

# A Day in the Life of a Prospective Teacher

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I considered a different title for this editorial. “The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Prospective Teacher” while certainly more catchy and accurate would probably have faced some copyright issues for ripping off the title of the popular book written by an “unlikely convert,” Rosaria Butterfield. So, what you see is what you get. At least now you know where this article is headed. Contained in this issue of *Beacon Lights* are two articles describing a day in the life of a teacher. This editorial follows the same theme. A college student pursuing teacher certification can have many questions and concerns that arise over the course of any given day. Even if you feel strongly that God is leading you into teaching, doubts and fears can arise. Satan tries to capitalize on these doubts and fears because the last thing he wants is convicted, reformed, Christian teachers standing in the place of convicted, reformed, Christian parents in a school each day. He would rather see prospective teachers throwing in the towel, concluding that they “can’t do it.” Here, I try to outline a few of these doubts and fears with the hope that consideration of them can be of some help to those who are struggling with the broader question, “Should I be a teacher?”

*“It’s too long of a path. It’s going to take me five years to get a degree (at many universities), then possibly a master’s degree after that?”*

If teaching is something you think you should be doing, something you feel compelled to do, something for which you feel you have been given the necessary gifts, then going to school for four or five years will seem like nothing. It may seem daunting to begin such a journey, but the outcome is something beautiful: teaching covenant children in a school supported by the church community. Are you worried about the financial burden of going to school for five years? Maybe you are already married and have a family to support. Can you really afford it? Consider that in addition to living within your means, you will find other financial helps, including participation in the PR Scholarship essay competition, help from family members, and unexpected financial gifts that show up in your mailbox. Your church community understands the great need for teachers and many people are looking for ways to help out prospective teachers.

As far as a master's degree is concerned, while not required in our schools, it is certainly helpful. If it is true that *all* people benefit from being lifelong learners, then certainly this holds true for teachers. If you do not enjoy learning, you will not enjoy teaching.

*“I don’t think I can do this. I wasn’t a very good student in high school and I feel like I might not be qualified for this.”*

Have you ever considered that you might be very good at relating to students who struggle to get good marks simply because *you* were that student at one time? A teacher who was an average student in elementary and high school has the potential to be really good at connecting with students who are in the same boat.

What about qualifications? God, if he is leading you down the path toward the vocation of teaching, will certainly qualify you with the necessary abilities. While much preparation is a good thing and is required, we are too often like Jacob, who many times tried to stay one step ahead of God's plan for him instead of just trusting God to provide for him in whatever situation he found himself. If we were fully in control of making sure that we had all of the necessary qualifications and abilities, we would fail every time. Good thing God is the one who qualifies the prospective teacher. Trust him.

*“It’s too much to think about, so I’m just going to forget about it. I’m going to ignore the feeling that God might be leading me down the path to becoming a teacher.”*

You might have the continual feeling that you will end up becoming a teacher someday, but it causes you much anxiety to think about it because you simply don’t know. In the meantime, as you observe the perpetual stream of bulletin announcements advertising for more teachers, you say, “someone will fill in, the schools always somehow or another have been able to make it work in the end.” Then you move on and stop thinking about it. You try to forget about it. If God has planned for you to be a teacher, he will not let you forget about it. No matter what, you shouldn’t try to forget about it anyway. Even if you feel strongly that you will not be a teacher, if you have only a passing thought about the possibility, you must pray about it.

*“How do they [other prospective teachers] know with so much confidence that they will be a teacher?”*

For quite some time, it almost bothered me that some people were so confident that they would become a teacher. How did they know? Did God write in the sky, “You will be a teacher”? Looking from the outside, it seems as if the decision was relatively easy for them. Maybe they loved school. Maybe they come from a family of teachers. Maybe they are by nature a leader.

Or maybe they struggle with the same doubts and fears listed above and below and you just don't know it.

In light of this possibility, it is important that you reach out to other prospective teachers and discuss these things. In the end every prospective teacher will struggle with some sort of doubt or fear. Regardless of what others struggle with, you must take your struggles to the Lord in prayer.

*“If only I had figured out my life right after high school, then I would have graduated from college already and could apply for one of the many jobs that are being advertised.”*

You’ve seen the bulletin announcements from year to year. One teacher needed at this school. Three teachers needed at that school. The need seems overwhelming at times. You say, “If only I hadn’t messed up and waited to pursue my degree, then I could have...”

You didn't mess up.

You didn’t “mess up” by “finally figuring it out” later in life. You see yourself as having waited too long to go to school for teaching. God sees you as having waited until the right time.

His time.

God in his providence governs all things, including which vocation you will pursue, when you will pursue it, and how many detours you will take before you get there. He will bring you to your life's vocation when he knows you are ready to begin. Maybe there are some circumstances in your life that you need to experience before you are ready to take that big step to go to college. Maybe there are some gifts he has given you that you never saw until later in life.

So, should you be a teacher?

I can't tell you that, but I do hope that you can relate to some or all of these doubts and fears if teaching is the vocation you are currently pursuing or hope to pursue in the future.

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