

Facing uncertainty

By [David Warkentin](#)

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Consider a big decision in your life (past, present, or future).

Now, consider the experience of deciding, especially the time of uncertainty and indecision prior to your choice.

For many, this state of disequilibrium is one to be avoided at all costs. Or at the very least, resolved as soon as possible. We are creatures of stability. Life is fulfilling if we know exactly who we are and exactly what we should be doing.

And this impulse isn't bad. To seek certainty and purpose is natural.

But if we're honest, such stability isn't the norm.

Countless people deal with uncertainty on a daily basis, be it in relationships, career, faith, and the like. There is a constant stress on our psyche as we ponder over and over, "What should I do?"

As a Christian, it can be tempting to offer religious self-help advice (e.g. "pray for an answer") or simple cliches that gloss over the depth of frustration we often endure (e.g. "When God closes a door, somewhere he opens a window").

I don't mean to exclude the value of direction through prayer and God's leading - I've experienced this myself. I just hesitate to make these extraordinary experiences the norm. For all the times I've gotten clear direction from God there have been countless more times I remain in a state of uncertainty. When it comes to discerning decisions, the influence of faith is complex.

And so I've come to accept the complexity. And I still have hope and purpose. Consider my paraphrase of Jesus's famous teaching ([Mt. 22:36-40](#)):

Facing uncertainty, and wondering how Jesus always seemed so confident in his approach to life, a doubter tested Jesus with this question: "Teacher, what do I need to do to rid myself of uncertainty - to attain purpose and direction?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All your reflection, uncertainty and decisions hang on these two commandments."

It's easy to feel worthless or unfulfilled in times of uncertainty. We may feel like we are wasting our time until we "get our act together." The Greatest Commandment reminds us that there is no wasted time - we can always love God and love others.

Facing uncertainty, love is one thing we can be certain about.

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