

Module One

Navigation Model 1

ETERNAL- “WHO”

- Child of God
- Heaven
- Purpose- “Who am I?”
- Character

TEMPORAL- “WHAT”

- Vocation
- Other life choices



Module 1: Set Your Compass

Module Learning Objectives:

- The Navigation Model that prioritizes the Eternal over the Temporal
- Three societal expectations to rid yourself of now
- What you're responsible for and what you're not
- How to expand your circle of control
- Set an achievable goal for the Course



Video 1

Learning points:

- The Navigation Model that clears up confusion
- Focusing on WHO rather than WHAT
- Why vocation and career are *less* important than you think

Welcome

It is so good to be with you! I am thrilled that you're choosing to invest in yourself and your future with me. As we embark, I encourage you not just to consume the course, but to DO the course. Right now, I'm asking you to put away your phone where you cannot see it, close all internet browsers, and give your brain the treat of focusing on just one thing. Grab a cup of coffee and a pen and paper if you're old school like me, or take notes in whatever way floats your boat.

If you want to get the most out of this course, and I know you do, do every worksheet and invest yourself in each one. So often it's easy to think "I know this already," or "I've heard this before," but to make the most progress, I ask you to approach with childlike curiosity. Ask, "what can I learn from this? What can I learn from this?" An attitude of openness is how God will be able to pour new wisdom and understanding into your soul, and how you'll be able to gain a new perspective. Isaiah 43:19 reads, "See, I am doing a new thing! Do you not perceive it? I am making paths in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." God wants to do a new thing in you. When you invest in this course, you'll gain a new skill set to make every future decision with peace. You just have to show up with your best self and full attention, and good things WILL grow.

In this video, we'll discuss:

- The Navigation Model that both clears up confusion and flips societal expectations upside down
- Focusing on WHO rather than WHAT

- Why vocation and job choices are less important than you think

Let's start with the Navigation Model that will set up how we are going to think and talk about discernment for the rest of the course.

Navigation Model 1

These are the two aspects of making choices: Temporal, or things that take place in time and have a beginning and an end, and Eternal, which are things that exist outside of time and have no end.

- Temporal is WHAT YOU DO in this life- your vocation and every other life choice, for example job, moving, education, and daily decisions.
- Eternal is WHO YOU ARE: your identity, your character, and your heavenly destiny.
- Temporal choices last for this life or for a portion of this life before they end. Eternal choices last forever- for example, residing with God in Heaven, forming a strong moral character, and developing a relationship with God.
- The Temporal is informed by the Eternal, and flows from Eternal. Another way to express this is: what you do is informed by who you are. Or, what you do flows from who you are.
- I think of the Eternal being the Tree, while the Temporal is the fruit of the tree.

Eternal is Greater than Temporal

Now with that all in mind, write this down: The Eternal is GREATER THAN the Temporal. The eternal is greater than the temporal.

Here's why: The Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1700, states this: "The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God; it is fulfilled in his vocation to divine beatitude." Pause there. The Catechism doesn't say your vocation is marriage or religious life or priesthood or a CEO or a lawyer or a plumber. Your vocation is heaven, seeing God face to face. This is the Eternal aspect of the Navigation model: Your true calling is to your heavenly destiny.

St. Ignatius of Loyola wrote the Spiritual Exercises in which are contained the principles for discernment, honored for centuries by the Church. The Spiritual Exercises begin with Ignatius's declaration of Principle and Foundation. He says, "Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul. And the other things on the face of the earth are created for man and that they may help him in prosecuting the end for which he is created. From this it follows that man is to use them as much as they help him on to his end, and ought to rid himself of them so far as they hinder him as to it."

Essentially what St. Ignatius is writing is that the purpose of *every single thing* in this life is to help us attain Heaven, and if it's not helping us attain Heaven then we should detach ourselves from it.

