life.

Remember Paul's words -- "My God will supply all your needs according to His glorious riches in Jesus Christ."³⁰ Just think about that -- ALL YOUR NEEDS! And the only limit is GOD'S RICHES IN CHRIST!

Finally, may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.³¹

³⁰Philippians 4:19

³¹Romans 15:13

Chapter 6

TRUST GOD TO PROVIDE DIRECTION FOR YOUR SEARCH

Although Moses led the Israelites through the desert for 40 years, he would not be the one to lead them into the promised land. God gave that job to Joshua. It was no small task. The Israelites had tremendous obstacles to overcome -- they would face great armies with giant and powerful soldiers.

Under God's direction, Moses gave Joshua his instructions from God, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. ... The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."³²

This was a tall order for Joshua, but also a big promise -- God Himself would go ahead of Joshua and get things ready for Him. God wouldn't leave Joshua on his own, he would go with him and be with him at all times.

But God did even more than that. We learn that Joshua "was filled with the spirit of wisdom."³³ God not only goes before us and is with us, but His spirit, the Holy Spirit, is always inside us!

What is the nature of the Holy Spirit? Isaiah gives us seven characteristics³⁴ -- power, wisdom, counsel, knowledge, understanding, the obedient fear of the Lord, and the reverent fear of the Lord. The Holy Spirit gives us all these things.

You may ask, "That sounds great. But who gets filled by the Holy Spirit?" Jesus gives us a simple answer -- "If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever -- the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you."³⁵

Jesus said that, among other things, the Holy Spirit would,

1. Counsel you (John 14:16)
2. Teach you all things (John 14:26)
3. Guide you into all truth (John 16:12)

Furthermore, Jesus said that He will give the Holy Spirit to His children who ask Him.³⁶ If you want the Holy Spirit you must be one of His children. You must believe in Him as your personal Lord and Savior and love Him with all your heart.

So how does this all apply to your job search?

In a way, you are like Joshua poised to lead his people into the promised land. You have been wandering around in the desert and are about to enter into strange territory with a lot of unknown enemies and hazards. You don't really know what lies in store for you on the other side of the river.

But God is going ahead of you and getting things ready for you -- things you have no idea about. When it is time for you to act, He will be with you. Furthermore, He places His Spirit in you to counsel you, teach you and guide you.

³²Deuteronomy 31:1-8

³³Deuteronomy 34:9

³⁴Isaiah 11:1

³⁵John 14:15-17

³⁶Luke 11:13

Have you ever read this verse in the Bible? -- "The Lord helps those who help themselves." Of course not, it's not in the Bible. Rather, the Bible says the opposite -- "it is not for man to direct his steps."³⁷

I can testify that God led me every step of the way to my current job. Only with the clarity of hindsight can I see the steps that were involved and how they related to each other. I can look back and identify 6-8 significant events which led to my current job. At the time each one seemed like an isolated occurrence. Following are four of those events that I offer to illustrate:

1. I was led to go to someone to ask their forgiveness for having wronged them in the past. I only went because the Holy Spirit made me feel miserable when I didn't, not because I thought it would lead to a job. That person turned out to be a primary factor in my getting the job.
2. One day I was driving and made a wrong turn, got lost and eventually found myself in the neighborhood of an old friend. I felt led to call him, stopped by and we had a long lunch. That friend turned out to be a primary factor in getting my job.
3. A friend asked me one day to call someone to encourage them during some troubles they were having. That person turned out to be a factor in getting my job.
4. I interviewed with another company whose President knew somebody who helped me get the job in the company that eventually hired me.

I did each of the above things because I sensed the leading of the Holy Spirit and obeyed. I obeyed in faith without any idea at all they would lead to the job I obtained. Each one at the time seemed like an isolated circumstance.

But what if you are not sensing any direction from God right now? What should you do?

1. Ask God for clearer direction.
2. Continue to seek God (see Chapter 4).
3. Ask God to remind you if there is anything He already told you to do that you have not done yet.
4. Ask for help in hearing God's voice.
5. Keep spending time studying God's Word. This will do two things for you. First, God will speak to you through His Word. Secondly, your faith will increase and help you through this time of uncertainty.³⁸

Above all else, keep doing what God told you to do last. Maybe it's just not His time for new direction.

Whatever God tells you to do, do it!

Finally, ask yourself this question -- Do you really believe deep in your heart that God will provide direction for your job search? If you do, the Holy Spirit will provide clear direction. If not, you won't really listen intently, your attention will be easily diverted to other things or you'll start taking matters into your own hands.

³⁷See Proverbs 16:9, Proverbs 20:24, Jeremiah 10:23

³⁸Romans 10:17

Chapter 7

WAIT ON THE LORD

Being between jobs involves a lot of waiting. Waiting for people to return calls. Waiting for an interview. Waiting for a prospective employer to make a decision. During this time it seems that our sense of urgency is far more acute than that of other people.

