

# MICHELLE SALADINO



# GOING TO *College*

STORIES, STRATEGIES, &  
SCRIPTURES BEFORE YOU GO



Chi Alpha Campus Ministries, U.S.A. is a ministry of Assemblies of God U.S. Missions.

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# CHI ALPHA CAMPUS MINISTRIES, U.S.A.

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Chi Alpha is mentioned in this booklet on several occasions. Many of the stories and testimonials from the booklet share about lives that were deeply impacted through this collegiate Christian ministry. Presently Chi Alpha is organized on more than 300 campuses led by more than 1,500 campus ministry staff and involves about 28,000 students.

Chi Alpha exists to reconcile students to Christ, believing the university is the world's most influential institution with more than one million international students studying in the United States. Furthermore, Chi Alpha exists to protect the investment that the Church has made in our youth. The church invests too much time, money, and prayer in its youth to not protect and empower that investment during the critical transitions from home to campus and the campus to the marketplace.

For more information, go to [chialpha.com](http://chialpha.com).

by Michelle Saladino

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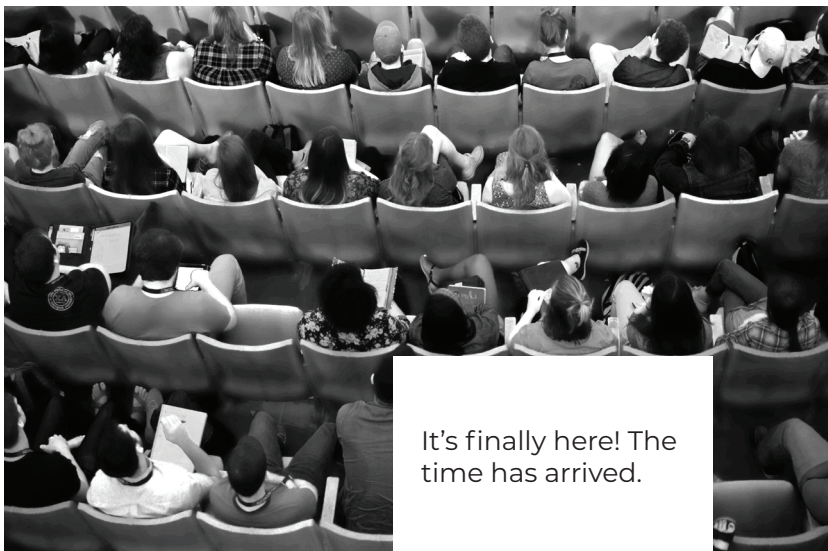


by Michelle Saladino



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# Preface



It's finally here! The time has arrived.

You are just about set to make the transition to college, and I could not be happier to get this booklet into your hands.

I took on this project because I remember my own adjustment from high school to college. I never could have imagined the transformation I would undergo in my years as a college student. Coming from a broken home, God used my time away to heal me, restore me, call me into a life of ministry, and give me my lifelong friends—one of which is now my husband! And I am just one story of many.

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Wherever you're coming from, I pray the stories shared here will help spark wisdom, hope, and greater excitement for what is ahead. They will remind you that God is with you, He's for you, and He won't ever abandon you. Rather than focusing on what not to do or how to play defense, this booklet focuses on what you can do proactively to make the most of this experience. If you want to dive even deeper, there are meditations and study questions for each story to aid in application; you could discuss them with friends, a mentor, or work through them individually in your journal.

Moreover, this booklet can be used by youth pastors, parents, mentors, or counselors as a seven-week study leading up to graduation. The topics covered are as follows: salvation, the gospel, spiritual warfare, community, mission, discernment, and embracing God's will for our lives. I'm so excited about the amazing work God is doing in and through college students right now. I hope this resource is a blessing to everyone involved in that transition.

With all my heart,  
Michelle





by Michelle Saladino

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GOING TO COLLEGE



## The Lost Are Saved

**“What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.”**

**-Matthew 16:26–27 (NIV)**

George had been running from God his whole life. His father worked for the government as a tax collector and by the age of 10 George began stealing money from him. At 14, he was heavily drinking and gambling; in fact, the night his mother died, he was out getting drunk and walking around intoxicated on the streets. When he was 16, he was put in jail for a month on account of fraud.<sup>1</sup> By the time George was college-bound, he was troubled, reeling from the pain of his choices and the loss of his mother, and had little to no desire for God.

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<sup>1</sup> Faith Coxe Bailey, *George Mueller: He Dared to Trust God for the Needs of Countless Orphans* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1958), 7.

When he arrived at college, George made a friend named Beta, who, like him, was no stranger to lying and cheating. One night, though, Beta sheepishly decided to invite George to a prayer meeting he had started attending. George mockingly agreed to attend the meeting mostly out of curiosity and disbelief that his friend would dare attend a prayer meeting.

While there, George saw a man kneel down to pray and was so moved, so overcome with the reality of a living God, that all the sin in the world and all the emptiness he felt began to fade into the background and a hunger for knowing God began to well up inside of him. For the first time in a long time, he felt joy.

On the walk home from the meeting with Beta, he told him, "...all our former pleasures, are as nothing in comparison with this evening." George, recollecting what happened that evening when he got home, wrote about it saying, "Whether I fell on my knees when I returned home I do not remember; but this I know, that I lay peaceful and happy in my bed. This shows that the Lord may begin his work in different ways. For I have not the least doubt that on that evening He began a work of grace in me, though I obtained joy without any deep sorrow of heart, and with scarcely any knowledge. But that evening was the turning point in my life. The next day, and Monday, and once or twice besides, I went again to the house of this brother, where I read the Scriptures with him and another brother; for it was too long for me to wait until Saturday came again."<sup>2</sup>

George was never the same after that meeting. Although he struggled to let go of a few sinful habits right away, he gave his life to Christ and began to slowly and steadily see change in his heart,

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<sup>2</sup> "George Müller's Testimony," published December 24, 2017, <https://www.georgemuller.org/devotional/george-mullers-testimony>. Accessed March 23, 2021.

behaviors, thoughts, and desires. After ten years of darkness, filled with every arrow Satan could throw at this young man—sickness, grief, broken family relationships, heartbreak, addiction, and harmful friendships—George, at last, surrendered his life to Jesus Christ. Furthermore, not long after his conversion, God began to give him great hope and further direction for his life and calling in missions and social reform.

George was used by God to bring lasting, societal change to England's care of orphans in the nineteenth century: housing, educating, feeding, teaching the Bible, and training thousands of children from the streets of Bristol. George's change of heart resulted in redemption, hope, and courage to trust God in all things—especially finances—and all of this began in his college years.

Perhaps you are opening this booklet and can relate with much of the brokenness George experienced in his life before Christ and college. Perhaps you have lost a parent or a dear family member, are overwhelmed with grief and isolation, come from a broken home, are struggling with a sexual addiction, are lonely, and/or are struggling with depression and anxiety. George experienced many of these sorrows and numbed the pain of his childhood and teenage years with substances and broken relationships.