He also writes, “In every good election (meaning decision), as far as depends on us, the eye of our intention ought to be simple, only looking at what we are created for, namely, the praise of God our Lord and the salvation of our soul. And so, I ought to choose whatever I do, that it may help me for the end for which I am created, not ordering or bringing the end to the means, but the means to the end.”

The end is the Eternal salvation of your soul, the wider circle in the Navigation Model. The Temporal is the means to the end, namely, the inner circle. And so, every Temporal choice, says Ignatius, is well-ordered when your priorities are directed toward Eternity.

Flipping Societal Values and Timelines

1. Worth in Work

The Navigation Model is completely upside-down from our modern-day values. Let’s go through three ways that we have to re-calibrate our thinking to point our internal true north. The first is timelines. Consider how we live in a society that equates our worth with our work and productivity. The first thing someone will ask you when you meet at a party is, “what do you do?” We are conditioned from our earliest days to produce: good grades, getting into a good school, winning the sports event, getting a good job, getting a better job, getting a promotion, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera! If you aren’t careful, you can approach seeking vocation and every other life choice the same way, valuing the Temporal over the Eternal. Have you ever thought, “I need to hit this or that milestone by such and such date or I’m a failure. I need to know the plan or else I’ll fall behind”? If you have, remembering that the Eternal is greater than the Temporal is incredibly reassuring. The only timeline that matters is God’s.

2. Itinerary

Here’s another way that this Navigation Model prioritizing the Eternal is reassuring. Have you ever wondered: “What if I choose the ‘wrong’ thing? What if I step outside of God’s one perfect plan? Am I doomed?” That’s thinking of the whole purpose of your life in the wrong terms because God’s will isn’t an itinerary; it’s a relationship. We’ll speak more on that later. But let’s imagine for now that God called you to be a nun and instead you got married. Or that he created you best suited for life as a Carmelite, and you became a Dominican. Even if you do that, your universal call to holiness, to Heaven, remains. God will never stop calling you to himself, to perfect happiness with him in Heaven.

- Your salvation doesn’t depend on making the right Temporal choices such as vocation, job, career, etc. Salvation is first of all a free gift from God in which he asks you to respond in love. This act of free will manifests itself when you make good Eternal choices such as morality, prayer life, and virtue. Micah 6:8 says, “*you have been told, O mortal, what is good and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.*”
- I worked for five years for Carmelite nuns, helping build their mission program. That was a good and wonderful thing, but it was easy to focus on how many people I was recruiting as the measure of my success and the program’s success. When I was

discerning religious life, the devil whispered in my ear that if I got this choice wrong, if I chose the wrong order or the wrong vocation, I'd be doomed. The devil loves to take something that's good and twist it into an idol.

- In forty-three episodes of the Called and Caffeinated Podcast and in many, many conversations with people who have changed direction, they all say the same thing. "I'm so glad I went to the convent or monastery or did mission work. Even though I ultimately wasn't called there, I wouldn't trade that experience for the world. It wasn't wasted time; it helped make me into who I am today. It helped make me better." The world will call your prayer time or missionary work a waste because you won't have anything productive to show for it, but the world is wrong. In my own life I can attest to this- I look back at the time I spent in service and discerning religious life, and I can see how that was a beautiful gift to my husband and family, even though I didn't know it at the time. Every good or selfless thing I did before I found my vocation was worthwhile, because it helped form me into the person they need me to be now for them.

3. Time

Other than over-identifying with productivity, another way that our culture gets this model backward is how we spend our time. As a culture, we focus on WHAT rather than WHO in the way that we spend more time trying to please people, and less time trying to please God. How long every day do you spend thinking about your social media following, how to make more money, how to get better grades? How much face time does your phone get with you, and how much face time does God get with you? Grades, social media, phones, notifications- Those things are good, but they are far less important than whether or not we make it to Heaven.