The Bible says much about waiting -- waiting on God. King David, who spent a lot of time waiting on God as he was being hunted by his enemies, said, "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him..."³⁹

God gives us many reasons why it is in our best interest to wait on Him:

1. God Himself acts on behalf of those who wait.⁴⁰
2. Waiting is part of the process God uses to grow us and mature us in our faith.⁴¹
3. Waiting produces serenity.⁴² We shift the responsibility for the outcome to God.
4. When we wait for God, He renews our strength -- He actually replaces our strength with His strength.⁴³
5. By waiting, we actually get our timing in unison with God's timing.⁴⁴ By not waiting, we may delay or miss out on something that God wants to do in our life.
6. God really likes it when we wait on Him.⁴⁵ What more reason do we need?

What does it mean to wait on the Lord? The idea is simple. It means that we don't act on our own in our own strength. Rather, we are continually seeking His will in every situation of our life. We wait for his command before we move. We do things according to His timetable and not our own. We acknowledge that we are living our life according to His plan only.

Waiting for God not only applies to our actions, it also involves our attitude of mind. In fact, the same Hebrew verb, "to wait", is often translated "to hope." When we wait on God we also put our hope in Him.

So how does this all apply to the job search? How do you wait on God during your job search?

1. You only do those things you know God wants you to do. If you want to do things His way, then you must do things His way. It's as simple as that. If you act on your own, you risk getting outside of His will for your life.
2. Actively seek God's direction in everything. Waiting on God is not a passive experience -- it takes work. Seek His will via prayer, Bible study and other Christians. If you seek Him, you will find Him.⁴⁶

³⁹Psalm 37:7

⁴⁰Isaiah 64:4

⁴¹James 1:2-4

⁴²Psalm 37:7

⁴³Isaiah 40:30-31

⁴⁴Ecclesiastes 3:1

⁴⁵Psalm 147:10-11

⁴⁶Jeremiah 29:13

3. Always be asking God what to do right NOW, at THIS moment -- How to spend this time. Whom to call and what to say. What to write on the resume. What to say in the letter. When you don't ask for his direction, you end up wasting time, effort and energy.
4. Don't go anywhere without God. Wait until you believe you understand His direction. Then go to Him in prayer, "Lord, I think you are telling me to do this. Please lead me and guide me as I move out. Help me to continue to pay attention to your guidance." Don't take the attitude, "Lord, I'm going to do this, please bless it." When you move out on your own, you bring unnecessary stress and anxiety into your life.
5. Involve others in your wait, especially your wife. You must be in this together. That means waiting together.
6. Remember, to wait is to hope. Work at your hope and trust by reading the Bible (especially Psalms), through prayer and support from strong Christians.
7. Be sure you are humble. Acknowledge that without Christ, you can do nothing.⁴⁷ You are not in control.
8. You must believe that God will not keep you waiting beyond His appointed time. He will never leave you hanging.
9. You must believe that it is in your best interest to wait. Read what the Bible promises to those who wait.
10. Some may tell you that "the Lord helps those who help themselves." Remember, the Bible does NOT say that. It says the opposite. Resist that temptation!

All this may sound a little scary to you. You may be thinking, "But what if God doesn't speak? Am I supposed to just sit in my living room doing nothing? If so, how long? Will God just leave me hanging? I'll just end up sitting around!"

My experience is quite the opposite. I found that my plate was always full of activities directed by God. Most nights I would fall into bed exhausted from doing what I felt God led me to do -- He wore me out!

There were days when I sat around doing nothing, but they were usually when I was procrastinating about doing something He had told me to do.

Don't think that waiting on God is a passive, boring experience. It is hard work. And remember, when you don't wait on God, whatever you do is in your own strength. When you wait on Him, whatever you do is with God's strength.⁴⁸

⁴⁷John 15:5

⁴⁸Isaiah 40:30-31

Chapter 8

OBEY GOD

Did you ever wonder why God chose Abraham to be the father of a great nation?

Through the stories of his life we get some clues.

When God told Abraham to leave his country, his people and his father's household and go to a land God would show him *later* ... "Abraham left, as the Lord had told him"⁴⁹.

When God entered into His covenant with Abraham and told him to have himself and every male in his household circumcised ... "on that very day" Abraham did it⁵⁰.

When God told Abraham to sacrifice his son ... "early the next morning" Abraham went to do it⁵¹.

When God spoke, Abraham obeyed.

To obey God means more than just not doing the wrong things. It also means that we do what God tells us -- when, how, where and with the right attitude. Disobedience comes in many forms. Delayed obedience, partial obedience and grumbling about the assignment are all less than God expects.

Is there anything that you know God wants you to do that is undone, or partially done? In any area of your life? Every command from God is urgent and important, even when that command isn't in the area of your life you happen to be focusing your attention on at the moment.

God doesn't segment our lives like we have a tendency to do. For Him, everything is connected. Asking Him for something while in a state of conscious disobedience is like your teenager asking to use the car when he hasn't taken the trash out since you reminded him a week ago.