But God wasn't absent, and He wasn't done with George. His transition into college was a time where God broke into his life, and he was transformed and filled with joy.

Remember, Satan is our enemy and wants us to believe we can never change, we are too far gone, our circumstances are too sad or too grave, our sin is too great for God's forgiveness, and our brokenness too deep for healing. But George's life stands out as a

beacon of hope—he was blind and lost, but in college, he encountered the living God and could finally see.

As you begin this big transition in your life, God wants to awaken you to see and trust in Him in a new and fresh way. What God has done in the past for others in these precious years of college, he is willing to do again in you.

There will never be another George Mueller, but there are many more awakenings to come in the hearts and lives of college students like George—if you will open your heart, it can happen for you. What God can heal, shift, and instill in your life in these years, can first and foremost change you, bringing joy and salvation that no one can ever take away. And like George, God will give you direction, a future, and a hope that can and will touch a generation, a nation, and even a world in desperate need of hope, healing, and the salvation that Christ offers.



## Practical Tip from George

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“It is certain that we children of God are so abundantly blessed in Jesus, by the grace of God, that we ought to need no stimulus to good works. The forgiveness of our sins, the having been made forever the children of God, the having before us the Father’s house as our home;—these blessings ought to be sufficient motives to constrain us in love and gratitude to serve God abundantly all the days of our life, and cheerfully also to give up, as he may call for it, that with which he has intrusted [sic] us of the things of this world.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> George Müller, *The Autobiography of George Muller* (Louisville, KY: GLH Publishing, 2015), 210-211.



# Meditation

**“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”**

**-Ephesians 2:1–5 (NIV)**

1. What stood out to you about George Mueller’s story and life?
2. How can you relate with the above passage of Scripture?
3. If you have never committed your life to Christ, what is holding you back? Is there anyone you can talk to about salvation? What practical steps will you take to get to that person this week?



# Scripture Reading

## Acts 9:1-31

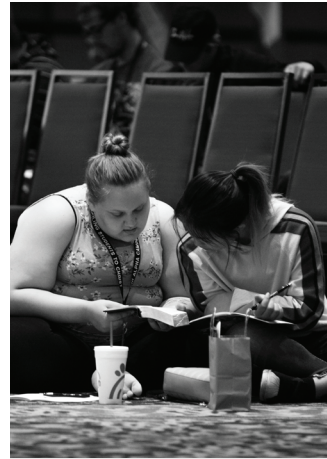
1. There were a lot of supernatural things that happened in this passage of Scripture. Which one stands out to you the most and why?
2. What does Paul's conversion experience reveal about the grace of God? What was he like before coming to Christ? Are there any other Scriptures that tell us about his past in the New Testament?
3. Describe a time in your life when you knew God was pursuing you and helped you overcome a specific behavior, mindset, or difficult season of your life with His love and truth.
4. Take some time to skim the passage of Scripture again. What were some of the actions Paul took after his encounter with Jesus that demonstrated the genuineness of his newfound faith and devotion to Christ?
5. After Paul was converted, he spent time with other believers; he always had a brother in Christ with him when he went on his journeys. What does this reveal about the importance of mentorship/discipleship and brotherhood/sisterhood?





## Engage

Pray and ask God if there is a specific person who could meet with you once a week or month to teach you more about the Bible. Ask them to share from their life some lessons about their faith journey. Think about how you could approach them in the next few weeks.





# John

## Believe with Your Heart

**“Trust is the lifeblood of faith—there is no saving faith without it! The Puritans were accustomed to explain faith by the word, ‘recumbency.’ You know what it means. You see me leaning upon this rail, leaning with all my weight upon it—even thus, lean upon Christ! It would be a better illustration, still, if I were to stretch myself at full length and rest my whole person upon a rock, lying flat upon it. Fall flat upon Christ! Cast yourself upon Him, rest in Him, and commit yourself to Him! That done, you have exercised saving faith.”<sup>4</sup>**

John struggled with the gospel concepts of faith and grace coming into college. John grew up in a Christian family, belonged to a church community, and knew a lot about Christ—living both ethically and morally. Entering college, he was determined to continue down this “narrow way.” He and his friends “visited inmates of the prisons and work-houses of Oxford. They took pity on the slum children of the city, providing them with food, clothing, and

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4 Charles Spurgeon, “Sermon No. 1609: Faith—What Is It? How Can It Be Obtained?,” Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington, July 17, 1881.

education. They observed Saturday as the Sabbath as well as Sunday. They went to church and to Holy communion. They gave alms, searched the Scriptures, fasted and prayed.”<sup>5</sup> Moreover, he even joined his brother’s campus ministry (called the Holy Club by some non-Christians).

He followed all the rules and did all the right things, but it wasn’t until he went on a mission trip that he finally came to understand the gospel for himself and receive it by faith.

You see, John’s Gospel wasn’t deep; it had only made it to his head, not his heart. He needed to move from knowing to believing that the shed blood of Christ was enough to make him a child of God, endue him with Christ’s righteousness, and save him from hell—regardless of his good works, fears, and failures.

When John finally entered into Christ’s offer of forgiveness and identified with His life, death, and resurrection he found the freedom to act because of God’s grace, instead of out of fear or habit. John’s life was forever changed.

He wrote in his own journal, “In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”<sup>6</sup>

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5 John Stott, *The Message of Galatians (Bible Speaks Today)* (Leicester, IVP Academic, 1968), 109.

6 “John Wesley: Methodical Pietist,” *Christianity Today*, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/denominationalfounders/john-wesley.html>. Accessed March 23, 2021.

At last, John was able to receive God's free gift of salvation by grace, through faith! Ephesians 2:8–9 (NIV) states, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” John had lived in bondage to good works, hoping they would save him, but when he finally put his trust in Christ's finished work on the Cross, his actions came from a place of freedom, obedience, and joy.

Later, he went on to help lead a national revival and awakening in England and North America, founded a denomination, and spearheaded many social reforms of his day, including the abolition of slavery.



## Practical Tip from John

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If John Wesley was alive today, his question to us would likely be, “Do you trust in Christ alone for salvation? Or are you trusting in your own good works to save you and make you righteous before him?” Trust in Christ and Christ alone for your salvation.

The greatest mistake we will ever make in college is not to get drunk at a party, pick the wrong friends, or agree with an atheist professor. The ultimate error is to believe we are saved and righteous before God because of our own efforts.

Ask Christ to give you a revelation of grace, not as a license to sin, but as His almighty power that teaches us to say no to sin and yes to all that is good, true, and beautiful in Him on our future campuses. Remember, “We don’t do good works in order to experience salvation; it’s because of our salvation that we do good works.”<sup>7</sup>

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7 Dr. Kara E. Powell and Brad M. Griffin, *Sticky Faith: 10 Lessons to Nurture Faith Beyond High School* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 17.



# Meditation

“You can learn all about the physics of flight, know which airlines have the safest record, pick the best craft to fly in, reserve your flight, drive to the airport, go to the gate, double check the cockpit crew’s credentials. But it does no good unless you get on the plane.

