

2009
CROSSROADS CAREER[®] EXPLORER GUIDE

How to walk through a crossroads in your career featuring 6 steps to finding jobs, career and calling

MAX*imizing*
Your **CAREER**
In Turbulent Times

Your Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

RECOMMENDED WORKBOOK PREPARATION

1. Put your Guide in 3-Ring Binder in which you can also put other career resources such as assessments and resumes.
2. Put Dividers in front of each of the 6 steps and Number the Divider Tabs 1 through 6.

Provided by Member Churches in the

***Crossroads* / *Career*[®]**
Network

Helping people through crossroads in their careers by hearing and following God's calling

WELCOME TO THE 2009 CROSSROADS CAREER® EXPLORER GUIDE

MAX*imizing* *Your* **CAREER** *In Turbulent Times*

When you are at a crossroads in your career, it is important to read and remember these truths. You are an incredible, one-of-a-kind person. Made by God for God, for good works and for a truly abundant life. Real success can be at work *in you* as you learn how to find jobs, careers and God's calling.

This Guide is designed to be a simple and powerful combination of practical and spiritual instruction, exercises and devotionals – intended to be used with other job search, career transition and Christian resources. It is a faith-based approach to explore six steps through crossroads in your career, a path which thousands of people have already walked. Over a hundred employers, career experts and ministry volunteers have contributed tips, tools and resources to this Guide.

This is your time. This is your opportunity. This is what the Lord says... “Stand at the crossroads and look ... ask where the good way is... and walk in it... you will find rest for your souls...” Jeremiah 6:16

Brian Ray, Founder
Crossroads Career® Network

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MAXIMIZING YOUR CAREER IN TURBULENT TIMES

Maximizing is making the most of situations. It is to increase to the greatest quantity or value attainable – to the highest, greatest, or utmost development. Maximizing is not a quick fix. It is not a goal that once accomplished, it is done. It is continuously improving – getting better all the time! It takes work and good decision making.

*Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise,
making the most of your time...
Ephesians 5:15-16*

Your career is the whole of your work life – beginning in your youth with part-time jobs and education – and continuing through the 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s and extending for most of us into our retirement years. It includes your educational and vocational life – whether you are paid for it – or you work as a volunteer.

Maximizing your career is taking full advantage of God’s unique design of you – your education, experience, abilities, interests, personality and values. It is generating maximum return on investment for your work – not just achievements and income, but also job satisfaction and personal fulfillment. It is also discovering that you are God’s workmanship created by Him for Him for good works.

Yes, you will have to invest time and effort, but it is worth it. You can start right now by thinking of yourself as a *Career Explorer*...

Ready for adventure...

Looking forward to what lies ahead...

Finding career direction, the right job and your true calling!

With the dip in our economy and the rise in unemployment, the opportunities of change and challenge can actually bring out the best in us.

- ❖ It stimulates us to re-examine ourselves to find new and different abilities, interests, values and potential.
- ❖ We can look for new and different industries and occupations where our qualities can bring greater value.
- ❖ We meet new people and make new friends as we reach out to find help, hope and fellowship,
- ❖ We learn to count our blessings, reprioritize what is important and recommit ourselves to them.
- ❖ The greatest opportunity is drawing nearer to God as we seek to understand what He has prepared for us.

YOUR CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES

Before we begin to look forward to the future, perhaps it would be helpful take a snapshot of your current employment situation and identify your career circumstances using these four major categories...

- ❖ Mis-employed is the largest with 70-90% of workers saying “somewhat satisfied” to “very dissatisfied.”
- ❖ Unemployed is the most urgent, accounting for 3% to over 10% of the workforce depending on location or vocation.
- ❖ Happily employed accounts for around 10-15% of all workers – saying “very satisfied” and “successful.”
- ❖ Fully employed are those people who feel called to a particular vocation and are walking in it.

Using the following examples that we have heard from thousands of Explorers over the years, circle the situations that best describe yours:

Mis-employed because...

- ❖ St-st-st-stress!
- ❖ Bored and/or in a rut
- ❖ Worried about losing your job
- ❖ Need or want to work from home
- ❖ Just don't like what you are doing
- ❖ Working for a boss behaving badly
- ❖ Not skilled for the job you are in
- ❖ Want to be an independent contractor
- ❖ Wondering if you should start your own business
- ❖ Not enough money? Too many hours? Maybe both
- ❖ Spending too much time “on the road again” either commuting or traveling
- ❖ Familiar with the words to this song ...

