

MODULE 6: EMPLOYMENT READINESS

SESSION 4: WHAT KIND OF WORK WILL YOU DO?

Key Ideas for This Session:

- By identifying your interests, natural abilities and skills—you can start to do the groundwork for an effective resumé.
- Try to visualize yourself in different work environments to decide where you think you could thrive.
- Be aware of gaps in your resumé and work experience. Look for ways you can fill those gaps even while still in jail or prison.
- Key verse: Jeremiah 29:11:
“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Are you feeling READY?

Are you at the place in your life where you know you need to have a good attitude toward work? Are you prepared to work in order to provide for your own needs and for your family when you leave jail or prison? Have you developed good work habits and know what it will take to serve your employer well? It is important for these to be solid values in your life as you begin thinking about work.

Are you REALISTIC?

Have you thought about the kind of work you can do or that you would be willing to do when you get back into the community? It may be necessary initially to take work that is not exactly what you want but that will at least give you some income so that you can get a place to live, food to eat, and money for the other things you need.

Each person has individual abilities, gifts, and interests that are part of their make up. They have natural abilities as well as abilities that come from training

or experience. You may have grown up in the family business and know a lot about it, or on a farm and you know about farming and raising animals, or you worked alongside a relative who was a carpenter or plumber and learned something about that, or you had a car or a motorcycle that you learned to do mechanical work on by yourself. Maybe you learned how to cook or work in the kitchen while in prison. Ultimately, everyone has some skill and natural interests.

Our natural abilities, learned skills, and interests often work together to create a desire to pursue a specific type of employment. For example, some people have a natural ability to communicate or convince others to do something. We might say this person has natural abilities in sales or marketing. Good salespeople are usually friendly, trustworthy, and good at communicating their passion for the product they sell. Others may have a natural ability in organizing or managing people.

Our natural abilities, experiences, and interests are all helpful as we think about the kind of work we can do and that we might enjoy doing. Begin by making a list of what these are:

What natural abilities have you always had?

What unique skills and experiences have you gained during your life?

What are some of the things you are most interested in doing?

Do you know what work you would really like to do if you could?

What motivates you to work? If you are unmotivated, do you think God can give you motivation?

What do you think you need from your employment? For example, this could be a specific work environment, the opportunity to perform a particular role, the opportunity to use a special skill(s), the kind of people you want to work with, or any other expectation you have about your future work situation.

What skills or education can you acquire before you leave prison or in transition that might help you prepare for getting the kind of work you want?

What else could you do to be interesting to a prospective employer?

Having a good attitude to work is something that employers look for and value. A positive approach to work and good motivation is the starting point. A negative attitude and lack of motivation won't get you past a job application or the first interview. With a recent prison release, you may find there are obstacles in your way to getting your dream job. It is important not to let your attitude and motivation be an additional obstacle.

What do you think your attitude will be and what will you do if...

...You keep getting turned down for a job because of your prison record or lack of experience and qualifications?

...You are required to take a two-hour bus ride to get to the only job available to you?

...You have issues with authority, especially with people who keep telling you what to do.

...You don't like your boss or the way you are treated?

In the Bible story of Joseph, Joseph had many setbacks including being sold by his brothers as a slave, being falsely accused of an indiscretion by his boss's wife, and being held in prison unjustly for years on end. Yet God was with Joseph as Joseph trusted fully in Him. During his lifetime, Joseph rose to become the second most powerful man in Egypt and through God's power saved Egypt from seven years of famine. In Genesis 39:23 we read, *"the Lord was with him, and the Lord made everything that he did successful."*

What do you think Joseph's secret was in order to be so competent and gifted but persevere through so much injustice?

Genesis 39:20-23

But while Joseph was there in the prison, ²¹ the Lord was with him; He showed him kindness and granted him favour in the eyes of the prison warden. ²² So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. ²³ The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Describe the relationship between Joseph and the Lord as described in these verses.

What kind of characteristics describe Joseph?

Make a list of some jobs that are of interest to you, that you think you would be good at, and that would give you the income you think you will need. (Tip: Be realistic but have a progressive plan.)

Break into small groups and discuss the following if there is time, or consider these topics this week:

- *Read the story of Joseph in your Bible this week (Genesis 37, 39-50) focusing on how Joseph persevered, ever trusting, when the odds were against him.*
- *Continue to visualize a work environment that you can see yourself in. Talk to your chaplain or community Bridgecare group about skills training or other ways you can strengthen your resumé.*
- *Memorize Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*