

Dear Future Self,

Who do you want to be when you grow up? This is a question you've been asked, and frankly, you've been asking yourself, for most of your life. As you've grown, the answer too has grown. It's matured, and so have you (mostly). At each stage, you've taken time to look at where you've been, where you are, and where you're headed. Throughout life, your dreams, desires, and focus have shifted as well.

So, look back for a minute. Where have you been? How did your choices (both the good and the not-so-genius ones) get you here? You've navigated your way through school, family, hobbies, faith, and career. As you look back, where have you seen God at work?

Standing where you are today, there's probably some things you'd do differently. Experience is a great teacher. Each has had a role in molding you into the person you are today. Through those experiences, there are a few lessons you need to remember for what's coming next.

First, celebrate the wins. You've done so much. You've accomplished some big things along the way. You have a reason to be proud for making it to where you are. Look around you. You have so much to be thankful for! Once upon a time you set some goals for yourself. Now is a good time to express gratitude to God and to yourself for pushing, reaching and achieving those goals. Be thankful for who you are, what you have, the life you lead, and the people you surround yourself with.

Second, take a quick inventory. What's going well right now? What do you need to work on? Are there changes you need to make? Relationships you need to focus on or mend? Dreams you still want to pursue?

Finally, never forget...you are on a journey. Every journey is filled with meandering roads, detours, wrong turns, random stops, some souvenirs, a great playlist (hopefully) and even better company. Along the way, you pass all kinds of mile markers. But it's important to remember that none of these markers are the destination. A mile marker is there to help you know where you've been, show you how far you've come, tell you where you are on the journey, and help you know what's still ahead.

This journey you're on – regardless of where you find yourself – isn't over yet. Whatever your accomplishments, there's still time for more. Whatever your regrets, you can still find redemption. Whatever your goals, you can still reach them. You've been through some tough stuff, and God has been faithful through it all. Let his past faithfulness give you hope for what's around the bend.

So, I ask you again. What do you want to be when you grow up? The destination is still somewhere out there in the distance. Maybe you're beginning to see it, maybe it's still over the horizon. Don't worry, you'll get there. But don't forget the journey. So, kick those tires, check your oil, top off the tank, and get back on the road. There are still some miles left on the journey. God isn't done with you yet. As a wise pastor you know often says...*"The Best Is Yet To Come!"*

On the Journey,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. H. ...', written in a cursive style.