If you think of your life as a critical path, the last command from God may be the next step on that path. Until you obey that last command, He may not reveal the next step.

There was a time in my job search when God was leading me to reconcile with a family member in another state. It was very uncomfortable for me because it involved re-surfacing some deep hurts from many years before. So I did what I too often do -- procrastinate. The only trouble was, whenever I would pray for direction about my job search the Holy Spirit would remind me what I was to do -- "Go see your sister!"

So one day I drove several hours to see her, but she had company and it wasn't convenient to talk. So I drove home relieved, telling myself that I must have heard God wrong. I put it out of my mind. But I still wasn't getting any direction about my job search. Then a couple weeks later I was asking God for direction and He told me again, "Go see your relative." So I drove all that way again. This time she was home alone and we had a warm and meaningful visit. Not only did we resolve those issues from long before, but the very next day I received clear direction about the job search!

How does all this apply to your job search?

⁴⁹Genesis 12:1-4

⁵⁰Genesis 17:23

⁵¹Genesis 22:1-3

1. Get yourself into a position of obedience to God in every area of your life, as far as you know. In His eyes, all those areas are related. He knows everything -- you can't hide something from Him, hoping He will forget or not notice⁵².

He may be waiting for you to do something in another area of your life before He takes you to the next step in your job search. So act NOW. Don't procrastinate any longer. Just do it!

2. Sometimes God will ask you to do something which turns out to be related to your job search but you don't connect it until much later. If you aren't obedient to that initial command you may get yourself out of His will for you.
3. Sometimes God may ask you to do something that is really difficult and takes you out of your comfort zone. It is during these times especially when you must trust Him. Remember, you can do everything through Him who gives you strength⁵³.

[Caution! Do your best to obey God but don't get caught up in a "works" mentality. You are saved not from your works but by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ⁵⁴. Likewise, He loves you. Period. Your good deeds won't make Him love you any more. God knows you are not perfect -- He just wants you to do your best and to be willing to allow Him to guide you. He knows your limitations far better than you do!⁵⁵]

Finally, Jesus said -- "If you love me, you will obey what I command."⁵⁶ He was not saying that obedience causes us to love Him, but the reverse. Ultimately, our obedience flows out of our love for Jesus. The only way we can be consistently obedient to God is through the power of Jesus in us. If we don't love Jesus, we cannot be obedient to God, no matter how hard we try.

So, if you really want to be obedient to God, focus on your relationship with Jesus Christ. Get to know Jesus better. Talk with Him -- speak out loud to Him. Listen for the quiet voice of His Spirit. Read the Gospels -- meditate on what Jesus said and did.

As your relationship with Jesus and your love for Him grows, so will your capacity to obey God.

⁵²Psalm 139:ALL

⁵³Philippians 4:13

⁵⁴Ephesians 2:8-9

⁵⁵Psalm 139:1

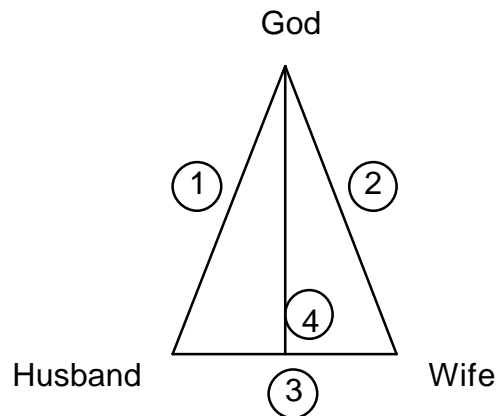
⁵⁶John 14:15

Chapter 9

YOU AND YOUR WIFE

"So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."⁵⁷

"One flesh..." Did you ever stop and really think about it? Many people think that this description of the marriage relationship refers to the physical union of the man and woman -- they are right. But it goes much farther than that. According to His Word, God views a marriage as a covenant relationship between three people -- the husband, the wife and Himself. A covenant is an agreement or contract between two people. There are at least four covenant relationships in a marriage -- God/Husband, God/Wife, Husband/Wife, God/Couple.



When two Christians marry they become "connected" to each other as one flesh. In addition to the relationship each has with God, they now have a new relationship with Him as a unified body. Throughout our married life God desires that we work toward a state of unity and one-ness with our wife. This applies at all times -- even when we lose our job.

Many marriages (both Christian and non-Christian) suffer and some even come to an end as a result of the stresses brought about by unemployment. On the other hand, many other marriages actually flourish during this difficult time. A key difference between marriages that succeed and those that fail during this time is the degree to which the partners approach their situation as a team, as "one flesh".

Your marriage can grow and become stronger than ever before because you lost your job if you and your wife approach it as one. How do you do that?

1. Get alone with your wife (ASAP):
 - Tell her that you believe you are in this together and you would like her to join you.

⁵⁷

⁵⁷Genesis 2:22-24, Matthew 19:5

- Tell her that you are committed to seeking and following God's will in this situation and that you are willing to subordinate your will to His. Further, you would like to seek His will together with her.
- Recommit to her that you are submitting yourself and your marriage to God.

