

Grad Tip for Parents: Let God Pick Your Kid's Career

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I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. It's graduation season, and I can't think of a more encouraging verse than Psalm 32:8. Whether our kids are headed to college, to new jobs, or into the great unknown, the whole "What's next?" thing can be daunting! And as parents, our hearts can feel like a tangled mess of emotions: pride of accomplishment, sadness over the chapter that's closing, or even (particularly when we don't know what the future holds) uncertainty, with maybe a little worry mixed in.

The pride and the sadness are both beautiful things; why else would 97% of all high school yearbooks and 29% of commencement speeches give the nod to Dr. Seuss: Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened?

The uncertainty thing, though, is not so much fun. And if that's where you are (like, if your child needs a job), I've got three things that might help.

The first is something Virginia (who was a college senior at

the time) told me, as we discussed her (still hazy) future. “Mom,” she said, “Research shows that 72% of college students don’t have a job lined up before graduation.” I don’t know whether Virginia was right or not. A point in her favor is that she actually worked in U.Va.’s Career Services office, where she would have had access to numbers like that, but you have to stack that against the fact that she is her mother’s daughter, and statistics (like that bit about yearbooks and speeches) sometimes get made up on the spot. Either way, though, the data made me feel better. And if it helps you to repeat this 72% claim, you can say that you read it in a blog.

The second thing that can help is prayer. It’s not just that you get a “peaceful, easy feeling” when you pray for your child; it’s more that when we bring our sons and daughters before God, we really are making a difference. As Paul told the Corinthians, “You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.” (Paul and his pals weren’t looking for work; they were more concerned with facing “deadly peril,” but the principle is the same. Our prayers matter.)

And finally, it can be good to remember the plan. We might

not know what it is, but after praying (and yes, worrying) three kids through the job-hunting process, I'm finally coming to realize that God does. He knows exactly how our children are wired (Psalm 139:13-16); he's already lined up good work for them to do (Ephesians 2:10); and he promises to instruct and counsel them in the way they should go (Psalm 32:8). Our job isn't to worry or nag; our job—if we want to get on board with God's plan—is simply to trust him.

So there you go: Repeat iffy statistics, pray for your kids, and trust God. And if you want help with tip #2, the folks at FaithGateway surprised me a few weeks ago when they sent word that they'd pulled a collection of prayers from the Adult Children book and created a beautiful "Praying for Your Graduate" resource for parents ([click here to download](#)):

The guide includes 21 prayers, all neatly divided by seven so that you can pray one every day for three weeks. Which, research shows, is about how long it takes for the average college grad to land his first job.