“Knowledge alone won’t get you anywhere. You have to act on what you know. You have to climb aboard the airplane, trusting it’ll take you where you want to go.’ Similarly, it’s not enough to know all about Christianity. You can study until you’re the expert, go to church, even get involved in ministry, and not have a relationship with Christ. You finally have to take a step of faith and ‘get on board’ by receiving the forgiveness He purchased on the Cross and entrusting your life and future to Him. That’s what it means to become a real Christian.”<sup>8</sup>

1. What stood out to you about John’s story and tip?
2. In what ways can you relate to the aviation illustration of faith in Christ?
3. Why is it so important that we do not mistake the knowledge of/or good works for Christ as our ticket to salvation?

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Sohn, “Four Compelling Illustrations to Share the Gospel,” January 6, 2013, <https://paulsohn.org/4-compelling-illustrations-to-share-the-gospel-to-your-unbelieving-friend/>.



# Scripture Reading

1. Read Romans 3:27–28, Romans 4:5, Ephesians 2:8–9, Hebrews 11:1 (or all of Hebrews 11), and John 3:16–18. How do these Scriptures help us understand saving faith?
2. Read Ephesians 1:13, Titus 2:11–14, Ezekiel 36:26, and James 2:20. What are the evidences of saving faith in our lives?
3. Read Luke 15:11–2. In what ways was the second son as lost as the first one? What perspectives did he have about his father that were false, what blessings was he taking for granted, and what may have caused him not to have compassion or empathy for his brother?
4. Which son can you relate to more in this season of your life and why?
5. Overall, how is the story of the Prodigal Son (Sons) a picture of the gospel and gospel principles, such as grace, faith, forgiveness, and redemption?



## Engage

Think about any questions you have about the gospel and write them down. Begin reading the Gospel of John this week and month. Write down how God answers some of those questions through this gospel.

Pray about who you could share the gospel with this week or next in school. Start with your testimony and share some of the Scriptures you reviewed this week.







## Being Present in God's Story

**"It's better to live as you will want to have lived,  
rather than spend your time worrying about the end.  
You are right here in your story. Don't skip ahead."**

**-S.D. Smith, *Ember Falls*<sup>9</sup>**

I once attended a writing workshop that S.D. Smith, a famous children's author, was giving. He talked about how some young people are waiting for the next thing to happen and are anxious to skip ahead with thoughts like, "Well, when I am 18, I will finally get to do this or that. I will finally get to live my life." It can be so easy to feel like we aren't making a difference now and to be always waiting for "our moment," but that is a clever trap. God makes it clear that no matter how young we are, we have a part to play right now in His story.

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<sup>9</sup> S.D. Smith, *Ember Falls (The Green Ember Series: Book II)* (Dexter: Story Warren Books, 2016), 7.

Two of the biggest things we can do to show up are to learn to listen to God's voice and make time to encounter Him in our everyday lives. God is raising up a mighty generation who is present in their story, understanding they are part of an ongoing battle, an epic tale of redemption that culminates with the return of King Jesus.

Jill, a homeschooler, was eager to grow with God and participate in what He was doing in her college years. She wasn't hanging back waiting for "real life" to begin, and what she found when she showed up day after day changed everything. She says:

I'm a lifer—you know, one of those awkward kids that went through the jean jumper phase, the painfully shy phase, the super-nerd phase. Actually, you might be glad to know that none of my hallmates knew I was homeschooled for most of the first semester of college; apparently, I did a pretty good job of being "normal," having a social life, and generally flying under the radar.

Growing up as a Christian homeschooler wasn't always easy. There was a lot of pressure to be a good kid, do all the right things, have all the right answers, etc. I didn't perceive my parents as being super strict—though now I realize that's so relative—but the culture all around me was rife with unrealistic expectations.

I was a normal kid who wanted to be loved and approved but had an abnormally high value for justice and truth, culminating in a classic stereotype—the goody-two-shoes. I had quite a few close friends by the time I graduated, but I always felt a little on the fringe, like I couldn't find other people who wanted Jesus more than they wanted anything or anyone else. Eventually I decided to go to a big state college, instead of a Christian school like many of my peers, because I wanted to "let my little light shine" and was

totally tired of the evangelism guilt that comes from being told you should share your faith but not having any non-Christian friends.

While going to school wasn't a shock to the system in most of the ways I was expecting, it was still a huge shift. Tough classes, roommate issues, and struggling to find healthy food choices were just a few of the challenges from that first year.

I also had a hard time finding a group where I could grow in my faith. There were only three other believers on my hall and I quickly discovered that what *they* meant by "believer" and what *I* meant were very different. I went to a bunch of college ministries in the first couple weeks, but it took me a while to find a Bible study with girls who were serious about Jesus and learning how to follow Him with their whole hearts.

While I was definitely growing with God and my personal time with Him was rich and fertile, it was my junior year that stands out as a major turning point. That fall, I went to England for a study abroad program and, while I was there, I encountered the Holy Spirit and the presence of God in very real and tangible ways. God spoke to me personally and specifically, and I was really drawn in by my church's commitment to loving the lost, knowing and believing the Word of God, and working together as a body. I was devastated to have to return home when the semester was over.

Fortunately, God had a plan. While I had no real frame of reference for the supernatural experiences I had in England, a friend from my Bible study did. I quickly realized that the depression and the struggle I felt every time I came back to campus after a refreshing stint at home or with old friends was spiritual. After being in England and learning

so much more about the spiritual realm, I realized the area around my school was under a very heavy spiritual oppression; I just hadn't had the understanding to recognize it or the language to describe it. Back in the second semester of my freshman year, I had found that verbally putting on the armor of God before I started my day made a big difference in the atmosphere around me—now I understood why.

Fast forward a few years, and I found myself working as a missionary associate with Chi Alpha Campus Ministries where I got to take my understanding of spiritual warfare, prayer, Bible study, and discipleship to a whole new level. My understanding of the Holy Spirit gained a thousand new facets. I experienced healing from old hurts. I (awkwardly and hesitantly, at first) led prayer meetings and Bible studies, preached, taught classes, and got to work with students to help them engage in their own story.

I learned and grew, and my growing pains were generously tended to. God used Chi Alpha to change my life, and I will never be the same.



## Practical Tip from Jill

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Disengagement and homesickness can be just as poisonous as rebellion and partying, if far more subtle. It's hard work to find friends who share your faith, a church community where you belong, and ministry where you can serve, especially if you already had those things at home.

It's even easier to slip into this trap if you're thinking of college as a checklist item to get to the next thing, instead of a season where God wants to challenge and refine you. The enemy knows you have some incredible opportunities to grow in self-awareness, God awareness, and to leave a legacy of discipleship and power that will have ripple effects well beyond your stay.

So be present, don't leave for home every weekend, press into your relationships with God and His family, reach out to people who don't know Him, and make time to serve. Stretching yourself is hard, but if you're willing to engage, God might just change your life forever.