If this is new to her, be courageous and hang in there. She will respond. God is faithful to those who love Him and seek Him.

2. Ask her to get down on your knees together and pray together out loud for God's help in doing all those things you agreed to in #1, above. In my personal experience this is probably the most important step of all. When you are open and honest with God in prayer He brings you into a right relationship with your wife.
3. Communicate with her regularly about all that is happening regarding the job search. Talk to her. Tell her what you are thinking and feeling. Don't hide anything. If you are worried about something, tell her about it. Don't keep secrets.
4. Develop a financial plan together. This is the one area that draws more couples apart than anything else. Don't let it divide your marriage.
 - Decide together how your money will be spent.

When you don't agree on something, the conservative position should usually prevail. In other words, if she doesn't agree with an expenditure, don't do it. Yield to her.
 - Both of you should understand the financial situation completely. Take time to explain it to her. If she keeps the finances, take the time for you to understand it.
 - Jointly turn over your financial needs to God.⁵⁸ Tell Him you trust Him to provide.⁵⁹
5. Enjoy your wife during this time. You will probably have a little more time to see each other - take advantage of it!
6. Bear your burdens together. If it's hard to go take money out of a savings account, do it together. Don't let your wife shoulder any burden by herself and don't you shoulder any either.
7. Don't neglect her sexual needs.⁶⁰
8. Continually seek God's will together. Ask her help in discerning God's will in your marriage and for your job search.
9. At the end of each day, pray together out loud. While you pray, have in your mind the image of the two of you as one person acknowledging Jesus Christ as the head of your marriage and of each one of you.

⁵⁸Matthew 6:25-34

⁵⁹Philippians 4:19

⁶⁰1 Corinthians 7:5

Do not go to bed angry with your wife -- it will only be worse in the morning.⁶¹ I can guarantee it from experience -- you will awaken angrier than when you went to bed and she will awaken more hurt.

The Bible says several things about the duties and responsibilities of the husband. They apply as much when you lose your job as at any other time.

1. If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.⁶²

If that means you need to take a part-time or temporary job to keep food on the table, do it. Don't be so proud that you don't provide for your family because you won't accept a job that is "beneath" you. According to the Bible, that's worse than being an unbeliever!⁶³

2. Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect...so that nothing will hinder your prayers.⁶⁴
3. Husbands, love you wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her... In this way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies.⁶⁵
4. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife...⁶⁶
5. Now I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of every woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.⁶⁷

You are to be the spiritual leader of your family. If you don't lead, how can anybody follow? If you have not been leading in this area, ask God for strength and courage. And begin now!

Perhaps your wife is not a Christian and some of the advice here will not be easy to implement. I urge you to read 1 Corinthians 7:12-14. Paul says that the unbelieving spouse is sanctified (made holy) by a believing spouse. I don't totally understand all that means, but I know it worked in my marriage -- my believing wife played a significant part in leading me to the Lord! She did it just by staying close to the Lord and obeying Him. So hang in there, obey what God's word says about being a husband and leave the rest up to God -- He knows a lot better than you how to draw her to Himself.

Finally, listen to some comments made by wives of unemployed husbands:

We need to communicate better than we ever have before -- in all areas of our lives.

I'm almost like a single person. I haven't been going through this with him. What I want most would be for him to share with me what he's going through. We're going along in our merry way and I have no idea if there'll be any food in the refrigerator tomorrow.

⁶¹Ephesians 4:26

⁶²1 Timothy 5:8

⁶³1 Timothy 5:8

⁶⁴1 Peter 3:5

⁶⁵Ephesians 5:25-28

⁶⁶1 Corinthians 7:3

⁶⁷1 Corinthians 11:3

You need to be extremely honest with the financial part. No matter how hard you try to hide it it'll surface later and that drives a wedge between us. It's tempting to protect or hide but that damages trust and it's hard to rebuild later.

I will support him in whatever decisions he makes and I'm available for listening. I will get a second job if he feels that's necessary. All things happen for a reason and I get scared too. It's taken him a while to learn that he can tell me what's NOT OK. Let's share the good and the bad.

Remember I'm married to YOU, not your job or your work.

The most important thing is to share your true feelings with me. Sometimes men don't want to admit their true feelings so as not to scare the wife, but they need to share their feelings.

[My wife wrote the following...]

When my husband was in between jobs he had just become a committed Christian after many years. At one point I realized he was seeking the Lord's will through prayer and Bible study but wasn't actually looking that hard for employment. We had severance money to meet basic needs but I was upset because he wasn't looking as actively as I thought he should. I was about to take matters into my own hands when the Lord showed me clearly that I was to learn to trust my husband again and yield in this matter; that I would be glad if I did. In faith, I dropped the issue and went on to experience seven months of the best time in our entire married life. During that time of closeness I could actually see God step-by-step fixing everything that had been wrong with our marriage. We now agree in all the areas where we didn't before; finances, sex, in-laws, the kids, housework. A lot of those solutions are not what we would have thought we wanted, but they are what God wanted and they have worked!