Focus on WHO Rather Than WHAT

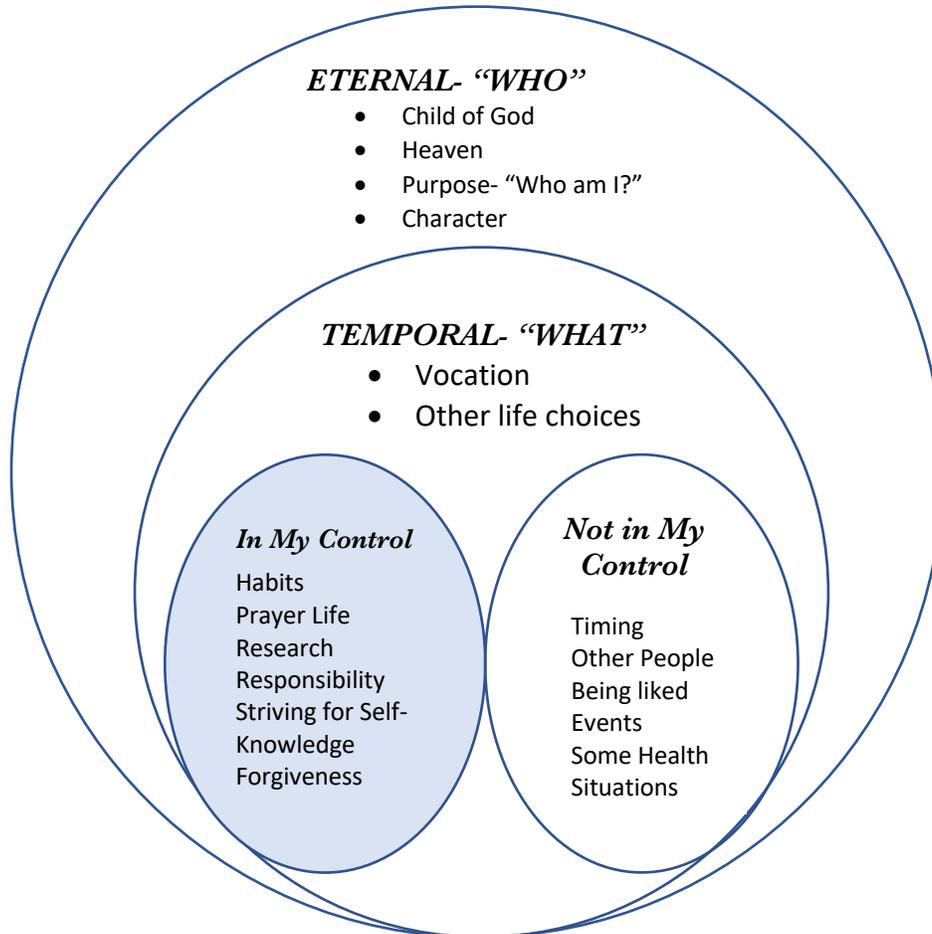
So, now that we've exposed the ways that our culture gets it wrong, let's look at a nugget of wisdom that gets it right. It's Today's North Star Quote: Focus on WHO rather than WHAT. A vocation director friend of mine, Paul Krenzeloek, said that in one of his talks and that's always stuck with me.

Your vocation and other life choices are the path that get you to your ultimate goal: Heaven. What God wants for you, more than anything, is Heaven. And in Heaven, you see God face to face. That's all. In Heaven it's ALL God.

Now of course, life choices are still important. We were designed for a purpose and as St. Paul says in Romans 8:28, we were "called according to that purpose." There are things we're better suited to than others. There are people we're better suited to marry than others. And much of our course will focus on choosing those better options. But it's so important to start out by putting everything in context of our heavenly calling. As a side benefit, isn't it nice it takes some of the pressure off you?

And that's a wrap for today! Today's worksheet helps you to brainstorm ways to make WHO greater than WHAT in your choices. It's a good one, so hop to it and I'll see you in the next video!

