

I have read the opening poem to Chapter 1 several times, and each time, I still didn't get it. :-\ I'm afraid I don't get the author/poet's analogies or references to the river and its currents, but the hope is, once I finish this text, I can come back to the beginning and possibly get a better understanding, or I could just come up with my own. As I reading, I was hoping the entire text wouldn't be written so dramatically, but nope; It is. The one line from Stafford's poem that did stand out, somewhat as it did for Palmer, was "Ask me whether what I have done is my life." For me, this translated to "Ask me what I have done with my life." Some time ago, if I were to be asked that question, I would stumble, and not know immediately what to say. However precise, piercing and disquieting are the words of the poet, I was also reminded that the life I am living isn't the life that wants to live in me.

I immediately thought of will, which is so ironic that he then goes on to mention how 'Vocation does not come from willfulness.' (Page 20) I was like, Hold up! How do you mean? But see, the will I was thinking of or referring to was God's will. Growing up, I did not know God as Father, until well into my twenties. As an undergrad student, I can remember acknowledging a presence and a higher power that I would pray to. But I had no idea all that entailed and all that would follow. Today, I am proud to say that I am a grateful sinner saved by grace and now I don't just know *of* God, but I know HIM, more intimately. I'd like to believe that I have surrendered to *His* will for my life, so now my ask is to Him: What am I meant to do, Lord? Who am I meant to be?

Like Palmer, I am in my early thirties, and I still have questions about my vocation. I appreciate how the focus of this text is on vocation, which to me, is a more appropriate term than simply, career path or work field. It's deeper than just what we want or ought to do for a living. [It] is true purpose. Palmer talks about how he was seeking a path more purposeful than accumulating wealth, or securing a career. It is so timely that we are reading this text for this course, as I have found myself in this exact state of being. But unlike Palmer, I didn't live a life other than my own, in context. Instead, I was sort of left to figure things out on my own, at a very young age. . . sooner than any child would hope for. I hadn't sensed the deeper, truer life hidden inside me, until I came to Christ. Palmer mentions the values that we are too often taught. Unfortunately, I wasn't taught any values in my home, other than go to school, get your education, then. . . figure out what you'll do after. Typically, a job. Having been born to immigrant parents, their cultural values and differences inevitably caused dissension and discord. While they were taught sacrifice, labor and to disregard all else,

they hadn't adopted, (or adapted to) cultural assimilation, and the fact that they were raising children in a completely different culture and environment. I couldn't live their life, and they couldn't (or wouldn't) live ours.

After feeling challenged by Palmer's assertion, 'Vocation does not come from willfulness.