## Meditation

1. What stood out to you about Jill's story and tip?
2. What are some hurdles (mindsets, behaviors, or fears) you are currently facing that are preventing you from being fully present and engaged in all God has for you right now with Him and with those around you?



# Scripture Reading

## Matthew 26:36–46

1. The disciples struggled to be present in this very important moment with Christ. What was holding them back?
2. What opportunities were missed because of their choice to sleep instead of pray?
3. In what ways can you relate to Jesus' words to the disciples, "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak?" How has prayer helped you overcome temptation and stay present and engaged in what Christ has called you to do in the past?
4. Jill grew in her understanding of spiritual warfare and in her prayer life in college, but this does not just happen. She had an encounter with Christ that spurred her on and a friend that helped bring clarity. Who are the friends or mentors that can encourage you in your prayer life in this season? How can you ask them for more help in the area of prayer?
5. Read Ephesians 6:10–18. What does this passage address about the importance of prayer as it relates to spiritual warfare? Why will growing and becoming more disciplined in prayer be important for the days ahead?



## Engage

What are some practical ways prayer can be incorporated into your day now, so that you are already in this rhythm when you head to college?

Are there any prayer journals or other resources that could help in this area?

Talk with your pastor, youth pastor, parents, or mentor for some ideas in this area and accountability to keep you moving forward in prayer.







## Choosing Community

**“Transitions have been described as trapeze acts: in the same way a swinging trapeze artist grips a rung with one hand as he reaches out to the next, we too have one hand on the past as we reach out for the future. At some point, though, we have to fully engage that far rung. If we keep gripping tightly with both hands to the rung of our past, we will eventually lose our grip and fall. As we maintain connection with the past, we must also learn to build real community in the present. We need to swing with the momentum of the transition, so we soar in our new location and beyond.”<sup>10</sup>**

Years ago, I watched a documentary on elephants. They are truly amazing animals and are so dependent on each other for life and survival. The entire herd cares for their young, eats, drinks, and moves together. One of the only times an elephant is

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<sup>10</sup> Erica Young Reitz, *After College: Navigating Transitions, Relationships, and Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 85.

vulnerable to being picked off as prey is when they are young and alone. Other than that, is it hard to get an elephant down—literally.

The Bible describes Satan like a ferocious lion looking for prey to pick off. You may be young, but you don't have to experience college alone. Being intentional about connecting deeply with a community that will support and challenge us in our faith provides a layer of protection that is only found in relationships with others.

Sometimes, though, we come into college with some baggage around the ideas of community, belonging, and identity from the past. Even if that is your experience, we have to learn to “fall forward,” choosing to engage with the body of Christ for our growth and survival. Whether you had a fantastic or terrible experience with Christians in your church, youth group, or family, college brings new opportunities for lifelong friendships and growth in your identity as a child of God. Ultimately, it's your choice to seek out those opportunities.

Rachel was able to use her past experiences as a pastor's kid (PK), her knowledge of the Bible, her understanding of the gifts of the Spirit, and the tough times of loneliness and rejection to swing her forward right into the arms of God and a great community that both accepted and challenged her. Because she engaged, she was able to lift many students up, share the gospel, and be on mission, all the while allowing God to heal her from past wounds of rejection. She writes:

I grew up as a PK. I was Mary in the children's musical when I was about 5 years old. I sang in the choir until I was in high school, I helped set up and tear down events; I came early, stayed late, cleaned up—you name it, I did it from an early age. There

were aspects I *loved* about being a PK and things that I was not so fond of. I loved knowing people, getting to grab soda and candy from the church office, going to PKMK (pastors' kids/missionaries' kids) retreats, and learning how a church worked. I was not too happy about not being allowed to win raffles or competitions, my dad having to work on my birthday, stories told about me from the pulpit (well, it depended on the story), and having the pressure to be a good example. But overall, I loved my childhood.

Thankfully, my dad was very good at setting boundaries and balancing his home and work life, and both him and my mom were very active in displaying the gifts of the Spirit at home. My mom would anoint my sister and I with oil and my dad would speak in tongues while walking around in the house in the morning!

As lovely as my home life was and as popular as my name and face were at church, I was never more aware of my PKness than during school hours. I was in public school all the way through high school, and while it gave me a lot of opportunities to share my faith, depend on and have a real friendship with Jesus, and come to appreciate diversity of all kinds, it also was a battleground where I suffered from feelings of loneliness, bullying, and not fitting in.

I was an extremely bold little girl. I would tell other kids my age about the lake of fire, Jesus, and the cross. I admit explaining the lake of fire to other 6-year-olds was not the wisest move and may have added to the not-fitting-in thing, but I was not going to tone it down for anyone.

I remember all my friends watching *That's So Raven* and reading *Harry Potter* and I was never allowed to watch those shows or read those books. My classmates called me sheltered, claimed I lived under a rock, and made fun of me—it was difficult.

Middle school and high school continued to test my faith and identity. In high school, I remember telling a girl in my biology class that I was a PK and she responded with, “Shouldn’t you be in rebellion?” To which I responded, “I don’t think so.” She had placed a label on me, and if you are a PK or MK out there reading this, I bet you might have had this presumption or label placed on you. Our world today is quick to try to fit you into a box where they can understand you. Because I was a PK, my school friends—and sometimes even my church friends—thought I needed to rebel and push back against my family.

But that’s foolishness. Yes, I remember some frustration with my parents’ rules or guidelines, but I also knew that they loved me. The Holy Spirit placed wisdom in my heart to accept their leadership and authority in my life. They knew what was best for me; I found safety and freedom in my parents and youth leaders’ direction, counsel, training, and teaching. When your parents set boundaries, limitations on your media and digital devices, and question your friendship choices, it’s love, they are not trying to keep good things from you. I am so grateful that this understanding was placed in my heart at a young age and during such testy years.

But by far one of the greatest gifts I received as a PK, which I did not appreciate as much before I came to college, was all the Bible teaching my dad, mom, and church friends instilled in me. By the time I was a senior in high school, I really started to read and study the Bible for myself. I found it so easy because I had the foundation from my upbringing in church. Reading the Bible helped me learn how to discern God’s will for my life and hear His voice. God even spoke to me about which university to attend!

I did my best to prepare for the transition; I prayed a lot and asked friends for advice. All the advice had a

similar ring for me: plug into Christian community right away. That didn't solely mean finding a local church, it meant a Christian club or organization on campus too. I looked up what the university had to offer and found there were a lot of options! I was familiar with Chi Alpha—my sister had joined when she went to college, so I decided I would check it out first.

During my first week on campus, I went to one of Chi Alpha's events and immediately felt at home. I looked around and saw how welcoming and kind the students were and knew I needed to stay. So many of them talked to me about Christ with such courage, boldness, and depth. They seemed solid in their identity in Christ and for me that was huge. As a PK, my identity was often conflicted; I knew Jesus, I knew I was God's daughter, but I still struggled with wondering if I was pleasing to God outside of my family standing.