Navigation Model 2





Video 2

Learning Points:

- What is discernment, really?
- The benefits and necessity of waiting- everyone's least favorite part
- Which areas are out of our control, (and yes, that's a good thing)
- Why we should always be discerning

Welcome back! I can't wait to dive further into our Navigation Model. First though, let's get one thing straight.

Clarifying Discernment

"Discernment" is a word that's going to come up quite a bit in this course and today I have a bone to pick with the typical Catholic understanding of that word. As a cradle Catholic, when I used to hear the word "discernment," it meant one thing to me. It meant a young man or woman who wanted to be a priest, a monk, or a nun. (Where my cradle Catholics at??) I believed discernment was only for the super holy people, the people who practically had the stigmata, the people who appeared super holy. I didn't see myself as worthy to go through that process. I had no knowledge of what that would even entail. Probably, I supposed, discernment would be boring.

So, let's just set the record straight, shall we? I looked up discernment in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, and it means "the ability to judge wisely." I've also heard another definition which is that it means to "sift" or to "sort." Discernment, therefore, is sifting or sorting through the layers of our desires. It's learning to judge which are the most lasting and which are temporary. Discernment doesn't mean figuring out God's will like a trigonometry problem; rather, it means digging deep to discover how God created me and who I am at the deepest level. Let's condense that: Discernment is sifting through the layers of my desires to discover who I was created to be at the deepest level.

Contrary to popular belief, Discernment is also NOT a one-time decision about your vocation. Heck, my husband and I got married and we discovered it raised more questions than it answered. Where should we move? When should we buy a house? When are we called to have another child? What career moves should my husband make? The decisions keep coming! Discernment is a lifelong walk with God, inviting him into EVERY decision of our lives. It's learning to hear his voice and to form our hearts to orient them more and more toward him and his will.

It's always fun to read the writings of someone illustrious and find out they agree with you, isn't it? In this case, Pope Francis agrees with me! In his Exhortation *Christus Vivit* he wrote, "*The word "vocation" can be understood in a broad sense as a calling from God, including the call to life, the call to friendship with him, the call to holiness, and so forth. This is helpful, since it situates our whole life in relation to the God who loves us. It makes us realize that nothing is the*

result of pure chance but that everything in our lives can become a way of responding to the Lord, who has a wonderful plan for us.”

I'm glad we got all that out on the table. Discernment is for you, me, and everyone until our dying breath. If you have a pulse and you're human, then you are discerning, as far as I'm concerned.

- I should also make a side note that's obvious but needs to be said: You don't discern choices that are immoral. You don't need to discern with whom to have an affair, or which test to cheat on, or how much to steal. In this entire True North course we are only dealing with morally good choices. And those are the hardest to make, because when you say yes to a good thing you're saying no to another good thing, amen?

Becoming Who We Are

Remember the Navigation Model? Today, we're building on that foundation from the last video. Recall that we established that The Eternal is the tree, and the Temporal is the fruit. The tree produces fruit according to its type: An apple tree produces apples, and a pear tree produces pears.

What does this mean for making decisions? It means you have to know WHO you are in order to know WHAT you want to do. That's easier said than done of course. I would like in so many decisions in my life to just know without having to do the background work of learning who I am and all that hazy stuff. So, we're going to begin to chip away and de-mystify the process of discovering who we are- not just children of God, but also as individuals.

This is hard as young people because we are still discovering ourselves. I'm still a mystery to myself! And in my childhood, teens and 20's I changed rapidly. There's no ending point where you know yourself perfectly.

Allow me to tell you my highest ambition as a five-year-old: I wanted to be a trashman. The reason is because I was homeschooled and at 5 years old I didn't want to do math inside. I wanted to ride around on the back of a truck *with no seat belt*. That would be the greatest conception of freedom I could imagine. When we went to the grocery store I'd hang off the cart, usually with one foot dangling, getting as close as I could to living that dream.

