

A Future with a Purpose

What is God's will for your life? That's a hard question for a lot of Christians. Maybe you've met people who seem to know exactly what God wants them to do—like who they should marry, where they should live, or what they should do in life. That would be great stuff to know, but don't feel like you have to have these answers now. For most Christians, discovering God's purpose for them is a gradual process. Take a look at how this process worked in the lives of these two people.



Tim Oswandel is a police officer in the Los Angeles area.

Listen to what Tim has to say about how

God led him to his exciting career.

Q. At what point in your life did you decide police work was in your future?

A. During middle school I thought about being an FBI agent. After college I became more interested in becoming a police officer. I became a jail guard for the City of Glendale (north of Los Angeles) before I was hired as a police recruit. Finally I returned to Glendale, this time as an officer.

Q. How does your faith in God give you peace on a day-to-day basis?

A. Being a police officer is exciting because you never know what is going to happen. I can see how that would make some people uneasy. God knows what is going to unfold even before I respond to a call. Jesus is the best partner any police officer would want! Also, I thank the Lord for giving me a great sense of humor because police officers see a lot of funny things!

Q. You once thought about going to seminary instead of the police academy. How did you seek God's will

in the midst of this hard decision?

A. After finishing college, I worked in the business world. After a few years I felt the Lord calling me to something else. I talked to a lot of people about what I should do. And I prayed about the things we talked about. It seemed my best choices were to either attend seminary and become a chaplain in the military (like my dad) or become a police officer. While I was struggling with this choice, I heard the testimony of a Los Angeles police officer. I realized that being a Christian *and* a police officer was the perfect match for me. I have had many opportunities to talk about spiritual things with officers that I never would have had otherwise. I thank God for my career because I get excited to go to work every day. The job also led me to the woman who became my wife, Michele. She's a 911 dispatcher!

Q. What advice would you give to a Christian middle schooler who is considering becoming a police officer?

A. I get excited when I hear young people say they want to become police officers. The fact that a young person is already a Christian is the best place to start. I would advise these middle schoolers to pray about the direction God has for them. Also, seek out and speak to police officers about their jobs. (That's good advice for any sort of career decision—talk to people who are already doing what you think you want to do!) Most importantly, commit your life to Christ and follow His guidance.

Matthew 5:9 is a verse that encourages me in my line of work, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.”



Kevin Witte's
current title is
Commander,
Weather
Flight. Listen
to what Kevin
has to say
about how
God directed
him in his career
in the Air Force.

Q. How did you know that God was calling you to predict weather patterns for the U.S. military? Were there any life experiences prior to this occupation that helped you make this choice?

A. I first became interested in studying the weather when I was 10 years old. I remember walking home when the loud county tornado siren sounded. I ran home and stayed in the basement with my family for a few hours. Tornadoes hit my hometown that afternoon and destroyed several businesses, a few houses, and a school gym. This tragic event is what first got me interested in weather. I remember a few years later, members of our class visited a television studio in Chicago and were led on a tour by meteorologist Harry Volkman. (A meteorologist is a person who studies the weather and tries to predict what it will do.) I really liked what I saw and wanted to be involved with forecasting the weather from then on. There were some bumps in my path, however. After taking the SAT test in high school, I reviewed the results with a counselor. I was told that I had little aptitude for science and would be best suited as a physical therapist. It wasn't until 10 years later that I found

the counselor had misread the data. She had reversed the scores on the aptitude parts of my test. In reality, my aptitude was high in geology and engineering (pretty close to meteorology). Years later I joined the Air Force and pursued my interests in meteorology.

Q. What unusual places have you been able to go to as a result of being in the Air Force?

A. The most unusual place I've ever been to is Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. I spent four months in Riyadh as a weather commander after Desert Storm. On weekends I went on field trips where I saw huge sand dunes and pictures drawn by people who lived in Jesus' time. I also went to Korea where I learned about Korean culture and the history of the Korean War.

Q. What advice would you give to a Christian young person who wanted to pursue a career in either the military or as a meteorologist?

A. I guess the advice I would give to any young person would be to set your goals, and don't listen to people who say you can't do this or that. Try to find someone who will support you and ask you good questions. If you want it bad enough, it can happen, especially if it is what God has in mind for you. Figuring out God's will is hard. I spent a lot of time worrying about what I was supposed to do with my life. Finally, with God's help, things worked themselves out.

So how do you know when you're fulfilling God's purpose for you? When you're doing something you really enjoy, and that work is meeting people's needs, then that's probably the direction that God wants you to go. Love God and follow your heart!