

the rack

What will
become of
me?

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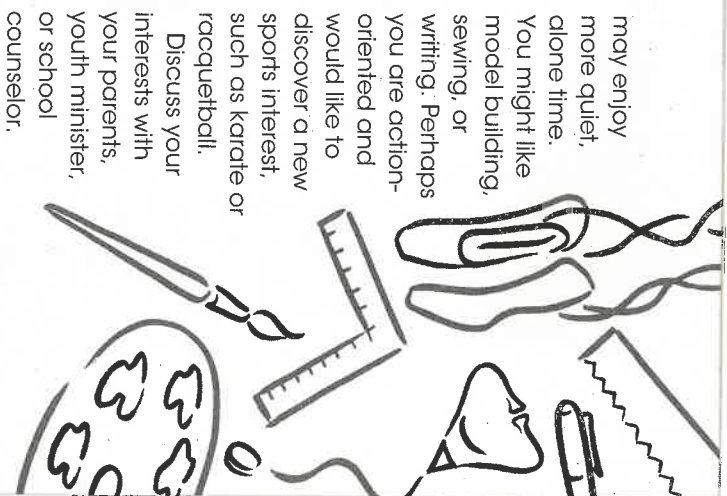
“Becoming” is difficult if you don’t know what you hope to become.

For **Jason**, it was not as easy to see his talents. He was a little hesitant to try something new. It was even hard for him to choose his eighth-grade electives. He explains his frustrations. “I didn’t know what interested me or what I’d do well in.” Jason expressed what many of us feel. “Becoming” is difficult if you don’t know what you hope to become.

In Romans 12:4-8, Paul reassures us “we have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.” God did not pass you by when He passed out skills. As we each are right-handed or left-handed, or have favorite foods and TV shows, we have different interests. The challenge is to discover the nature of your particular interests. When you do this, you will unlock doors to your special talents and skills.

How can you recognize your interests? An easy way to begin is to examine the hobbies and activities you are now participating in. Which ones do you enjoy? Which ones could you develop and expand?

If you get your energy from being with other people, perhaps you have a talent for helping others. You can consider baby-sitting, coaching, or helping at a hospital or nursing home as areas of interest to explore. On the other hand, you



may enjoy more quiet, alone time. You might like model building, sewing, or writing. Perhaps you are action-oriented and would like to discover a new sports interest, such as karate or racquetball. Discuss your interests with your parents, youth minister, or school counselor. They can give you ideas as you set out on your personal “talent hunt.” Sometimes they know about opportunities in your areas of interest. Ask your school counselor to give you an interest test or personality inventory. (It explains which interests appeal to certain personality types.)

Allison admitted that trying out a new interest or talent is a little scary. “I’m really nervous when I play a new piece. I’m afraid I’ll forget or mess up.” As you focus on the options and begin to see your abilities, sometimes you will face the possibility of failure. It doesn’t mean it was a bad choice. You have to step back and rethink the direction you took.

Allison, 13, won a scholarship to the Youth Performing Arts School in Louisville, Kentucky. Was she born with her fingers on the piano keys? Did her parents make her practice before she learned to walk?

“Believe it or not, I didn’t even know I was musically talented. Three years ago, I had a knee injury and couldn’t play sports with my friends. It was boring, just sitting around. I decided to try piano lessons.

“When I played for my fifth grade graduation, I got compliments from everyone. I knew then I wanted to stick with it.” Doing well at something is exciting, as Allison can tell. It’s a satisfying feeling to find something that interests you.

I didn’t know what interested me or what I’d do well in.

6. Double underline the goal you feel is most needed for the church today. Why?
7. What does all this tell you about Jesus? The goals He had?
8. If you had to write a headline for the passage that Jesus read (verses 18, 19), what would it be?



TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Luke 4:16-22

¹⁶He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. ¹⁷The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ¹⁸"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

²⁰Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, ²¹and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

²²All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.



GOOD NEWS GOALS

A goal gives us something to try for, a direction to follow, and a place to think up. Too often we don't take time to think about our goals, and we usually end up going nowhere! In today's lesson, Jesus announces the goals that will guide His life. Let's find out more about them.

1. In today's Scripture section, underline all the actions that are a part of Jesus' goals.
2. Circle all the people Jesus wanted to reach.
3. Put a check mark by the goal you think was the most difficult for Jesus to reach. Explain why you chose the goal you did.
4. Put a star by the goal you feel was the easiest for Him to reach. Explain why.
5. Put a squiggly line underneath the goal you feel was most needed for Jesus' day. Why?

What will I become of me?

Continued from page 3.

Jason found that a skill in school can lead to outside talents. "I had fun in my Language Arts class doing skits. My teacher encouraged me to try out for a community play. I was nervous about it, so my friend and I tried out together. Now he's on the stage crew, and I'm part of the cast. We're having fun."

Jason's youth minister heard about his talents and asked Jason to help write a column for the church newsletter. Now Jason is considering signing up for a journalism enrichment class at his high school next year.

One thing about talent most of us dislike is the work involved. Allison admits she'd often prefer going swimming with her friends. "Practice is not always fun. I hate playing the same piece over and over. It's so boring, but I've got to stay with it to get it right."

One great benefit is that as you practice, you can

measure your progress. You can begin to set goals. You can ask yourself, "Where do I want to go from here?" and start to see answers.

Jason sees play practice as a type of cultivation. "I watched my mom weed her flower garden. As she pulled out the weeds, the flowers had more room to grow. As I learn my lines from the play, I get rid of all the stuttering. My performance is better."

By trusting in God, you will have the courage to use your talents effectively. But remember, it's not a disgrace if you don't succeed right away in your "talent hunt." As you focus on the choices, you will learn who you are and your place as a Christian. In the parable of the talents (money), Jesus said that people who do their best with what He gives them will be rewarded. "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matt. 25:21).

FAMOUS Goals

These famous names from fiction, history, and the present have at least one thing in common. Each has (or had) a goal in life. Match the famous name with its proper goal.

1. Roodrunner
2. Thurgood Marshall
3. Jesus Christ
4. Barack Obama
5. Moses
6. Superman
7. Abraham Lincoln
8. George Washington
9. Apostle Paul
10. Daniel
11. Yogi Baur
12. Queen Esther
13. Martin Luther King, Jr.

- a. Interpret the law in the Supreme Court
- b. Unite the United States in agreement to end slavery
- c. Lead the Israelites to the promised land
- d. Escape Wile E. Coyote
- e. To worship only the one true God
- f. Get food from visitors to Jellystone Park
- g. Spread the gospel
- h. To be the first African-American U.S. President
- i. To plead for the lives of the Jewish people
- j. Redeem the lost
- k. Secure equal rights for blacks
- l. Stay away from Kryptonite
- m. Be a good president



Where do I go from here?



every day devos

Some people spend their lives seeking fame, fortune, or whatever it is they feel will bring them happiness. They miss out on the treasures God has for them. What is it that you seek?

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

Matthew 6:33

MONDAY Read Matthew 6:33. “Righteousness” means living according to God’s will. What would you have to do differently to live more righteously?

TUESDAY Read Micah 6:8. What does this verse help you to seek? How does this compare with your goals?

WEDNESDAY Review Monday’s list of how you can live more righteously. Then spend some time praying about those goals, asking God for His wisdom.

THURSDAY Seek out Jeremiah 29:13. What does God promise you will find if you seek? How can you seek with all your heart?

FRIDAY Read Matthew 6:31-33 and Philippians 4:19. How can you demonstrate trust in God?

SATURDAY End the week in prayer, seeking God’s guidance for the coming week.

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