I soon met a girl named Alyssa and joined her Bible study. After that, my faith skyrocketed! I would get up early and read my Bible, my prayer life grew, and the way that I worshiped deepened. My sophomore year through my senior year I co-led a Bible study full of women.

Over those years, I was discipled and discipled other women. I was no longer lonely and rejected. I was accepted into a community I could call my own and I was steadfast in my faith. I graduated with the best friends of my life, in deeper relationship with Christ, and having left a legacy in the lives of others I helped disciple.



## Practical Tip from Rachel

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Commit—first, before you go to college, commit to honoring the Lord with your college years and to finding a Christ-loving community.

Second, once you are on campus and have been to different events, commit to a community. This may sound redundant, but finding a community is different than committing to a community. Finding a community does not demand something of you and you can stay on the fringes without going deep. Committing to a community means that you will have to sacrifice for a group of people and push out of your comfort zone to really be a contributor and not just a consumer.

Remember, as part of worship to God and your survival, you need community and it will require that you assert yourself to look for it and commit.



# Meditation

1. What stood out to you about Rachel's story and tip? How can you relate?
2. How is God teaching you to value Christian community and commit to it now?



# Scripture Reading

## **Acts 2:42-47**

1. What was this community devoted to?
2. Which of these spiritual disciplines are you wanting to grow in the most in this season of your life? Which one(s) are you walking in steadfastly?
3. What was the attitude and heart behind this community of believers? How do you think their sincerity, devotion, and joy helped add to the number of people who got saved and joined their community?
4. In what ways do you anticipate college will present new opportunities for day-to-day interaction with Christians? How can you use this access to Christian community as a swing to propel you forward in your relationship with Christ?





## Engage

There can be a decent amount of spiritual warfare that attempts to prevent Christians and non-Christians from enjoying the company of believers. Have you found it difficult lately to consistently show up to youth group, church gatherings, Bible studies, worship services, and other get-togethers with Christian community?

Ask God to help show you when it is spiritual and how to press through, so you can more consistently enjoy the community of believers around you. Talk with your mentor, parents, pastors, or friends about how they can help you get around Christian community on a more consistent basis.





## A Man with a Mission

**“As they say, light often shines brightest in the darkest of environments. As a Christian in a vastly non-Christian college culture, take heart—you’ve been blessed with a unique opportunity to shine the light of Christ to an area in our culture that might as well be considered one of the darkest, most unreached mission fields there is.”<sup>11</sup>**

The university is perhaps one of the most strategic mission fields in the world. Think about it: thousands of students live within a mile or two from all over the globe—some of the most elite in each of their societal backgrounds within an arm’s length of you.

To enter this season of life thinking solely of your academic goals and aspirations, your personal freedom, and who you are going to date and marry, is to sorely miss out on one of the greatest missions adventures you will ever get to be on. You may

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<sup>11</sup> Austin Gentry, *10 Things Every Christian Should Know for College: A Student’s Guide on Doubt, Community, and Identity*, (Gentry Publishing, 2018), 107.

have never thought about missions, been on a missions trip, or had the opportunity in your school background to be among so much diversity—ethnically, spiritually, and socioeconomically—but you are here now, and God has a very specific plan for you.

C.T. Studd's signature statement on evangelism has resonated with missional believers for decades now, "Some wish to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell."

Studd was highly educated, came from a wealthy home, and was an extremely gifted cricket player. He eventually attended Trinity College at the University of Cambridge, and came to the understanding that being on mission was far more satisfying than playing cricket. He began to use his gift of athletics and rhetoric to lead his team to Christ and eventually joined six other students from Cambridge who all felt called to missions as students, becoming known as one of the Cambridge Seven.<sup>12</sup>

After college, he gave everything to missions. When his father died, he was already in China doing the work to which he felt called; he inherited a large sum of money, which he gave away to evangelists, missionaries, and orphans.<sup>13</sup> Studd truly believed in losing his life to gain something greater, using his academic training, athletic gifts, and wealth for God's glory in China and around the world. But it was in his college years that God gripped his heart for the lost world around him.

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<sup>12</sup> Anthony B. Wong, "Cambridge Seven Report-Missionary Biographies-Worldwide Missions," <https://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/bcambridge7.html>. Accessed March 23, 2021.

<sup>13</sup> Stephen Ross, "Missionary Biographies and Adventures: C.T. Studd Cricketer and Pioneer," <https://www.wholesomewords.org/children/bio/cc/biostuddcc.html>. Accessed March 23, 2021.

Luke, like Studd, came from a strong academic background, a solid family, and was a gifted athlete. Luke was able to understand that his foundation and giftedness was strategic, preparing him to be on mission at his university. Here's a look at his story:

I went to a small private, Christian school from pre-K until I graduated high school. When I was looking into college, I honestly had no desire to continue going to a Christian school. Not because I had a bad experience or that I did not want to do the Christian thing any more, but because I wanted to have my faith challenged and be in an atmosphere where the prevailing culture was not all Christian. I viewed the fifteen years I was at the small private Christian school as a bubble, and that idea was affirmed by my friends who went to public school.

I cannot deny that I was exposed to fewer temptations and less availability of the typical things that people think of in high school and, unfortunately, when I graduated, I saw this as a hindrance in many ways, like I had been robbed of the chance to grow stronger through trials. Now, looking back, I see that my experience was less of a bubble and more of a fortress to prepare for a battle ahead. I was given an opportunity to safely learn about the Lord, build a strong biblical foundation, ask questions, and grow stronger in my faith.

Many times, I heard at my high school in a cautionary way, that eight out of every ten Christians in high school lose their faith in college! As a high schooler who certainly considered himself a Christian, I did not know what to make of this statistic. However, being the stubborn and driven person I am, I was sure that I would beat the odds even though I was not aware of the battle ahead.

When I arrived on campus that first week, there was an awesome and wild sense of freedom. At the beginning of a semester everything is vying for your attention. There are clubs all over the place and Greek life all attempting to help you find your place. College truly is unique in the fact that whatever your heart desires, good or bad, can be found all in one place.

I knew that I wanted to find a campus ministry to join as soon as I could, so I went to everything I could find that the ministries on campus were doing. Cookouts, ice cream socials, parties, worship nights, and more. But there was something that was different about Chi Alpha. The events were fun, yet they refused to settle for just a fun event and the people there were intentional about talking about Jesus.

It would not be long after the first weeks of school that I decided I would commit to this ministry. From there, I would love to say that the rest is history, and everything was perfect the day I found my community, but it wasn't.

When you get involved in a community of believers there are imperfect people, and imperfect people often butt heads and hurt people's feelings. For me, in that first semester of college, I was involved but stayed apathetic in many ways toward really being a contributor. I went to most events, but never made people a priority, especially if it was inconvenient or I thought I had something better to do. This is not how community is meant to work, but often how I had seen it work in middle and high school.

Over the next few years, God began to grip my heart and mind and challenge me to think and live beyond myself, my needs, my time, and my interests. By staying plugged into the imperfect community I was part of (mic drop, there is no such thing as a "perfect" Christian church or campus ministry), and

not allowing the spiritual warfare, irritations, or my prideful thinking that I could do it better alone or with different campus ministry to dissuade me, God began to change my mindset about community and mission.

