



**“Follow your dreams!” the world tells us when we are young, but as we grow up, we learn that living our dream is not only hard, it’s also often criticized.** Especially dreams involving radical vows in a religious order, low-income paychecks at a non-profit, or counter-cultural pursuits leave others questioning your sanity. Society doesn’t always understand why you want to be a youth minister, missionary, priest, nun, writer, philosopher, theologian, artist, or follow other dreams along those lines.

This is often because society has a “cookie cutter” idea of success. This “cookie cutter” idea has three important ingredients—**trendy appearance, a path in careerism, and a big stake in consumer culture.** Provided that you act virtuously, nothing is wrong with being a well-paid doctor, a well-dressed lawyer, or going into sales and marketing, but too often in these lifestyles, there is little consideration given to vows, a family, or even church on Sundays.

On the other hand, the recipe for happiness doesn’t involve a cookie cutter at all. **It simply involves you and God.** Its three active ingredients may be said to be prayer, courage, and love. As Christians, [we ask what our vocation](#)—our calling in life—is, not what our salary will be or how society will react to our resume, trusting that there will be a way to provide as long as we put forth the effort to do so.

**“We have been given a gift that we call life,”** Prince Ea reminds us in this video. People probably think he’s crazy when he tells them his title – “futurologist.” He most likely has to explain it, deal with questions about how it pays the bills, and defend its importance at times. He doesn’t appear to be dissuaded from his dreams, though. As he tells us in his video, we need to follow our dreams and use what gifts are calling to us: **“If you don’t use your gift, you sell not only yourself but the whole world short.”**

**“Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire.”** – St. Catherine of Siena

Living your vocation helps the world, despite what society may think about you wearing a habit, priest collar, or jeans and a t-shirt to work. Living on minimum wage or “below living standards” does not make you a bad person. If you’re supporting yourself and your family, be unashamed and consider yourself blessed—even without the newest video game system or smartphone!

Here is some food for thought to encourage you to live your vocation fully:

## 1. You don't need a honeymoon in Paris or annual cruises to live a fulfilling life

Putting God first means your priorities are in order. Unlike what our mass consumerism culture suggests, objects won't make you happy. Love, memories, and family is where true happiness is found. When others are saddened that you can't go to Jamaica for Christmas, assure them that you are perfectly capable of celebrating Christmas at home. You are not a pity-case. Your ability to be happy in frugality will deflect sadness based on salary. God made you to be rich in love and mercy—not in objects and monetary wealth. Being wealthy and vacationing is not objectively bad—but neither is cutting coupons or counting pennies.

## 2. Don't let other's judgements bring you down

God is your boss. He is the one who you should worry about pleasing. Your ability to have fun with friends, worship God, and enjoy life isn't determined by your income. Find friends who build you up with their companionship, and invite your current friends to more thrifty ways to hang out. Like in the video, if you aren't doing what you love, feeling like you have purpose, why are you doing it? For God or for money?

## 3. If you are following God's will, there is no other path to greater happiness

I know many youth ministers from my college studies. They spent thousands of dollars on a fantastic education to prepare themselves for a low-paying job at a non-profit mission, parish, or charity. Some even have a second job, had to go back to school for a Masters for more job opportunities, or don't even work in their field of study. If you are like them, does this mean you failed at being a graduate or a parent or a son/daughter of Christ? No! Your investments in your vocation are worth it. You use your education and/or training every day in the way you live your life; your education has value beyond this world. You shouldn't open the door for others to think of you as a failure. No matter what you work hard at, don't think of yourself as one.

## 4. You can never trust God too much to balance your checkbook

You've likely heard the St. Augustine quote: "Pray as if everything depends on God. Work as if everything depends on you." Do just that! Jesus taught that we all have dignity based on our human life—not our status in society, job title, or bank account total. God wouldn't call you to have a big family without also calling you to ways to provide for that family. Your money is your business. You don't have to answer all those questions. You don't have to tell people what your income is or how you pay your bills. It's one thing to ask parents for advice or host a fundraiser for your family when you have unheard-of medical bills in an emergency, but you don't have to pretend to be a second-class citizen and answer everyone's nosey questions about your bank account.

## 5. Your smile says a lot

It is okay to admit that it's hard, but your Father in Heaven prepared a path for you, and as you pursue that, complaining would only mean you are complaining about God's gift in your life. Those who care about you may think that you aren't happy because they are projecting what they might feel if they were in your position. Well, they probably would be unhappy because they aren't you; they are themselves with their own vocation. So, [smile](#) and let them know that no matter how complicated life gets, you are doing just fine. Keep in mind, people may be genuinely worried about your bills and your success, so be kind in your words to those who might accidentally offend you.

Like Prince Ea reminds us, **"You have a part to play in this song."** The song will be less and less beautiful the more people choose to conform to society instead of conforming themselves to God's will, playing their unique part, whatever it may be. So, even if you think you have the really lame part that no one hears, everyone will suffer its absence if you decide not to play it. People may not fully comprehend your contribution until they also learn to listen to the song.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works;  
that I know very well. (Ps. 139:14)

So, you think you're called to be a [enter your vocation here]? Go for it! Put out into the deep! And thank you!

### Extracted

from CatholicLink: <http://catholic-link.org/2017/03/28/wonderfully-made-follow-dreams/>