I pretended at age 15, 18, 22, and 25 that I really had myself figured out- that I was "finished." In other words, I thought I knew the tree I was and the kind of fruit I was meant to produce. I wanted the security of an answer. But the reality is that I'm never "finished." But if you've ever tried to grow a tree, you know it takes a long time to grow and even longer to produce fruit.

In every milestone, having the security of an answer is an illusion. As soon as you get an answer about one thing, another question comes up. Having an answer just doesn't have the power to make you happy.

I can see looking back that I wasn't ready at 15, 18, or 20 to know WHAT I was going to do. I had to mature for longer than was comfortable. Waiting can be the worst part of discerning. So, if

you're like me- impatient, tired of waiting, and longing for an answer about your next milestone, enjoy this gem I found written by a Jesuit named Pierre Teilhard de Chardin:

"Above all, trust in the slow work of God.

We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.

We should like to skip the intermediate stages.

We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.

And yet it is the law of all progress

that it is made by passing through some stages of instability—

and that it may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you;

your ideas mature gradually—let them grow,

let them shape themselves, without undue haste.

Don't try to force them on,

as though you could be today what time

(that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will)

will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit

gradually forming within you will be.

Give Our Lord the benefit of believing

that his hand is leading you,

and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself

in suspense and incomplete."

You may have heard the phrase: "God's timing is not our timing." Thank God it's not! If I had met my husband at age twenty-four, the age I thought I'd be ready to get married, I wouldn't have been ready. We both had growing to do. When we did meet, I appreciated him so much more because I had chased my dreams of being on Broadway and found that they were unfulfilling.

It's been my experience that anything worth doing takes at least twice as long and five times more effort than I anticipate. Allow yourself to be unfinished, and don't burden yourself with trying to control what's not in your department.

What's in God's Department?

Take a look at the Navigation Model to enumerate what you are *not* responsible for. The beauty and the pain of the human condition is that we are not independent creatures; we are inter-dependent creatures. Some of what we need to flourish is out of our control. It requires cooperation from outside- God, other people, or factors that we do not control.

Things that are not in your control: Timing, other people, events, whether or not people like you, success, politics, and some health situations. Pause for a moment. Take a look at that list. Read through the items and say them aloud with me: "I am not responsible for the timing of my vocation. I am not responsible for other people. I am not responsible for being liked. I am not responsible for events over which I have no influence. I am not responsible for success. I am not responsible for health situations that may arise."

That felt relieving, right?

Mother Teresa famously stated, *"God has not called me to be successful; God has called me to be faithful."* She knew that being faithful was within her control, but what others thought about her or the outcome of her endeavors was not her department to control. It's easy to stress or blame yourself for not being able to figure things out. The simple truth is, none of those things are in your job description of being a human. They are in God's department.

Any insecurity we feel about why we can't figure things out is the devil's golden opportunity to whisper lies into your ear that it's because you're not enough. Or you're crazy. Or you're missing something. He'll tell you if you were holier and prayed harder, you'd have an answer by now. But it's just not your department. Timing, other people, events, or health situations are not the measure of your holiness.

Learning to let go is hard and it takes time. I know this firsthand: I am a type A go-getter type who always wants to jump in with both feet. If you're like me, relinquishing control is painful, to say the least. For my type B friends, you may be just living this out already, and for that I commend you. Teach me your ways!

It's a hard fact that you could be doing everything right and still experience prolonged singleness, rejection from the order to which you feel called due to a health situation, or a relationship that falls through because your partner is immature. And those things are truly difficult. We'll talk more about trust God in the next module. In the meantime, lean into the truth that God is sovereign and you're dependent on him.

That brings us to the North Star quote of the day: I don't have to worry about timing, other people, events, whether or not people like me, politics, and some health situations, because they are not my department.

There's lots we *are* responsible for in tending our tree to produce that fruit. Waiting time is not wasted time. In the next video we will cover what's in our control. So hop on your worksheet today, and I can't wait to see you in the next video.



