

Johnathon Wilt

Professor Sanders

IDCR151

30 April 2024

Vocation Essay Final Draft

From the time that I was but a young lad, I have always been interested in computers. As a child even under ten years old, I would be helping my mom and siblings with wifi connections on their computers or plugging in the HDMI to the right port and configuring the displays. Not very impressive, but this formed part of the foundation for why I felt I was called to become a cybersecurity professional. An important part of discerning your vocation is finding work that you enjoy doing - and I have found that I enjoy cybersecurity and all that it entails. Not only that, but the world has an increasing need for cybersecurity professionals that will only be getting more dire. In today's digital age, cyber threats are becoming more frequent and severe, and as a cybersecurity student, I am called to work in this field because of my personal experiences and the increase in demand for cyber defense workers.

As Jerry Sittser, a professor of theology at Whitworth College says, "A calling grows out of our temperament, our talents, and our experiences in life" (278). A large part of why I want to go into cybersecurity is based on what my dad does. He is a computer network engineer and taught me much of what I know about computers. I was able to see the interesting things that he worked on on a daily basis. Growing up, we had a computer in almost every single room that my dad had brought home from his work to do different projects on, which allowed me to branch out and try new and different types of operating systems and functions on each computer type. I ended up taking programming courses in middle and high school and had a particular aptitude

and interest in them. The concepts of programming came quite naturally to me, and I enjoyed doing it, to a certain extent. Eventually, I would get bored and my eyes would get tired and I realized that maybe doing programming all day as a career would not be feasible. Going into college, I then started to research other fields within the computer sciences and landed on cybersecurity. Not only does cybersecurity involve scripting (a form of programming) but it also allows more for social interaction, usually through working in teams. Protecting companies against cyber attacks seemed far more interesting to me, and it allowed me to serve people more directly as well. According to Lisa Easterly, president and CEO of Cyber Center of Excellence,

There is a place in cybersecurity for everyone. We need folks that are great communicators. We need folks that are good problem solvers. We need good collaborators. So it's really an exciting field to be able to join at a time where it's just incredibly in demand and every single industry needs it. So if you want to be in medicine and you can't deal with blood and you want to help folks, cybersecurity is a great place to get in (San Diego Business Journal, 44(9), 42).

Thus, cybersecurity is a rich field that allows for many different career paths within itself. Upon obtaining my degree, I could essentially go whichever direction I want, which reinforces my idea that cybersecurity is not simply the ideal option for me as a career, but also as a vocation, a calling from God. In comparison, being a software developer would not allow me as much to delve into ethical issues and protect businesses and individuals from attacks. I knew that I wanted to help and talk to more people, and that cybersecurity was becoming more and more desperately needed in the world.

In addition to my yearning to serve as a cybersecurity professional, I also recognize the great need to for cyber defense. According to Statista, “In 2023, the monetary damage caused by

cybercrime reported to the United States' Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) saw a year-over-year increase of around 21 percent, amounting to a historical peak of 12.5 billion U.S. dollars". Cyber attacks are happening more and more often, causing many businesses to close down simply due to the scammer's desire to make quick cash. However, not only are these attacks happening more and more often, they are also becoming more and more substantial in the amount of money that is being stolen. This demonstrates a rapidly increasing need for capable cyber professionals that can prevent these attacks from ever happening to accommodate the massive 21 percent annual increase in monetary damage. According to Dr. Richard Payerchin, editor of Medical Economics,

[DDoS attacks] can interrupt business continuity by blocking patients or health care personnel from accessing electronic health records, software-based medical equipment, or websites to coordinate care...Moreover, DDoS attacks are getting more sophisticated and complex while getting easier and cheaper to perpetrate (Medical World News).

Thus, not only do cyber threats hurt the economic state of good businesses and the world at large, but they also are being used against healthcare systems, which affect the health and security of patients and could even lead to death if systems are decapacitated in the DDoS attacks. Now that the number of skilled hackers in the world is increasing, the number of skilled cyber defense professionals must increase exponentially to keep up, which is why I know that I must become a cyber professional in order to defend businesses and important infrastructure.

As a Christian, I am called to work differently than the rest of the world, understanding that my vocation is not simply a career path, but a divine assignment entrusted to me by God. In Gene Veith Jr's, *God at Work*, he writes:

It is certainly true that a Christian, who understands his life in terms of God's calling, will look at the work placed before him in a completely different way than a person, doing the same work, who is lost in his sins (35).

Veith is correct in explaining that a Christian in the workforce works in a different, usually more joyful and productive way than one who does not have the same worldview. This makes me a valuable future cybersecurity professional (by God's grace). In Colossians 3:23, it is written: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters" (*OSB*). Our vocations are not mere "jobs", but as St. Paul writes, they are ultimately serving our God. St Paul echoes the sentiment expressed in the quote, emphasizing the transformative power of understanding one's vocation as a calling from God. This understanding shapes my perspective, giving my every task particular purpose and significance. When I will face difficulties in my vocation, I will strive to remind myself that my efforts are ultimately directed toward serving the higher calling of God, rather than merely fulfilling worldly obligations. This awareness fills me with both a sense of fulfillment and of purpose towards becoming a cyber defense professional.

All are called to a specific vocation, Christian or non-Christian. As a future cybersecurity professional, I will protect people's assets from being stolen online so they may live out their lives in greater peace and well-deserved prosperity. As a Christian, I want a job that I will be fulfilled in, that helps humanity, glorifies God, and makes me feel as if I am useful, making a difference in the world. With the rapid technological advancements the world is witnessing today, from artificial intelligence to credit card chips in our hands, the need for cyber defense is increasing exponentially. People's credit cards, social security numbers, and passwords are being stolen on the daily. In conclusion, cybersecurity professionals are desperately needed in our

world today, and I am ready and fully capable of fulfilling that need, living out my vocation as best I can.

Works Cited

- Graves, B. (2023). "As a New Year Begins, Threat Landscape Takes a New Shape
CYBERSECURITY: AI Thrown Into the Mix; Need for Cyber Professionals Remains
High". *San Diego Business Journal*, 44(9), 42.
- Schieszer, John. "Cyberattacks Increasing Against Health Care Providers." *Renal & Urology
News Staff*, 2021.
- Sittser, Jerry. "Distinguishing Between Calling and Career". The CCC Core Reader, edited by
James B. LaGrand, et al., 4th ed., Messiah College, 2017, pp. 274-286.
- The Orthodox Study Bible*. St. Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology, 2008.
- Veith, Gene Edward. *God at Work*. Crossway, 2002.