



CONSIDERING A NEW CAREER at midlife can be frightening. Staying in a safe port is easier than sailing into uncharted waters, but an economic upheaval can force change upon us at any time. Work which once filled our days with excitement may grow humdrum and trigger a longing for fresh challenges.

The dictionary defines midlife as the period from age forty-five to fifty-five. Some view this decade as a time to think about slowing down. Others are vigorously planning next steps, forming goals, and mapping out their next twenty years. Certainly the question, "What am I going to be when I grow up?" has been replaced by another urgent query, "What am I going to accomplish in the remainder of my life?"

Changing careers at midlife is not a new phenomenon. In a rags to riches tale, Moses floated into royalty. At age forty he exchanged the privilege and opulence of the royal court for crash courses in wilderness survival and shepherding. At eighty he became a national leader and was instrumental in releasing the Law of Moses, a body of timeless legislation. Moses could be the poster child for midlife career change.

While Moses had a burning bush experience directing his career choice, I should not expect that as the norm. No one will knock on my door with a detailed plan. With discernment, I

must examine my personal situation and take informed steps. Consider these pointers.

LIVE EXPECTANTLY - Make pursuing a relationship with God top priority. Do not neglect prayer and Bible study. Block out time for meditation and contemplation. In your times of reflection consider passions and arising interests. Ask, "Is God illuminating a new opportunity through these?"

LIVE EAGERLY - Conduct studies into areas of interest. Foster the childlike curiosity that leads to discovery. If possible, volunteer to try out a new role before leaping into it. Speak with friends working in a similar career, and ask why they chose their line of work. Find out what they enjoy and how they prepared for the job.

LIVE RESPONSIBLY - Career choices affect our spouses who must be included in the decision-making process. If children are in the home involve them in the conversation. Family obligations do not disappear with a new career or the quest to secure it.

LIVE FRUGALLY - Develop a financial plan and discipline yourself to adhere to a budget. Exterminate debt. The perfect career choice may deliver satisfaction but at a reduced level of salary. Be creative about reducing expenses to facilitate a job change. Regulate spending with an eye on the future.

LIVE HEALTHILY - A dull body dulls the mind. Exercise and healthy eating habits are crucial to success at this stage of life.

LIVE EXCITEDLY - Approach career change as an opportunity to learn and grow. Be flexible, and be patient. Understand there will be unexpected turns as you master the responsibilities. Remember, life is always an adventure.

Avoiding the uncertainty of career change may seem the safest choice, but the costs can be staggering as we miss out on invigorating fulfillment. Perhaps a good motivating question is, "If I had one year left on earth, how would I spend it?"