

How To Face Academic And Career Challenges - Asaolu O.S (Church of Christ, Akoka)

Theme: The Christian Youth: Strategies against failure and challenges of life

Definitions

Youth refers to a young person between late childhood and mature adulthood.

Christian means an individual who has obeyed the gospel and is “in Christ” whose sovereignty he accepts

Strategies refer to methodologies, ways or approaches

Failure means no success or bad success or “inability to achieve desired goal in accordance to governing rules, with optimal resources at the required time.”

Academic refers to structured schooling or tutoring, formal learning by study of documented knowledge from experts with certification based on passing of prescribed examinations. This is thus multi-apprenticeship.

Career has to do with profession and work-life or occupational history; it involves “job progression in a field over a prolonged period.”

Challenges refer to problems and difficulties.

We are trying to identify the ways a young person who is a disciple of Christ may confront, manage or surmount the problems of living encountered in their study or work environment.

Introduction

Academic education in institutional environments is both for enlightenment and preparation for various careers.

Apprenticeship involves receiving training from a master or employer in order to acquire on-the-job skills.

Most people use either or both approaches to understudy a profession. A job is needed for reasons such as:

1. To fulfill divine imperatives (before and after the fall) – Gen. 2:15 & 3:19
2. For provision of basic necessities and life needs – 2 Thess. 3:8-12
3. To confront idleness and godlessness – Eccl. 3:12-13 & 9:10

A job is anything that you do to earn an income whereas a career is a course of work-life that you pursue for personal fulfillment.

Fundamentals

Career path should not be determined solely based on financial considerations but must take into account one’s talent/abilities, personality, desires and available support for realization. From teenage years [say JSS level], youths must choose whether to ‘pursue higher education or learn the skills of a trade.’ Whatever the career choice and route taken, the following attributes and people are needed to realize it and excel therein:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ambition (goal and objectives) –Prov 13:19a, Jms 1:8• Patience (time and self-control) -Eccl. 7:8, Heb 10:36• Courage (boldness and hope) –Ps 31:24, 2Tim 1:7• Wisdom (right use of knowledge) -Prov 23:12, Jms 1:5• Integrity (uprightness and honesty) – Prov 11:3, Acts 6:3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Family</i> support (moral & financial)• <i>Friends</i> encouragement• <i>Tutors</i> impartation of knowledge• <i>Mentors</i> (advice / role model)• <i>Rivals</i> for healthy competition |
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The Christian youth also needs *prayer and the word of God* for good success (Phil. 4:6, Ps 119:9, 2 Pet 1:3) for ‘it is neither by power nor by might..., the race is not to the swift... it is better to trust in the Lord than on anything or anyone –Ps 118:8, Prov. 3:5-6. This could make one to surpass his instructor and master’s professional achievements –Ps 119:99, John 14:12

For a desired Course of study/Organization to work for;

- a) Research it to know the origin and what it entails
- b) Find out about the top professors/ management
- c) What do the graduates do/what does the firm produce?
- d) Does it align with your aspirations?
- e) Are you ready to cope with possible requirements, impediments and rewards? [Lk 14:28-30]

Addressing Challenges

Whatever one’s course of study or career, in order to successfully meet inevitable challenges, one must first take time to understand ***the origin, nature, standards and ethics of the profession as well as the operating environment***. This enables one to deploy initiative in harnessing resources to properly tackle problems.

Life is all about confronting problems and a well-lived life should address higher or bigger problems with time. Therefore, everyone including students and workers should always do the following to challenges:

1. Admit they exist
2. Identify them
3. Categorize and prioritize them
4. Solve or manage them

Always remember this: *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”* – 1 Corinthians 10:13

Table 1: Sample Challenges and How to Address them

Challenge	Academic / Career Application	Way of Escape
Unpreparedness	Exams / Interviews	2Tim 2:15, 1 Pet 3:15, 2 Cor 8:21
Defrauding	Paying fees / taxes	Rm 13:5-7 (1Tim 5:8, Gal. 6:10)
Slothfulness	Dedication and punctuality	Prov 6:6-11; 18:9; Rm 12:11
Procrastination	Meeting deadlines for work or reports	Prov 10:4-5; 22:29
Victimization	Harassment from bad tutors/bosses or employees	Prov 21:1, Acts 23:16-19 (reporting) Eph 6:5-9
Delayed promotion	Incompetence / Favoritism	Heb 13:6, Ps 75:6, 1 Pet 5:6-7
Social influence	Peer pressure/ Catching-up with the Jones	1 Cor 15:33, 3 John 1:11
Maintaining reputation	Referrals/ Testimonials	Phil. 2:12-15, 1 Tim 5:24-25, 2 Cor 1:17-20
Bad union activities	Student groups/ Professional bodies	Acts 19:24ff, 2 Kings 2:22 -23
Intrigues & violence	Vandalism & Stealing/ Office politics & occupational hazard	Eph 4:25-27, Acts 22:25-23:7
Political-correctness	Shying from spirituality and evangelism	Mt. 10:32-33, John 12:42-44, Acts
Greed	Malpractices, Cultism, Aristos, etc. / Corruption, Embezzlement, etc.	Rm 12:1-2, 1 Cor 6:9-11, 1 Tim 6:6-10
Obsolesce	Seek new journals/equipment/training	Mt 9:14-17; 11:12
Disappointment	Failed exams or projects, lay-off, etc.	2 Cor 4:9; 7:6, Mt. 6:25-33
Managing success	Pride, extravagance, etc.	Prov 8:13; 16:18, Lk 12:15-20

Case Studies

1. David had a bad boss who was jealous of him and sought after his life -1 Sam 19ff
2. Solomon was a young king who sought the Lord’s help for the performance of his duties -1 Kg. 3:5-9 unlike his son Rehoboam who rejected the aged and divine counsel -1 Kg 12
3. Elisha was about to have his supervisor taken away but he followed him till the last moment -2 Kg 2
4. The apostles were a group of apprentices who initially had pettiness, rivalry, etc. in their midst. All but one graduated to practice excellently. In even secular fishing career, they appreciated the Lord’s intervention on more than a single occasion – Luke 5:3-10, John 21:3-6
5. Timothy was a P.A. and assistant lecturer (of the gospel) who matured to hold his own -1Tim 4:12
6. Everyone from the peasant farmer to the gallant soldier faces career challenges -2 Tim 2:4-7
7. Christ had enormous career challenges from the people, religious and political leaders as well as the devil but he was not overwhelmed. He overcame.

Conclusions

A problem identified is half solved, so we need not shy away from challenges. It is better as Youths to commit our ways to the Lord and not rely on our strength or understanding. Advice could also be sought from Mature Brethren, Career Counselors, Psychologists, Human Resource Personnel and the Aged who have trod the path before us (Prov. 11:14). The younger you are, the easier it is to find help for people respect your potential.

The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles...

Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. and he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.