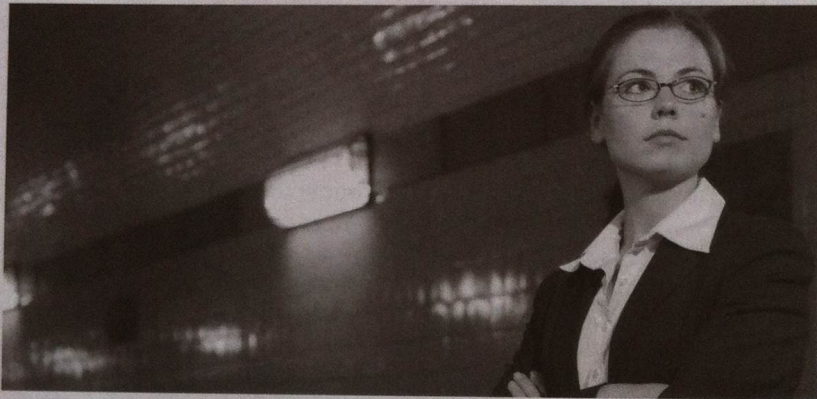


Seeking God in Difficult Times

by Allison Flexer



Although the signs existed for quite some time, the economic recession started to reveal its undesirable characteristics in October 2008. At that time, I decided to quit my corporate job at a large company. Instead of leaving to pursue another position or more money, I chose to take time off and reevaluate my career based on God's direction. The decision to resign without another job seemed preposterous by most secular standards, especially since I spent ten years working my way up the corporate ladder. As I watched the increasingly pessimistic news reports, I started to feel anxious about being unemployed during such turbulent times.

In these difficult economic times, many Christians and non-Christians are currently unemployed and searching for work. Many others feel trapped in jobs that bring them misery instead of joy. In general, there is a lot of anxiety and unrest. How

do we remain focused on Christ during these troubling times?

In Philippians, Paul gave us some advice: "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27). Whatever our circumstances, we can undertake Paul's objective to live in a manner worthy of Christ. It is not always easy to apply this concept to our lives. Personally, I sometimes forget that my true boss is Jesus Christ.

What are some ways we can conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of our holy God?

Prayer is one important way to connect with God during difficult times. When I resigned from my job, I based the decision on months of prayer. We all experience those days when we want to throw our arms up and yell, "I quit!" at our boss. For me, this was not one of those moments. Instead, I felt an increasing burden that I was not utilizing my God-given passion. I

am not recommending that every Christian quit his or her job tomorrow to discover God's purpose for his or her life. But an active prayer life can illuminate areas we need to turn over to God. In my life, that area was my career.

A second step is obedience. Being a people-pleaser for my entire life, the successful career track came easily to me. It was all about working hard to keep others happy. After I made the drastic move to leave my job, God did not provide answers immediately. He did not appear and show me a new and improved plan for my life. Yet, in the stillness that was created by taking that first step of obedience, God was able to reduce the anxiety. God will use obedience to change our lives. He began changing me from a people-pleaser to a God-glorifier.

Lastly, we must look to God to find our value. During my journey, I learned that my potential is not defined by the approval of other people in my life. My value is not set by my bank account balance, my job, or my possessions. Whatever the current circumstances, we must remember that our value comes from the One who created us in His image. We are children of God. In good times and in difficult times, God calls us to seek Him and live in a manner worthy of His name. ◀