*“You load 16 tons, and what do you get? Another day older and deeper in debt.
Saint Peter don't call me 'cause I can't go. I owe my soul to the company store.”
(American folk song written by Merle Travis; made popular by Tennessee Ernie Ford)*

Unemployed because...

- ❖ Quit, laid off or fired from your job
- ❖ Nearly and newly graduated from college or high school
- ❖ Going back to work after raising your children
- ❖ Recently divorced and need to earn money
- ❖ Just relocated and seeking new job

Happily employed, but...

- ❖ Successful and prosperous, but lacking a sense of greater purpose and mission
- ❖ Half-way through your career and wondering about your “second half”?
- ❖ Just finished reading a book about your purpose in life?
- ❖ Happy in work, but...

Fulfilled and called...

- ❖ Using God-given abilities, interests, personality and values
- ❖ Living and working with a sense of purpose, mission and fulfillment
- ❖ Hearing and following God's calling
- ❖ Maximizing career potential

Circle the words on the range of employment situations on this scale that best describe you now

Unemployed	Mis-employed	Happily-employed	Called	
Need a job	Need to change	Something isn't right	No purpose	Fulfilled

Now let's have a look at how to work toward a future as you would like it to be.

MAXIMIZE YOUR CAREER – WITHOUT CHANGING JOBS

If you're not finding fulfillment in your current work, *you* might be contributing to the problem without even realizing it. If you're doing anything less than your very best in your work, no matter what the circumstances, you could be short-changing yourself. If you have a bad attitude about your work, your boss, your co-workers, or any other aspect of your work, that attitude could be spilling over into your performance and relationships.

To maximize your career in your current job, consider the following

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,
since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.
It is the Lord Christ you are serving.
Colossians 3:22-24*

Does this describe you and how you work? Are you working heartily and with sincerity of heart? Are you serving God in your job? If not, how would your situation be different if you *did* work heartily?

Maybe you're thinking, "Yeah, but you don't know my boss." You're right, but consider what the Bible has to say about how you should respond to even a harsh slave driver...

*Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect,
not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.
1 Peter 2:18*

If this describes your boss, it's especially important to take your attitude and performance to their highest levels. You may discover that your work situation changes, maybe dramatically for the better, because you have changed *how* you are working. If you know you have to go, however, then work all the more heartily and finish well!

While you are doing your best in your current job, you can still consider other jobs, explore new career directions and seek your calling. It is perfectly okay to explore crossroads in your career and wind up in the same job, but with the conviction that it's the best place to be at this time. That's why we think of you as a career explorer.

EXPLORE CROSSROADS IN YOUR CAREER

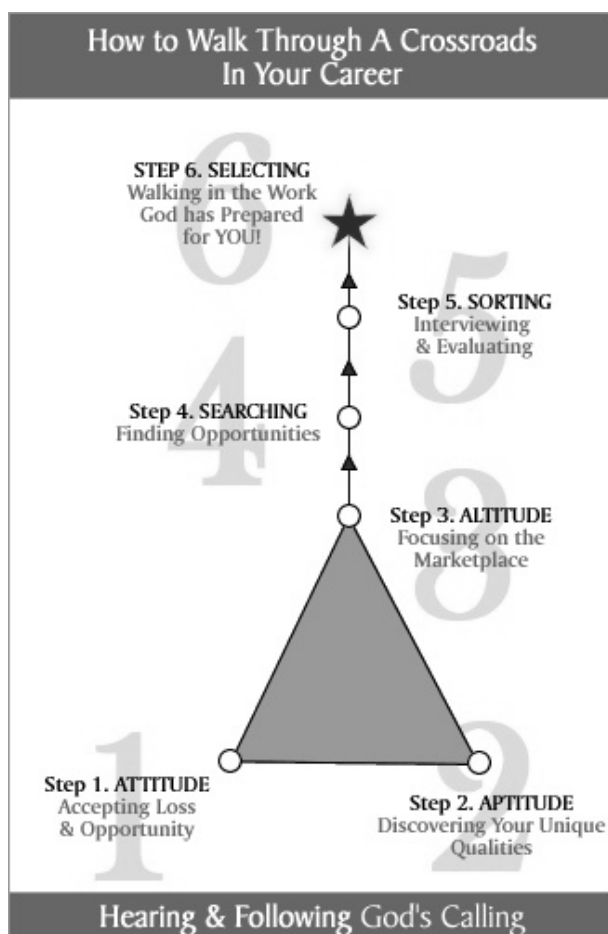
Over 15 years ago more than a hundred people went through a series of Crossroads Career® small group meetings. As they talked about their experiences, we discovered that most of them encountered the following six steps.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. ATTITUDE | Accepting loss and opportunity |
| 2. APTITUDE | Discovering your unique qualities |
| 3. ALTITUDE | Focusing on the marketplace |
| 4. SEARCHING | Finding opportunities |
| 5. SORTING | Interviewing and evaluating |
| 6. SELECTING | Walking in the work God has prepared for you |