Chapter 10

SEEK THE COUNSEL OF OTHER CHRISTIANS

List below the people you talk to about the important issues in your life:

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

If you are like most people, you ran out of gas after you wrote down the name of your wife and maybe a parent or brother. Maybe you could think of no one.

I know from my experience that it's easy to become isolated when not working. First of all, you don't have to account to anyone for what you are doing. There's no boss or co-worker to report in to. No time clock to punch. No deadlines to meet. If you sleep in or spend an afternoon at the mall or watching TV nobody will notice or say anything. Nobody asks you how many phone calls you've made or how much time you spent researching leads. After a few weeks friends stop calling -- they're embarrassed for you and don't know what to say.

If you don't seek out others, you will soon be isolated and alone.

The Bible is clear about the subject of seeking counsel. Take a few moments to meditate on the following verses:

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. Psalm 27:17

...let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance. (Proverbs 1:5)

Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning. (Proverbs 9:9)

The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice. (Proverbs 12:15)

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. (Proverbs 15:22)

Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise. (Proverbs 19:20)

Make plans by seeking advice; if you wage war, obtain guidance. (Proverbs 20:18)

Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel. (Proverbs 27:9)

The fact is that it will be very difficult to be successful in what you do without the counsel of others, especially during a challenging time, such as when you are out of a job.

The benefits of seeking counsel are many:

1. You receive encouragement and support.

2. You get a sanity check. Sometimes you get off-track in your thinking and need someone else to bring you back to reality.
3. The other person will introduce something new which you hadn't thought about before. This may be new information, a new viewpoint or just a new way of looking at your situation.
4. You receive confirmation about what you perceive God to be telling you.
5. You develop wisdom (see Proverbs 19:20, above).
6. You crystallize your thinking (i.e., you see things more clearly).
7. You get advice.

Have you been isolating yourself from other people? Have you been sharing with other Christians what you are thinking about? Have you asked them for advice? Have you made yourself accountable to someone else? If not, then take another look at the above list and see what you are missing.

And don't let your pride get in the way of seeking and listening to good counsel! Many of us (myself included) have a tendency to want to be self-sufficient and macho -- we have a "John-Wayne-I-am-in-control-on-my-island" complex. But I have learned that I experience a great release when I humble myself and take the attitude that I don't have all the answers, that someone else actually may know something I don't. I was even so arrogant that I thought I didn't need any help from headhunters -- until one who was a friend of my wife actually found me a job!

CONSIDER STARTING A 59:59 GROUP

This is an idea that started at Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, GA and has spread to many churches across the country.

Small groups are formed for the purpose of encouraging, providing accountability, and praying for those in the group who are between jobs. Networking is not the purpose, although some may actually occur. The ideal group size is six to eight and consists of an equal number of "left-siders" (employed) "right-siders" (unemployed). Men are grouped with men and women with women. Each member of the 59:59 group signs a covenant agreeing to meet together each week for 59 minutes and 59 seconds until every member of the group is gainfully employed. Starting a group is as simple as finding five other people.

An information and group organization kit can be obtained free of charge by contacting the author of this document or Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, 955 Johnson Ferry Road, NE, Marietta, GA, 30068. (404-973-6561)

Some cautions about seeking counsel:

1. When it comes to the skills and functions of the job search, seek out the best counsel you can. God may provide expertise from non-Christian sources. However, don't overlook the fact that much of what is going on in your life is spiritual. Therefore, you **MUST** be seeking the counsel of other believers and followers of Christ.⁶⁸
2. Remember that your ultimate counselor is the Lord God Himself.
"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you."⁶⁹
3. **LISTEN** to the counsel you receive and take it seriously! I have seen men and women greatly helped through the job search process because they applied the good counsel they received from others. Unfortunately I have also seen many who suffered needlessly because they refused to apply the excellent counsel they were given.

Pray about whom you should seek counsel from. God may be doing something in your life that not everyone will be able to understand and accept.

⁶⁸1 John 4:1-3

⁶⁹Psalm 32:8

(Epilogue)

You Are Not Alone

You may feel lonely. You may feel like no one cares. You may feel like you don't have a friend in the world.

But listen to what God says to you⁷⁰:

"I have searched you and know you. I know when you sit and when you rise. I perceive your thoughts from afar. I discern your going out and your lying down. Before a word is on your tongue, I know it completely. I hem you in, behind and before. I have placed my hand on you.

[Don't try to understand all these concepts! They are too much for you to fully comprehend. Just accept what I say -- believe Me and internalize it.]

There is no place in the universe where you can be separated from me and my Holy Spirit. If you fly to the farthest reaches of outer space, I am there. If you burrow into the center of the earth, I am there. If you go to any place on the planet, I am there and I will guide you. My Son will hold fast to you.

Even if you are in darkness I can still see you. The light of Jesus will shine on you."