I began to take my knowledge of what it looked like to love my neighbor and actually live it out. I didn't have to do it alone; I was encouraged by other believers, I had mentors challenge me, and I had a church and campus ministry where I could bring the people I was sharing the gospel with.

I also started taking the initiative in my dorm and asking people to hang out on the weekends instead of settling for Friday and Saturday night in my dorm doing nothing. Anthony, my campus pastor, used to always say, "Why do anything alone that you can do with other people?" This mindset is a challenge. It's not natural or easy, but it is worth it.

I started asking my non-Christian friends to play sports with me, work out, come to my Bible studies; I began to eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner with them. All my training in my formative years back at my small Christian school really began to come into play as I led Bible studies with my campus ministry, did evangelism outreaches, and prayed with students.

My senior year there was a guy who joined my small group Bible study from the first week. He was a junior and was not a Christian, but he loved to be in community. We were intentional about inviting him to things and he accepted nearly every invitation. He belonged to our group and, while people may not admit it, everyone just wants a place where they belong.

I remember one night we went to a restaurant after a worship service, and sitting there with shakes at 1:00 a.m., he began to cry. He explained that coming into

the year he was living like many students: smoking, drinking, going out, etc. But being a part of our group and experiencing the love those guys shared had helped him to say no to all that. He said he felt like a completely different person. Within the next couple of weeks, he gave his life to Jesus during a response time at our large group service and hasn't been the same since!

by Michelle Saladino

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GOING TO COLLEGE



## Practical Tip from Luke

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Be courageous. Don't be afraid to share your life and faith with people and go do activities and things that you have never tried before. Use your Christian community for momentum with the lost, not to isolate you from non-Christians. Take your Christian friends with you to engage with non-Christians.

Don't be afraid to be the one who initiates hang-outs and events. You want to go on a hike, or go to lunch in your favorite dining hall? Text someone you have met and invite them. Afraid you do not know them well enough? I can guarantee you will know them way better after spending a day with them doing something fun.

We too often fear rejection and allow it to stop us from taking risks. Everyone is feeling that in college, so be the one to break the ice. It's worth it. You never know who you will rescue because you were willing to be uncomfortable, take risks, and be on mission.





# Meditation

1. In what ways can you relate to Luke's story?
2. How does Luke's tip encourage or challenge you?
3. Describe a time when someone reached out to you in your time of need. What did it mean to you? How did it impact your understanding of Christ and Christianity? How did it encourage or challenge you in your own faith?



# Scripture Reading

## Matthew 10:1-39

1. Re-read verses 7-8. What does it mean to give freely that which you have received?
2. In what ways have you been on the receiving end of someone who is giving to you from a place of joy and freedom, whether it be their finances, time, spiritual wisdom, friendship, or material goods, like food? How did it impact your understanding of Jesus and what His Kingdom is like?
3. Of all of Jesus' commands and His advice to His disciples, which one stands out to you the most and why?
4. In what ways are you bringing God's Kingdom and mission to your friendships, teams, extra-curricular activities, and families now?
5. Re-read verses 19, 29-30. How does Jesus' knowledge of us and care for us motivate our mission and make a difference in the way we interact with non-Christians?



# Engage

Re-read verses 37–39. What does “counting the cost” and “losing your life for Christ” look like now at home, school, and in extracurricular activities? In what ways will you have to count the cost to be committed to a local church and campus ministry when you head off to college? How will you have to count the cost to stay missional and not get too comfortable?

Jot down in your journal or notes what comes to mind right off the bat. Take some time this week to find out from a graduate in your church community what it looked like for them to “count the cost” while they were in college.





## The Importance of Discernment

**“But college is a season in which you can—and must—really take ownership of your faith. You can’t truly grow in the Christian life on borrowed faith, and most find college to be a season in which their Christian faith is put to test.”<sup>14</sup>**

Our culture is teeming with many different worldviews—what we each believe and how we make sense of our world. As a high school student, there is a good chance you have already experienced a variety of belief systems through your teachers, classmates, sports teams, and friends. In college, you will meet students and professors that hold just about every belief system you can think of, and chances are, you will be challenged. But take heart, God is not afraid of doubts, questions, and skepticism; for centuries, He has been turning the

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<sup>14</sup> Alex Chediak, *Thriving at College: Make Great Friends, Keep Your Faith, and Get Ready for the Real World!* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2011), 3. Accessed March 23, 2021.

greatest skeptics into the greatest apologists in the university setting! He can use the momentum of the big feelings, doubts, and questions we have to bring great peace, hope, and reassurance in our faith. We have to be honest with ourselves and others and get to the root of our questions, doubts, and skepticism to strengthen our faith in Christ and to do this, we will need discernment.

Are the intellectual concerns that have been posed to us, either those that spring from our own mind and heart or those we hear from others, rooted in preferences (what we wish was true or would like to be true) or are they rooted in a hunger for truth? Austin Gentry notes in his book:

“...the mantra of college is, ‘Follow your heart, and change your doctrine if necessary.’” But the Bible says, ‘Follow my Word, and your heart will change accordingly.’ No doubt, it can be easier to hide behind what you want to believe than it is to be convinced of what is actually true. In many areas, college students will have a tendency to alleviate the tension between what they want versus what they’ve been taught by getting rid of their Christian belief system...so that they can more fully enjoy [their] preferences. Indeed, it’s much easier to adopt a set of intellectual objections on the mental level (even if you aren’t totally convinced one way or another) than it is to wrestle with and submit to what Christianity requires on the heart level.”<sup>15</sup>

Christ calls us to follow Him with our all or not at all. This kind of commitment includes embracing Scripture and a lifestyle that our world opposes and even mocks. Christ said that He is the way, the truth, and the life and that the truth will set you free

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15 Austin Gentry, *10 Things Every Christian Should Know for College: A Student's Guide on Doubt, Community, and Identity*, (Gentry Publishing, 2018), 49-50.

(John 8:32, John 14:6). In essence, our freedom and victory are truly found in Him and His Word, not in how we wish or feel truth should look like. So take courage. God will give you wisdom and discernment to grow in your understanding of His Word as you look at questions, doubts, and skepticism from every angle.

Dr. Sarah Irving-Stonebraker, a senior lecturer at Western Sydney University in Australia, grew up agnostic (not committed to believing in either the existence or nonexistence of God or a god), and was a big thinker with serious questions and doubts about Christianity. God met her in the college library, and her search for truth as well as the questions about Christianity she had begun to be answered by God's grace.

Here is a portion of her testimony:<sup>16</sup>

I grew up in Australia, in a loving, secular home, and arrived at Sydney University as a critic of "religion." I didn't need faith to ground my identity or my values. I knew from the age of eight that I wanted to study history at Cambridge and become a historian. My identity lay in academic achievement, and my secular humanism was based on self-evident truths.