The first three steps are planning the work—**ATTITUDE**, **APTITUDE**, and **ALTITUDE**.

The final three steps are working the plan—**SEARCHING**, **SORTING**, and **SELECTING**.

Notice in this diagram of the six step model that Attitude and Aptitude meet at Altitude – focusing on the marketplace with movement and direction – which leads to Searching, Sorting and Selecting.



Most people who are actively searching for a new job are in steps 3 and/or 4. If you are exploring a career change, you might be in Steps 2-3. Those who have been searching for a while may have walked through Step 1 through 6 and back again. Write down what step are you in right now? Step # ____.

Many people find it helpful to know where they are, what's next and to consider reviewing earlier steps to make changes in what they are doing based on what they have learned so far. A great way to focus your search to work on your 30-second "Elevator Pitch" about the job or career you seek (refer to page 48).

The most important part of this process is not actually in the 6 steps, but rather it surrounds them. It is you hearing and following God's calling – every step of the way! For a short video review of these 6 steps on the web, click on this link [Crossroads in Your Career?](#) or go to the home page on www.CrossroadsCareer.org and click on the video link.

GOD IS CALLING YOU

Good news! God, who created the world and everything in it—including you—wants to have a relationship with you. He made it possible by His Son paying the price for your sin—the only thing that separates you from Him. By accepting His payment on your behalf, you can have a relationship with the Creator of the universe, starting now for forever.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16

If you believe this, the next section should be reassuring. If you do not believe it, would you consider reading the following points and check them out for yourself?

HEARING AND FOLLOWING GOD'S CALLING

Finding God's will is not a game of hide and seek. It does, however, require your participation. We have observed that the following 11 actions have helped people get and stay connected to God and His calling.

1. *Worship God*

Worshipping God puts things in perspective in two ways. First, you begin to see God for who He really is. Second, when you begin to see Him for who He is, then everything else begins to look much smaller.

*Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.
Psalm 29:2*

2. *Read and Study the Bible*

First, foremost, and forever, the Bible is God's authority and our manual for living. Consider it as bread, and feed from it every day. If you have never read the Bible, consider starting with the book of John, Ephesians or Psalms.

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.
Psalm 119:105*

3. *Pray*

Be in conversation with God every day, perhaps multiple times during every day. He is always available. Pray for guidance. Read a Psalm as your own personal prayer.

*Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you.
Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.
Psalm 143:8*

4. *Listen to God*

Prayer is two-way communication. In a journal or notebook, write down thoughts that come to your mind for later reflection and Bible study; remember these thoughts when you are seeking counsel...

*“Be still, and know that I am God”
Psalm 46:10*

5. *Be with Christians*

Spend time with Christians whom you like and who like you. Study the Bible together, and pray with them. Encourage one another. Follow the ABCs of Accountability, Belonging, and Care.

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another.
Hebrews 10:24-25*

6. *Seek Counsel*

Seek wisdom first from above (James 3:17) and from other people who love and follow Jesus. Some may be your friends. Some you may talk with only once or twice. Each person may have a nugget of wisdom to share with you.

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

7. *Consider Unfolding Circumstances*

Be a good steward of the opportunities God gives you. Consider each situation with God in prayer. Always measure your prayer, counsel, and unfolding circumstances in light of the truth of the Bible.

*Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity...
Ephesians 5:15-16*

8. *Confess and Clear Your Head*

A clear head is critical in thinking through options and seeking God's leading. It is easy to become confused, especially if sin is getting in the way of your relationship with the Lord. Confess it, and clear it out every day.

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous
to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
1 John 1:9*

9. *Be Alert for God's Peace*

As you consider various options and paths, be alert for the peace that transcends all understanding, even in the midst of the most chaotic of times.