Video 3

Learning points:

- Your circle of control
- How to expand your control
- Set a realistic, achievable action goal for the Course

Remember I told you in the last video that I love control? I love knowing the plan. There is such security in knowing what's going to happen next. If you're like me and the last video where I told you to wait and trust stressed you out, allow me to help you feel very secure by telling you how the rest of this video will go. We're talking about what *is* in your control, and we're going to set a realistic, achievable goal for the rest of the course.

What's in My Department?

Let's take a look at the final component of the Navigation Model. You'll see the circle of control. Take a look at the things that are in your control: Prayer life, habits, researching, taking responsibility, striving for self-knowledge, and forgiving. Stop for a moment and take those in. Say with me, "My prayer life is in my control. My habits are in my control. Researching and gathering information are in my control. Taking responsibility is in my control. Striving for self-knowledge is in my control. Forgiveness is in my control.

Paragraph 1700 in the Catechism of the Catholic Church names divine Beatitude as our primary vocation and calling. It then goes on to say: "*It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself to this fulfillment. By his deliberate actions the human person does, or does not, conform to the good promised by God and attested by moral conscience. Human beings make their own contribution to their interior growth; they make their whole sentient and spiritual lives into means of this growth.*"

Every single moment and day is an opportunity to direct ourselves, through our own efforts, to conform ourselves to God's will. We are responsible for contributing to our own interior growth. God himself will do the growing, but we put in the time and effort. God is waiting to bless your striving and to expand your control as you exercise the power you already have.

Expanding Your Control

In *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, one of the greatest books of all time in my opinion, author Steven Covey writes about your "circle of influence," which basically equates with the circle of control in our Navigation Model here. When you move in your circle of influence and focus your energy on what you can do rather than what you can't do, you actually *expand* your circle of influence outward.

Here's an example: Striving for self-knowledge is in your control, so you read the Bible and you invest yourself fully in this course. You expand your understanding - you begin to comprehend

that Eternal aspect of yourself- aka the kind of tree you are. Then, when you have to make a Temporal decision, it's easier and takes less time because you've already invested in that so-called "background work."

Here's another example: Your prayer life is in your control. So, you spend thirty minutes every day meditating for a few months. In that time, you learn to hear God's voice and situate your priorities in light of your heavenly calling. Then your next major life choice you're more easily able to discern his spirit and voice because you already know what that sounds like.

Throughout the rest of this course we will focus on moving in our circles of control, knowing that they will expand as we do.

Goal-Setting for the Course

As I began writing this course, I wanted to make it an effective program that gets results people can see. However, (need I say it again?) God's timing is not in my control. It's not in my power to guarantee that the necessary factors about your decision will all align before the end of the course. I can't hurry up your future spouse to meet you or guarantee that you'll find your dream job. However, I can promise that you will make significant steps toward it by doing the things that are in your control.

So, let's get down to business. You're going to use today's worksheet to set a goal. It'll be a *realistic, achievable, specific* goal that falls in your circle of control.

1. First, answer in writing the question to: *WHAT AM I SEEKING?* (vocation, relationship, job, discernment of other life choice) That answer may or may not fall within your circle of control if it requires outside cooperation from other people or factors out of your control.
2. Second, set yourself two options of action that you will take at the end of this course. Make both of them something that's within your circle of control, whether or not you have the answer to your bigger question yet. Phrase your resolution, "at the end of this course I will do either A or B."

For example, perhaps you're trying to decide whether to apply to enter the seminary or to take a job, and you have a deadline coming up to accept the job. Your action plan is, "When this course is over I will either apply to enter the seminary or I will accept the new job offer." Those are both in your control, so they are good goals to choose. Don't set a resolution you can't achieve. The purpose of making an action goal is to take action within your current circle of control.

3. Third, ask yourself, "what actions can I take, that fall in my circle of control, to move me closer to either A or B?" Look at the actions available within your circle of control. Choose *SPECIFIC, ACHIEVABLE* actions. If the goal is the destination, then this is the step where you chart your course to get there.