God wants a personal relationship with you more than anything else in your life. God wants you to seek Him and His will for your life. He wants you to acknowledge Him in everything you do. God wants you to trust Him to meet all your needs -- in every area of your life. God wants you to wait on Him and to obey Him. God wants you and your wife to be one. God wants you to enjoy the company of other Christians.

Don't let your present circumstances come between you and God. Don't let your preoccupation with the job search stand between you and Him. Focus on Him first. Let God use this time to bring you into a closer relationship with Him than you have ever thought possible.

So keep your head up. You aren't alone. You aren't the only person who ever went through this experience and you certainly won't be the last. If you let God take control of your life during this time, He promises to transform it into a fulfilling and satisfying period of growth⁷¹.

⁷⁰Paraphrase of Ps 139:1-12. Liberty has been taken to re-express these thoughts as from God to men.

⁷¹Deuteronomy 5:29

TROUBLESHOOTING CHART

| DOES THIS APPLY TO YOU? | IF THIS IS HOW YOU FEEL | REVIEW AND READ | HOW TO PRAY |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|
| | <p>Most of this doesn't apply to me because I don't feel that I have a relationship with God. I have never accepted Christ as my Savior and Lord.</p> | <p>Chapter 2 John 3:16, 10:10, 1:12 Romans 3:23, 5:8, 6:23, 10:9-10 1 Peter 3:18 Rev 3:29</p> | <p>These are only ideas for you. The Holy Spirit should lead you in what to pray specifically. Listen to the words He puts into your heart. If you don't "feel" it, put emotion aside and pray in faith. Repeat it when doubt sneaks in.</p> <p>Lord, I feel alone. I feel as if I don't know you. I want to know you. Please draw me to Yourself. I know that I have sinned against you. [Elaborate here, if you feel led.] Please forgive me. I want to turn away from that sin and walk with You. I know that Jesus died on the cross for me. Because of His death all my sins are forgiven. Right now, as best as I know how, I accept Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Lord, lead me in a new life. Send Your Holy Spirit to dwell in me. Thank You, Jesus.</p> |
| | <p>I don't understand why I lost my job. Why me? It just isn't fair.</p> | <p>Chapter 1 Romans 8:28 Philippians 2:13</p> | <p>Lord, I thank you that in all things You work for my good, because I love you and you have called me according to Your purpose⁷². I know that you work in me to will and to act according to Your good purpose⁷³. I know that You are at work in the middle of my circumstances right now and have a specific plan for me⁷⁴. Lord, now that I find myself in this position, how do You want me to respond? What do You want me to do right now?</p> |

⁷²Romans 8:28

⁷³Philippians 2:13

⁷⁴Jeremiah 29:11

| DOES THIS APPLY TO YOU? | IF THIS IS HOW YOU FEEL | REVIEW AND READ | HOW TO PRAY |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| | I feel like a failure, a loser. | Epilogue Psalm 139 Romans 8:28 John 3:16 | <p>These are only ideas for you. The Holy Spirit should lead you in what to pray specifically. Listen to the words He puts into your heart. If you don't "feel" it, put emotion aside and pray in faith. Repeat it when doubt sneaks in.</p> <p>Lord, only you know why this happened to me. Only you know how it will turn out. Your Word says that I am fearfully and wonderfully made. I praise You for that.⁷⁵ You know me inside out - better than I know myself.</p> <p>I believe that you have a plan for me and that I will be better off because this happened.⁷⁶ I know that You love me with a love so powerful that I cannot comprehend it. You love me so much that you sent Your Son to die on the cross for me.⁷⁷ I know that You wouldn't allow your Son to die for a "loser". Thank you for your love.</p> |
| | I am worried about my finances. | Chapter 5 Matthew 6:25-34 Philippians 4:6-7 Philippians 4:19 | <p>Lord, thank you for providing for me and my family. Forgive me for any doubt I have had that you may not continue to provide for my needs.</p> <p>As of this moment I place my total trust in You with regard to my financial needs.</p> <p>Through your Spirit, help me to seek first your kingdom and your righteousness so that my needs for food, clothing and shelter can be met according to your promise⁷⁸. Help me to be receptive to your will for my finances. Give me the strength to carry out your commands in this area of my life. As best as I am able I will carry out those commands, whatever they may be.</p> |