*And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:7*

10. *Keep a Journal*

It can be helpful to keep track of what you learn from your Bible reading, thoughts you have during prayer, advice you receive from your friends, unfolding circumstances, and things that bring you God's peace.

*"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Write all the words which I have spoken to you in a book.
Jeremiah 30:2*

11. *Trust and obey*

There is no other way! If you think the Lord wants you to do something, and it seems to be in alignment with everything we've been talking about, then do it! If you hear Him, follow Him.

*"Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me
will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."
John 14:2*

INVEST IN YOURSELF

Time

If you are unemployed, looking for a job is a job itself. Plan to work 9a-5p Monday-Friday with extra effort at night and on weekends. If you are currently employed and looking for the next assignment, smart planning and commitment will be important.

How long to find a job? That's a tough question to answer, because it depends on your sense of urgency, how many hours you invest, what you are looking for, the market, your search plan and how well you execute it. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in November 2008 that unemployment averaged over 18 weeks! For updated reports go to www.BLS.gov/cps

- ❖ Almost 1/3 got a job within 5 weeks
- ❖ Almost 1/3 got a job between 5 and 14 weeks
- ❖ For more than 1/3, getting a job took 15 weeks or more

How long to change careers? It may take a few weeks or maybe a few years. You may need further education. If no additional education is required, consider a 90-day plan of exploration using this Guide and online tools.

How long will it take to discover your calling? It takes a lifetime! Hearing and following God's calling is a journey, not a destination. God knows exactly who and where you are and what's next.

Money

You might ask, “How much will I have to spend to find the right job?” A better question is, “How much am I willing to invest?” Set a budget and consider including these potential expenses.

- ❖ Career assessments and perhaps coaching
- ❖ Career books, directories, magazines, and newspapers
- ❖ Trade and professional association memberships and meetings
- ❖ Extra phone and phone lines and charges; email and internet access
- ❖ Resumes, business cards, and stationery; postage and shipping
- ❖ Local or perhaps long distance travel and meals
- ❖ New clothes and grooming

Whatever amount you decide, set aside the money and invest it wisely. Keep good records. Costs related to job search may qualify as tax deductions. Check with the IRS, your tax preparer, or an accountant.

Effort

Personal commitment to your future is critical. Job search and exploring a crossroads in your career can be hard work. You have to do things that you may not feel comfortable doing. When you hit one of those areas that are tough for you, seek help, encouragement and support and persevere.

To maximize your efforts in searching for a job or seeking a new career, we recommend you plan your activities every week using SMART goals...

Specific: Define exactly what you want to accomplish in measurable terms – like a networking call a day

Moderate: Select two to five goals per week. Too many different goals become overwhelming.

Accountable: Show and tell somebody what you are planning to do, and let them know how you did.

Record: You will find it helpful and motivating to keep a written record of your goals and progress.

Time-activated: Put in your calendar goals by days and times during the week.

Do the homework in this Guide – not only reading – but also completing the exercises and devotionals. The more time and effort you invest, the greater your return on your investment! You may not get a job or change careers before you finish this Guide, but you will have learned much more about how to find jobs, careers and God’s calling.

MAXIMIZING THE EXPLORER GUIDE

The Crossroads Career® Explorer Guide can be used in several ways:

- ❖ The best way is in a study course in a small group with a facilitator
- ❖ One-on-one with help of a friend, coach or mentor
- ❖ In workshops with a leader
- ❖ Self-paced; on your own

We recommend that you use the Guide with others in a small group, with a friend, mentor/coach, or at a workshop. The accountability, belonging and care in the company of others multiplies your strength and wisdom. To maximize the value of using the Guide with others, read and complete exercises and devotionals in each step followed by a scheduled meeting “session.” **Tips for meetings with others...**

1. Plan to attend all the sessions.
2. Arrive early so the session can begin and end on time.
3. Always bring this Explorer Guide and *Bible* to every meeting
4. Please pay attention to the facilitator(s), as well as to your fellow career explorers.
5. If you have questions, concerns, or critiques, please share them with your facilitator(s).
6. Maintain confidentiality about others. What is said in the group should stay in the group.

MEETING WITH OTHERS

Dates/Day of week: _____ Time from _____ to _____

Place/Address: _____

Meeting with Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

[Find Crossroads Career® Network member churches](#) that hold network meetings, workshops and/or small group studies. For information about Crossroads Career resources for your church, visit www.CrossroadsCareer.org.