Using the example of taking a job offer vs. applying for seminary, you may realize as you write them down that you haven't had a meeting with your spiritual director in a while. "Meet with my spiritual director before the course is over" is

one of the courses of action you'll take. Perhaps you've visited the seminary once but you feel you need another visit. "Schedule and visit the seminary" is another course of action. Perhaps you'd like to talk with employees in the company where you have the job offer. "Discuss the workplace with three employees before the course is over" is a course of action you will take. Those examples are all things in your control.

Decide as you write them down when you will carry out these actions- you're much more likely to actually do it if you have it written down on your schedule!

Hopefully tons of ideas for action goals are flooding into your brain, but if not, here are some ideas to get the ball rolling. Before the end of this course, you could:

- Research and visit three religious orders
- Talk to your local vocation director and visit a seminary
- Find a spiritual director and have a first meeting with him or her
- Set up an online dating profile
- Set up a date with a therapist to heal past trauma
- Spend twenty minutes reading two chapters of the Bible and meditating on them each day
- Pray the Liturgy of the Hours each day
- "Interview" three close friends who can help you discover and recognize your unique talents
- Ask smart people you know for the best books and resources they know of for your decision situation, and then go check out those books from the library or buy them. And read them.
- Limit yourself to one hour a day on your phone

Notice how specific these goals are. Don't drown in generalities! Getting very specific will help you achieve them.

A Loving Kick in the Pants

When I interviewed him on the Called and Caffeinated Podcast, Fr. Mike Schmitz said "action purifies desire," and I could not love that statement more! This action piece is so important to discerning well. As you pray, move your feet. Get moving on the "informed" part of "making an informed decision." Much as I'd love for my discernment to consist purely of lighting a candle, putting on Gregorian chant and hearing the God voice in my head telling me the plan, it doesn't work that way. It's key that you take responsibility on this.

It's never convenient or easy to take action. Booking a plane ticket costs money. Dating someone costs time and money. There's risk you'll lose what you invest. But remember that God will bring good out of it. That leads to your North Star Quote for the day: Taking action gives you evidence that will prove the right decision. Knowledge brings confidence and peace, so don't skip this step!

Review

Great job! You made it to the end of Module One. Let's quickly review What we learned. In Video one we covered the Navigation Model that showed the Temporal WHAT decisions we make are less important the Eternal WHO of who we are. The Eternal is the tree and the Temporal is the fruit. We never lose our call to Heavenly union with God.

Then in Videos two and three we looked at areas that are in our control and areas outside of our control. Events, people, being well-liked, jobs, and some health situations are not in our department. Prayer life, habits, researching and taking action, taking responsibility, striving for self-knowledge, and forgiving are in our control.

Moving within our circle of control and leaving the rest up to God makes discernment simple and less confusing. Here's a step-by-step breakdown of what living out discernment from the Navigation Model looks like:

1. I invest in my prayer life and my relationship with God at all times.
2. When a choice comes along, I take all steps within my control to inform me of what to do.
3. I don't stress about whether I'm missing a sign, or how other people behave, because that's not my department.
4. If a clear answer doesn't emerge while I'm working within my circle of control, that means that God is still working behind the scenes and he likely wants me to do what is in my current circle of control.
5. In the waiting, I trust in hope and move within my circle of control. My tree just needs to grow and develop before it is able to produce fruit.
6. If I have to make a decision and it can't wait, I make the best choice I can based on what I know. I don't have to worry because God will work with what I choose.

I hope you can see how this simplifies and de-mystifies many of the difficult parts of discernment. It comes down to striving for knowledge, doing your best with the information you have, and trusting God with everything else. If trusting and leaning on God is hard for you, you're not alone! We'll spend the whole next module learning to anchor ourselves in God. I can't wait to see you back for Module two.