As an undergrad, I won the University Medal and a Commonwealth Scholarship to undertake my Ph.D. in History at King's College, Cambridge. King's is known for its secular ideology and my perception of Christianity fitted well with the views of my fellow students: Christians were anti-intellectual and self-righteous.

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16 Sarah Irving-Stonebraker, "How Oxford and Peter Singer Drove me from Atheism to Jesus," *The Veritas-Forum*, May 22, 2017, <http://www.veritas.org/oxford-atheism-to-jesus/>. Used with permission.

...One afternoon, I noticed that my usual desk in the college library was in front of the Theology section. With an awkward but humble reluctance, I opened a book of sermons by philosopher and theologian Paul Tillich. As I read, I was struck at how intellectually compelling, complex, and profound the gospel was. I was attracted, but I wasn't convinced.

A few months later, near the end of my time at Oxford, I was invited to a dinner for the International Society for the Study of Science and Religion. I sat next to Andrew Briggs, a professor of nanomaterials, who happened to be a Christian. During dinner, Briggs asked me whether I believed in God. I fumbled. Perhaps I was an agnostic?

He responded, "Do you really want to sit on the fence forever?" That question made me realize that if issues about human value and ethics mattered to me, the response that perhaps there was a God, or perhaps there wasn't, was unsatisfactory.

...One Sunday, shortly before my 28th birthday, I walked into a church for the first time as someone earnestly seeking God. Before long, I found myself overwhelmed. At last I was fully known and seen and, I realized, unconditionally loved—perhaps I had a sense of relief from no longer running from God. A friend gave me C.S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*, and one night, after a couple months of attending church, I knelt in my closet in my apartment and asked Jesus to save me, and to become the Lord of my life.

From there, I started a rigorous diet of theology, reading the Bible and exploring theologians such as Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Ramsey, and F.D. Maurice. Christianity, it turned out, looked nothing like the caricature I once held. I found the story of Jacob wrestling with God especially compelling: God wants anything but the unthinking faith I had once

assumed characterized Christianity. God wants us to wrestle with Him; to struggle through doubt and faith, sorrow and hope.

Moreover, God wants broken people, not self-righteous ones. And salvation is not about us earning our way to some place in the clouds through good works. On the contrary; there is nothing we can do to reconcile ourselves to God. As a historian, this made profound sense to me. I was too aware of the cycles of poverty, violence and injustice in human history to think that some utopian design of our own, scientific or otherwise, might save us.

Christianity was also, to my surprise, radical – far more radical than the leftist ideologies with which I had previously been enamored. The love of God was unlike anything which I expected, or of which I could make sense. In becoming fully human in Jesus, God behaved decidedly unlike a god.

Why deign to walk through death's dark valley, or hold the weeping limbs of lepers if you are God? Why submit to humiliation and death on a cross, in order to save those who hate you? God suffered punishment in our place because of a radical love. This sacrificial love is utterly opposed to the individualism, consumerism, exploitation, and objectification of our culture.

Just as radical, I realized, was the new creation which Christ began to initiate. This turned on its head the sentimental caricature of 'heaven' I'd once held as an atheist. I learned that Jesus' resurrection initiated the kingdom of God, which will "bring good news to the poor, release the captives, restore sight to the blind, free the oppressed" (Luke 4:18).

To live as a Christian is a call to be part of this new, radical creation. I am not passively awaiting a place in the clouds. I am redeemed by Christ, so now I have work to do.





# Practical Tip from Author Austin Gentry

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“One healthy way to approach doubt is to treat it in the same way that a miner would screen for gold... To be sure, no good miner immediately accepts all the elements of the soil as gold or immediately dismisses them all not as gold, either. Rather, the miner sifts through all the elements, not allowing any of them to go untouched without careful, meticulous analysis. Similarly, when you are in class, strive to carry an intellectual ‘screen’ around with you. Take it all in, gather it all up. Don’t immediately dismiss anything. But once you’ve taken it all in, don’t let it all pass through. Because all of it is not gold. Sift and sift and sift, leaving no professorial claims or personal doubts untouched...Test it against sources. Hold it up to the light of Scripture. And for each, you have three options: 1) toss it, 2) re-categorize it for further investigation, or 3) get richer in mind, heart, and soul.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Austin Gentry, *10 Things Every Christian Should Know for College: A Student’s Guide on Doubt, Community, and Identity*, (Gentry Publishing, 2018), 59-63.



## Meditation

1. What stood out to you about Sarah's testimony? Are you or someone in your life at a similar place as Sarah was entering college? What are some of the doubts, questions, or skepticism that need to be examined?
2. What about the mining analogy encouraged you in your doubt? Can you describe a time in your life that you were able to "mine" through doubt and get "richer in mind, heart, and soul"?



# Scripture Reading

## 1 Kings 3:1–15, 1 Kings 10:1–10, 1 Peter 3:15

1. From 1 Kings 3:1–15, how does Solomon’s request for understanding and discernment impact you? What do you think you would have asked for in his position?
2. How can you relate Solomon’s new chapter of his life as king to your transition into college?
3. In what ways do you see wisdom, understanding, and discernment playing a role when it comes to doubt and truth?
4. Can you describe a time when God gave you wisdom, understanding, or discernment in how to answer a hard question or interpret a hard question for yourself?
5. From the reading of 1 Kings 10, what was the queen of Sheba looking for and what did she find?
6. How did Solomon’s actions and life impact her?
7. What practical wisdom can we take away from Solomon’s interaction with the queen of Sheba as it relates to engaging people of other worldviews at college?
8. From 1 Peter 3:15, what are we always supposed to be ready to do and how do we do it? Have you ever had someone share their point of view with you in a disrespectful, harsh manner? How did that go? Did it change your mind or feelings on the subject?



## Engage

How can we share our faith and worldview with people in a respectful and gentle way as the Scripture states? What practical steps can we take now to prepare to give people an account for the hope and life we have in Christ? Are there any good articles, books, or podcasts out there that are directed at defending the Christian faith?

Create a plan of how to take some time each week to listen and take notes on what you are learning.





## Embracing God's Dream

**"In the end you must ask yourself, whose dream am I going to follow: mine, my parents', or God's? God's dreams are always bigger and better and more unbelievable."<sup>18</sup>**

While many of us may enter college with a direction for our major, and defined goals, it's not unusual to start questioning—within weeks or months—whether or not we're on the right path. And this feeling of uncertainty isn't limited to studies, of course, a recent-break up, a ghosting friend, or any number of disorienting situations can quickly leave us feeling lost and confused. The good news is, no matter your circumstances, God is not lost or confused. He has a dream for your life that He is committed to revealing and bringing forth.

In the midst of all the changes ahead, one thing can remain constant: your commitment to seeking Jesus and following Him with all your heart. You can be

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<sup>18</sup> Max Lucado, *Let the Journey Begin* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 27.

assured He has a very specific plan for your life and that He is going to use this time to help shape you into who He wants you to be. It might look much different than you expected, but, in the end, there's no question that He has your best in mind.