Each step in the Crossroads Career® Explorer Guide is made up of these building blocks.



INSTRUCTION: Read each step overview to prepare you for action



EXERCISE: Complete practical actions to help you make progress in your search



DEVOTIONALS: Read-and-write devotionals to further stimulate your thinking



REGISTER ONLINE FREE

Use the electronic version of this Guide online by clicking hotlinks in the text and explore over 100 online career tools for more info about specific situations. If you have not registered on www.CrossroadsCareer.org, then go online to [Register Now as an Explorer](#) for free with either a Crossroads Career member church key or the promotional code: **explorer**.

Remember your email Login _____ Password _____

ABOUT CROSSROADS CAREER® NETWORK

We are a [network of member churches](#) helping people in our congregations and in communities explore crossroads in their careers and maximize their career potential in two ways...

- ❖ Online career resources
- ❖ On-the-ground career ministry volunteers

At the heart of our ministry is the 2009 Crossroads Career Explorer Guide featuring a 6-step process of career exploration and job search while hearing and following God's calling. We have developed a buffet of resources, programs and materials for...

- ❖ [Career Explorers](#) - searching for career direction, next job or God's calling
- ❖ [Churches and Volunteers](#) - looking for better ways to minister to people in career crossroads
- ❖ [Employers](#) - seeking to find candidates through local churches

The Crossroads Career® Network began in 1997 in a single church with three local business volunteers helping people walk through crossroads in their careers. The network has grown to a membership of churches with hundreds of volunteers and thousands of registered participants.

Crossroads Career® Services, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and is the support organization for Crossroads Career® Network that equips, and supports local churches to have their own Crossroads Career® Ministries. Each church sponsors and supports its own ministry led by volunteers, who are called to be involved with career explorers in the church and the community. Crossroads Career® Ministry materials are copyright © 2001-2009 by Crossroads Career® Services, Inc. All rights reserved. Active members of the Crossroads Career® Network are granted permission to duplicate these materials for use in Crossroads Career® Ministries.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brian Ray founded the Crossroads Career® Network, and serves on the leadership team as president. He is also the owner of Primus® Consulting, an executive-search consulting firm which he began in 1987.

His other career highlights include serving as Chief Human Resources and Administrative Officer for the Chick-fil-A restaurant chain and guest appearances on Crown's national "Money Life" radio program as a career expert.

Brian is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and the University of Illinois with a Master of Science in Communication.

Brian and his wife, Kristy, reside in Charlotte, NC and have four grown children and seven grandchildren. They are members of a local Charlotte church called theGathering, while Brian remains an active member with the North Point Community Church GlobalX mission team in Alpharetta, GA.

WEEKLY PROGRESS REVIEW & PREVIEW EXERCISE

For The Week of _____

To maximize your efforts in searching for a job or seeking a new career, we recommend you plan your activities weekly (such as Sunday through Saturday) using SMART goals...

Specific: Define exactly what you want to accomplish in measurable terms – like a networking call a day

Moderate: Select two to five goals per week. Too many different goals become overwhelming.

Accountable: Show and tell somebody what you are planning to do, and let them know how you did.

Record: You will find it helpful and motivating to keep a written record of your goals and progress.

Time-activated: Put in your calendar your goals by days and times during the week.

High Point of last week:		Low Point of last week:	
My key accomplishments from last week			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 			
My key goals for this week are (research, meetings, follow up calls, etc.)			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 			
Things learned that could be useful to me and others			
Help most needed (resume writing, interviewing skills, emotional support, networking contacts?)			

READ & WRITE DEVOTIONAL

CAREER + CALLING  = MAXIMIZING YOUR POTENTIAL

Career, according to Webster's Dictionary, means, among many things, "a course, a passage; a profession for which one undergoes special training and which is undertaken as a permanent calling; an occupation or profession engaged in as a life work."

Calling comes from the Greek KALEO, which means "to call anyone, invite, summon." It refers primarily to a divine call as it relates to a vocation or redemption.

What are the differences between career and calling. Write your thoughts below.	
<u>Career</u>	<u>Calling</u>

Pray these verses for God to enlighten the eyes of your heart so you may know the hope of His calling.

*I pray also that the eyes of [my] heart may be enlightened
in order that [I] may know the hope to which he has called [me],
the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,
and his incomparably great power for us who believe.
That power is like the working of his mighty strength . . .
Ephesians 1:18-19*