⁷⁵Psalm 139:13-14

⁷⁶Jeremiah 29:11, Romans 8:28

⁷⁷John 3:16

⁷⁸Matthew 6:25-34

| DOES THIS APPLY TO YOU? | IF THIS IS HOW YOU FEEL | REVIEW AND READ | HOW TO PRAY |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| | I am worried about whether I will ever find a job. | Chapter 1 Chapter 5 Jeremiah 29:11-13 Romans 8:28 | These are only ideas for you. The Holy Spirit should lead you in what to pray specifically. Listen to the words He puts into your heart. If you don't "feel" it, put emotion aside and pray in faith. Repeat it when doubt sneaks in. Lord, I know you have a plan for me ⁷⁹ . I know that Your plan is for my good and that You will reveal it to me in Your timing, not my own. Lord, You are a faithful God ⁸⁰ . I know you won't leave me hanging. Lord, please help me overcome my unbelief ⁸¹ . Help me to trust in You and be obedient to You during this time of waiting. |
| | I don't feel like God is going to help me through this. | Chapter 3 Psalm 139 Proverbs 3:5-6 Psalm 23 1 Thess 5:24 | Lord, You are my Shepherd and I am your sheep ⁸² . I believe that you will lead and guide me through this time. Lord, please help me overcome my unbelief ⁸³ . I commit my will to you during this job search. I promise to wait for you and not move on my own, outside of Your will. |
| | This is the worst thing that ever could have happened to me. | Psalm 23 Romans 8:28 Jeremiah 29:11-13 | Lord, from where I sit my situation looks bad. But Lord, I know You have a plan and a purpose for my life ⁸⁴ . This experience is part of that plan. Your word says that You are at work in my life in order to make this time good for me ⁸⁵ . You are the author and perfecter of my faith ⁸⁶ - - please increase my faith in You. I thank You because this happened to me ⁸⁷ because I trust that I will be better off because it happened. |

⁷⁹Jeremiah 29:11-13
⁸⁰1 Thessalonians 5:24
⁸¹Mark 9:24
⁸²Psalm 23
⁸³Mark 9:24
⁸⁴Jeremiah 29:11-13
⁸⁵Romans 8:28
⁸⁶Hebrews 12:1
⁸⁷1 Thessalonians 5:18

| DOES THIS APPLY TO YOU? | IF THIS IS HOW YOU FEEL | REVIEW AND READ | HOW TO PRAY |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|
| | I feel like God let me down. | Chapters 5 and 6 Proverbs 4:5 Psalm 121 Psalm 23 Romans 8:28 Psalm 139 | <p>These are only ideas for you. The Holy Spirit should lead you in what to pray specifically. Listen to the words He puts into your heart. If you don't "feel" it, put emotion aside and pray in faith. Repeat it when doubt sneaks in.</p> <p>Lord, You know my thoughts better than I do, so You know the pain I am feeling over my job loss⁸⁸. Although this situation is hard for me, I thank You that it happened because I know that You are in control. I put my hope and my trust in You.</p> <p>Lord, You are a faithful God⁸⁹. I know you won't leave me hanging. I know that if I follow the path You have set before me and stay in Your will that I will be better off because this happened⁹⁰. Help me to see beyond my circumstances and to focus my attention on You and what You are doing in my life.</p> |
| | My wife is no help. She doesn't understand. We can't talk about this. | Chapter 9 Ephesians 4:26 1 Peter 3:5 Ephesians 5:25-28 | <p>Lord, thank You for my wife. Thank You for giving her to me. I know that You selected for me and me for her in order that we, as one, can better accomplish Your purposes in our lives.</p> <p>Help me to be the husband I should be during this difficult time. Help me to love her as You loved your church -- to give myself up for her, to put her needs ahead of my own. Make me sensitive to her emotions and concerns about my unemployment. Remind me to spend time with her talking about my thoughts, my plans, my experiences and my feelings. Work in our marriage during this time to make it stronger and increase our "one-ness". Help us both to keep our attention on You and Your will, Your plans and Your purposes for our lives.</p> |

⁸⁸Psalm 139

⁸⁹1 Thessalonians 5:24

⁹⁰Romans 8:28

| DOES THIS APPLY TO YOU? | IF THIS IS HOW YOU FEEL | REVIEW AND READ | HOW TO PRAY |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| | I've got to do whatever it takes to get a job. It's all up to me. The Lord helps those who help themselves. | Chapters 3, 6, 7 | <p>These are only ideas for you. The Holy Spirit should lead you in what to pray specifically. Listen to the words He puts into your heart. If you don't "feel" it, put emotion aside and pray in faith. Repeat it when doubt sneaks in.</p> <p>Father, You know me -- my thoughts, actions, feelings and emotions -- better than I do⁹¹. Lord, give me peace of mind and spirit. Give me Your perfect peace.</p> <p>I know that you see the past, present and future and that You have a plan for me⁹². Give me the serenity of mind and trust in my heart to follow where You lead me. Help me to trust that You are in control and that You have this all mapped out for me. You will take care of me. Give me enough trust to wait on You.</p> <p>Lord, whatever I know to be your will, I will do it. Regardless of the cost and regardless of the adjustment, as best as I know my heart, I commit to do Your will ahead of time. Lord, no matter what that will look like, I will do it.</p> |
| | I don't need to pray for direction. I just need to network, mail out resumes and do the things you do to find a job. | Chapter 6 Proverbs 3:5-6 Jeremiah 29:11-13 Ephesians 6:18 | <p>Lord, You know my heart. You know my thoughts⁹³. Lord, forgive me for not putting my trust in You as You have told me to in Your word⁹⁴. Your word says that You have a plan for my life⁹⁵. As best as I know how, I commit to yield to Your will for me. Lord, I ask you to direct my steps⁹⁶.</p> <p>Show me Your ways. Lead me in the paths you have established for me.</p> |