Partnering with God in His dreams for us starts with a regular habit of spending time with God and listening to what He is saying and doing. It's important for us to hold our ideas and dreams with an open hand if we are going to remain open to hear what He has to say about our future.

Thankfully, when it comes to knowing God's will and following His dream for our life, the Bible is a wonderful guide! Matthew 6:33 states, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Proverbs 3:5–6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." And in 1 Thessalonians 4:3, we read, "For it is God's will that you should be sanctified."

Sometimes we can overcomplicate God's will instead of simply, seeking, trusting, and submitting to what has already been revealed to us. "We feel like we can know—and need to know—what God wants every step of the way. But such preoccupation with finding God's will, as well-intentioned as the desire may be, is more folly than freedom. The better way is the biblical way: Seek first the kingdom of God, and then trust that He will take care of our needs, even before we know what they are and where we're going."<sup>19</sup> God promises to do His part, and we need to do ours: seek, trust, and submit.

Rigo chose to embrace God's plan during his time in college and it changed his life:

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<sup>19</sup> Kevin DeYoung, *Just Do Something: A Liberating Approach to Finding God's Will* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009), 24.

I am originally from Honduras. I grew up in New Orleans, and now serve on staff with Chi Alpha. From the moment my family and I set foot on American soil, my life revolved around the pursuit of the American Dream. I experienced a lot of economic, geographic, and emotional instability growing up. For me, going to a flagship university was my chance to make it big and break that cycle of instability.

After serving on a mission trip with Chi Alpha and feeling like the Lord was putting a burden on my heart for missions, I felt many mixed emotions. I felt joy, a sense of adventure, and a newfound purpose; but, at the same time, I felt dread and fear and many insecurities raised their heads.

I thought to myself, "How could someone like me do this?" Even though I grew up in the church, I didn't exactly see many missionaries that were my color. Most of the missionaries I had experienced were White Americans.

I had all these uncertainties concerning whether I could do this or not. Was this even wise? Was I really going to let go of the American Dream and pursue this dream that I felt God was giving me?

It definitely was a sacrifice letting go of my title, my degree, and my idea of what my future was going to look like, but the Lord has given me a lot of purpose in what I do as a campus minister. I'm able to connect with students through my culture. I'm able to speak in Spanish with Hispanic students. I'm able to lead mission trips to Spanish-speaking nations and connect with people and workers there.

The Lord has called us all to leverage our identities for the kingdom of God and to draw people of every color, every nation, and every tongue into His Kingdom.

In sum, if we believe that God is a good, loving God, why would His dreams be any different for us? When we submit to His perfect will over our lives, we get to truly experience life the way He intended it to be. Living the dream He has for us means living a wonderful life of freedom, adventure, and purpose. Nothing the world offers compares to what only our Heavenly Father offers us!

I encourage you to honestly consider what God might have for you. Spend some time in prayer and reflection asking God to open your heart up to see His dreams for you.



## Practical Tip from Rigo

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Have you been too busy pursuing your own dreams of success, wealth, power, etc.? Are you ready to let go of your dreams to embrace His perfect will?

Over the next four years of college God's plan and purposes will continue to unfold for you as you seek, trust, and submit to Him each day.





# Meditation

“Once an amateur pilot explained to me how airliners are kept on their course by radar. A pilot cannot always see what is coming, particularly in bad weather. At best he can see only about a hundred miles. And yet he can fly his aircraft safely in all weather, because the course is marked out for him by radar. If he deviates either to the right or to the left, the radar warns him accordingly. It is thus that God guides us. Our text does not mean that we shall always be able to see more than one step ahead in our Christian lives. It does not mean that we shall even always be able to see ahead at all. But it does mean that God has a plan for our lives — for your life and mine and that He promises to reveal the steps of that plan to us.”<sup>20</sup>

1. What stood out to you about Rigo’s story and tip?
2. Can you describe a time in your life that reminded you of the airliner analogy in terms of finding and/or remaining in God’s will?

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<sup>20</sup> James Boice, “How to Know the Will of God-The Bible Study Hour with Dr. James Boice,” Focus on the Family, [www.oneplace.com](http://www.oneplace.com). Accessed March 23, 2021.



# Scripture Reading

## Exodus 16:1–36

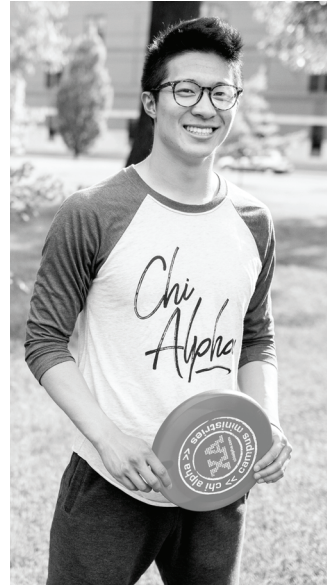
1. What stood out to you about God's work and will in this passage?
2. Cite verses where God declared His plan to His people. What are your thoughts and reactions to His plan? How would you feel if you were on the receiving end of this story as an Israelite?
3. What did God ask of the Israelites in order to receive the blessing of His will and promises?
4. God provided bread daily, exactly what each household and individual needed, but it would spoil by the next morning. In what ways can we relate the gathering of manna to our responsibility to gather our spiritual "bread," daily through His Word?
5. In verse 25, Moses commanded them to eat. Sometimes we gather, we get in the right position to hear from God, seek Him, but we do not eat; we get distracted. In what ways have you been able to overcome the distractions of your cell phone, social media platforms, to-do list, and thoughts to "eat"—or process—what you have gathered each day?
6. Re-read verses 33–36. God called the people to take a few actions to ensure they would remember what He had done in the past. How will you remember all God has done in and through your life in your high school years? Why do you think this will be important moving forward?



## Engage

Is there anyone in your life you should thank and honor for helping you in practical and spiritual ways as a high school student? How do you plan to honor them? Is there a way you can intentionally stay connected to them as you make this transition?

Spend some time over the next month thinking through how to stay in touch with and take some time to thank, ask for support, and honor those God has placed on your heart and mind.











What will take place over these next four to six years will be full of defining moments for you. Intentionality, strategy, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit will be needed more now than ever as you embark on the journey to college. Don't just play defense; get on the offensive and add to your wisdom the knowledge of how to navigate the season with this wonderful resource.

In every transition, we are invited to join God's big story of redemption for the world. Will you join Him by reconciling to Christ personally and calling others to come with you? This book will engage you in many stories of those who have gone before you and have done just that on their campuses! Their stories will bring you courage, wisdom, joy, and insight as you prepare for the road ahead.

## About the Author



Michelle, her husband Anthony, and four children live in the mountains of Southwest Virginia. Michelle has been serving alongside her husband in campus ministry with Chi Alpha for 15 years. Currently they direct at Virginia Tech as well as run a nationally accredited CMIT (Campus Ministry-in-Training) program where they train students for leadership and lifelong service in the market, ministry, and missions.

Michelle enjoys coaching missionaries and ministers, writing resources, teaching, homeschooling her children, and is passionate about discipleship and investing in the next generation.

