



by *Jarvis Braun*

As homeschoolers, our parents encouraged us to pursue as many opportunities as possible. We kept busy with chores and various projects. During our adolescence, we raised and marketed meat birds and chicken eggs. At the time, we didn't enjoy all the work, but it established character and taught us the value of money. My brother Dalton and I would often work with Dad. We constructed numerous outbuildings for our animals and accomplished many home improvements. Together, we spent hundreds of hours working in the woodshop and fixing equipment in our garage. While we were growing up, my brother and I had a go-kart and snowmobiles. Although our father wasn't overly mechanically inclined, he was very supportive of our endeavours and helped us gather the tools and knowledge to repair our unreliable machines.

While in our teens, Dalton and I would often work with friends and family doing roofing, framing, flooring, wiring, plumbing, siding, dry walling, mudding, and other tasks. At the age of 15, my father and I both worked for a framer in our area for a summer. This was a very educational experience. Not only did we both learn a lot about construction, it was a good to have my father with me as I was exposed to the crude realm of construction. It was very interesting to learn what the various trades did and the opportunities available. By the end of the summer, I was confident that framing wasn't for me, but that electrical might work. God gave me the desire to live as an ambassador for Him in the sphere of construction and clearly directed me to be an electrician.

My parents saw great opportunities in the trades and recommended that I pursue an electrical apprenticeship. In grade 11, I applied at Careers (a organization that links RAP students with employers) and began apprenticing during the summer. The Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) was an excellent way to begin my vocation while still in high school and earn credits towards my diploma.

From an early age, I enjoyed building projects and repairing equipment. While growing up, Dalton and I built numerous tree forts as only young boys could. In retrospect, I'm surprised our parents allowed us to build those rickety death traps. Our forts were a creative outlet and gave us a sense of accomplishment. We also spent many hours disassembling electronics and reusing the parts to create small apparatuses. We once made a miniature tram to transport small items for the kitchen floor to the counter. Our snowmobile and go-kart provide countless opportunities to improve our troubleshooting and mechanical

skills. We would spend hours cleaning the carburetor and enjoy mere moments riding, until something else would malfunction. I recall changing our go-kart from a belt drive to chain drive to eliminate the cost and inconvenience of burning out belts. We once had an old truck for hauling stuff around the acreage. It was fun to drive, but had this habit of running out of gas, which would result in clogged fuel filter. Needless to say, we became quite the experts at changing fuel filters. In our mid-teens, we began to maintain and perform minor repairs on our parents' vehicles. These experiences gave me a passion for physical labor and problem-solving. There were excellent preparation for my apprenticeship.

My experience as an apprentice electrician has been a challenging and rewarding journey. It has provided me with invaluable skills and once I attain my Red Seal, I will be able to work around the world with little or no additional certification. My trade has limitless opportunities, from building manufacturing shops, commercial office space, state-of-the-art hospital, and working in an international airline's hangar and office complex. A career in construction is a very rewarding! There is a lot of variety and numerous challenges. I would highly recommend the trades as a vocational option. Not only is it exciting, but it provides countless opportunities to live out the gospel. God has given me many opportunities to share Christ with my coworkers. By God's grace, I endeavour to honour Him with my work and He has rewarded me exponentially. May God raise up a generation who "With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." (Eph. 6:7, 8). May God bless you as you seek to follow His perfect will for your life.

*Jarvis Braun is homeschooled graduate and currently a 3rd year electrical apprentice at one of Western Canada's leading electrical and data contractors. As an electrician, Jarvis has found the perfect balance of physical work, using logic and foresight, and applying mathematics and electrical physics. Jarvis strives to work for the glory of God and to exhibit Christ-likeness. God has exponentially blessed his feeble efforts. In 1st and 2nd year Electrical at SAIT, Jarvis achieved outstanding grades and was selected by Alberta Industry Training to participate in the Provincial Skills Competition. He competed in the prestigious category of "Automation and Control" and was blessed with a Silver medal. Jarvis currently lives at home with his family on their acreage outside Calgary and is excited to see how God will continue to shape his future.*