⁹¹Psalm 139

⁹²Jeremiah 29:11-13

⁹³Psalm 139

⁹⁴John 14:1

⁹⁵Jeremiah 29:11-13

⁹⁶Proverbs 16:9

| DOES THIS APPLY TO YOU? | IF THIS IS HOW YOU FEEL | REVIEW AND READ | HOW TO PRAY |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|
| | This is going to be a horrible time for me. | Chapter 6 Romans 8:28 Psalm 126:5 | <p>These are only ideas for you. The Holy Spirit should lead you in what to pray specifically. Listen to the words He puts into your heart. If you don't "feel" it, put emotion aside and pray in faith. Repeat it when doubt sneaks in.</p> <p>Lord, You know my mind and my heart. You know and understand how I feel⁹⁷. In spite of what I am feeling about this time I will be out of work I want to thank You for what has happened. I know that You are right now working for my good in the middle of this⁹⁸. Help me to keep my attention on You and what You are doing.</p> <p>I place my trust in You⁹⁹. I am relying on You and know that You have a plan. Lord, give me patience, peace and strength so that I will let You work in me and through me.</p> |
| | I have prayed to God for direction in my search, but He isn't answering me. | Chapters 4, 6 Hebrews 13:5 | <p>Father, I thank You that You are the Lord of my life. As my Lord, You have promised me that You will provide me with the direction I need at the precise time I need it. Help me to have the patience to wait on You. Lord, please bring to my mind anything You have asked me to do which remains undone, whatever area of my life it happens to be in. As best as I know my heart, I promise I will do it.</p> <p>Finally, Lord, empower me through Your Spirit to continue doing what you told me to do last.</p> |

⁹⁷Psalm 139

⁹⁸Romans 8:28

⁹⁹John 14:1

| DOES THIS APPLY TO YOU? | IF THIS IS HOW YOU FEEL | REVIEW AND READ | HOW TO PRAY |
|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | I feel like I won't get a job by the time my finances run out. | Chapters 5 and 6 Matt. 6:25-34 | <p>These are only ideas for you. The Holy Spirit should lead you in what to pray specifically. Listen to the words He puts into your heart. If you don't "feel" it, put emotion aside and pray in faith. Repeat it when doubt sneaks in.</p> <p>Father, I thank You for the Lord Jesus who told me I don't have to worry about food, clothing and shelter. In fact, He commanded me NOT to worry about these things.¹⁰⁰ Lord, give me peace about this so that I will be better able to hear Your voice and perceive Your will for me. Lord, help me to put my trust in You. Lord Jesus, You are the author and perfecter of my faith -- increase my faith¹⁰¹. Lord, show me if there is any thought, attitude or sin in my life that might prevent me from obeying You in any area of my life. Thank you for being Jehovah Jireh, "the God who provides."</p> |
| | Nothing good can come of this. It's the worst thing that could have happened. | Chapter 1 Romans 8:28 Philippians 2:13 | <p>Father, You know my thoughts. You see and understand the feelings of despair I have about losing my job. Lord, Your word says that You work in all things for the good of those who love You and who are called according to Your purpose. Continue Your work in me. (Thank You for Your word.) I yield myself -- my life and will -- to You, for You to work in and through me. I am not in this situation by accident. Now that I find myself in these circumstances, Lord, how do You want me to respond? What do You want me to do right now?</p> |

¹⁰⁰Matthew 6:25-34

¹⁰¹Hebrews 12:1-2

| DOES THIS APPLY TO YOU? | IF THIS IS HOW YOU FEEL | REVIEW AND READ | HOW TO PRAY |
|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | I feel lonely. Nobody cares. It's me against the world. | Chapters 4,7,9,10 Epilogue Psalm 139:1-12 Deut 31:6 | <p>These are only ideas for you. The Holy Spirit should lead you in what to pray specifically. Listen to the words He puts into your heart. If you don't "feel" it, put emotion aside and pray in faith. Repeat it when doubt sneaks in.</p> <p>Father, You know my heart. You know the loneliness I feel. You have promised never to leave me or forsake me.¹⁰² Thank You for this promise. Lord, I want to feel Your closeness to me. I want to know You better. I know that You love me and care for me more than I can even understand. You have told me in Your word, "If you seek Me, you will find Me, if you seek Me with all your heart". Lord, I want to seek You with all my heart. Lord, help me to reach out to others during this time. Give me the strength and courage to overcome my isolation. Lead me through the steps necessary toward spending time with other believers. I'm sure there are people who could use some encouragement from me and are in similar circumstances -- help me to seek them out. Please take away any pride, embarrassment or shame that keeps me closed off. Thank You for Your love for me.</p> |

¹⁰²Deuteronomy 31:6