

CHI ALPHA INTERNATIONALS

# NAVIGATING YOUR JOURNEY

*A Post-Graduation Guide for  
International Students*





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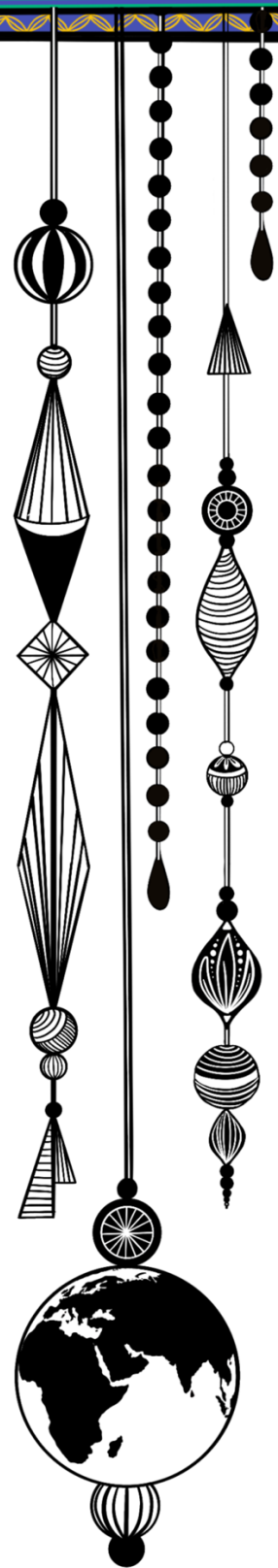
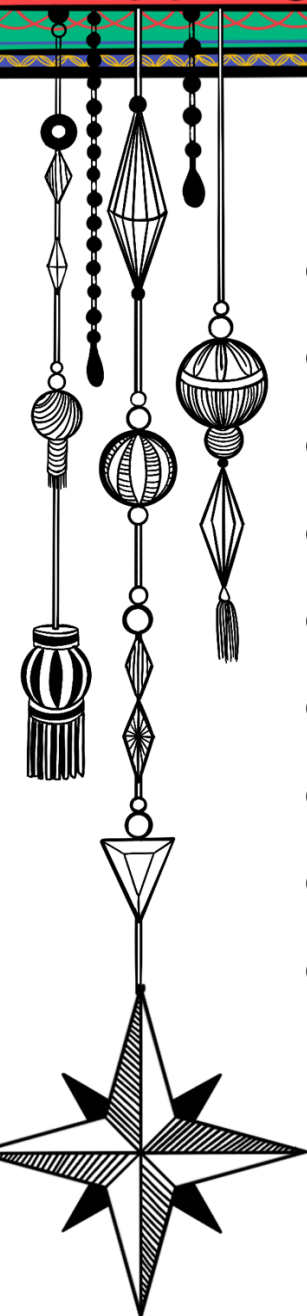
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## **Your Journey Post Chi Alpha**

From the very beginning, God had a purpose for Moses. He tasked Moses with leading the Israelites out of slavery and into the fruitful land He had promised them. During their journey to the promised land, God was their guide. He did not let darkness and bright light distract their eyes from seeing which direction to walk. He was their constant navigator on their journey, guiding them from where they were to where they were going.

**“The Lord went ahead of them. He guided them during the day with a pillar of cloud, and He provided light at night with a pillar of fire. This allowed them to travel by day or by night. And the Lord did not remove the pillar of cloud or pillar of fire from its place in front of the people.”**

**Exodus 13:21-22 NLT**

From the moment Jesus created you to this moment (Ephesians 1:4) and even before you stepped onto the plane to study in the United States, Jesus has a specific purpose for you. Jesus is not a North American idea, nor is your journey post Chi Alpha. He will continue to use you in His kingdom now and wherever He leads you. Just as He appointed Moses, He is appointing you for great things. Just as He guided the Israelites with fire and a cloud, He will be the constant source of direction in your life.

**Your journey post Chi Alpha is the time after your university study, whether you go back home, go to another country, or stay in America. Whether you continue with more study, work in the marketplace, or jump into full-time ministry, Jesus is walking with you and promises to be your guide.**

### **Why Prepare?**

It is important to prepare for your journey post Chi Alpha. Experiences and living in different cultures influence and shape us. As you have lived here in the United States, studying, making memories, and serving Christ, you have become a different person. (Think Home).



“I think one of the most important things when we transition from coming to Christ in a different culture and going back to native culture, it almost feels like you’re neither here nor there. Because you’re not fully American, neither are you fully now the culture you grew up in.” He continues to say, “It’s on me to create this culture of Christ, a cultural understanding of completely filling our lives with Christ and Christianity.”

- Former International Student who returned to India



Life will be different as you move on to new places and opportunities. The external culture will be different. Transition comes with its own set of challenges and experiences. It is vital to process, set realistic expectations, and plan for what is to come and how you will respond and approach the new context where Jesus is leading you. The great news is that you are in God’s culture, which never changes, no matter where you are. What an exciting moment to bring God’s culture into your new external culture!

### **Contextualization**

We know God was the Israelite’s navigator on their journey from Egypt. However, God mightily used someone from Egypt to rescue them. Moses, once a high leader in Egypt, fled to the wilderness of Midian. He married, had children, and lived a new life for over 40 years. Through a burning bush, God called Moses out of his current context of Midian to return to the context he once called home, Egypt. Through obedience, Moses said yes to God to return to Egypt and rescue God’s people, the Israelites, out of pain and suffering.

Why did God choose Moses? He could have chosen anyone. He chose Moses because Moses had the language, cultural knowledge, relationships, and more needed to complete the task of rescuing God’s people. You have incredible knowledge and context for your home culture and the potential culture God is sending you to. Process your journey post Chi Alpha through the lens of the culture you are walking into. God will use your experiences and knowledge to accomplish mighty things for His kingdom.

### **How to Use This Guide**

Only once a compass points true North can you know east, west, and south. Then, you can make decisions about which direction to go. Use this guide as a compass as you navigate through your journey post Chi Alpha. Allow Jesus to be your true North - to establish your east, west, and south. Think of your compass as your modern-day fire at night and cloud by day, keeping your eyes fixed on Jesus as your constant source of direction toward the purpose and path He has for you.

Each chapter is written specifically with you in mind, equipping you and giving you tools to use now and in the future. From spending quality time with Jesus to making disciples in your new context, we want you to be prepared, cared for, and able to apply what you have learned while studying overseas.







## Processing Transition

### Where Are You Going?

As you begin your journey post Chi Alpha, it is important to look ahead to the potential direction you are hoping to go. Look to Jesus as your true North and begin to process what is next for you. Will you be staying in the U.S. for more academic studies or a career? Are you moving to a different country? Will you be returning home? (Think Home).

What are your motivations for your move? Think through the examples below:

**Sense of Belonging**  
**Career Aspiration**  
**Family Needs**  
**Heart for Obeying the Lordship of Christ**  
**Heart for Sharing Christ with Others**  
**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

**If you do not know the answer right now, pray fervently and patiently to listen to where God is leading you.**

**“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.”**  
**Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT**

1. Are you returning home, going to another country, or staying in the U.S.? Why?
2. How did God lead you to this decision? Is there anything you need from Him about planning your next steps?
3. Write down a prayer to the Lord asking Him for guidance on your journey post Chi Alpha.



## Your Spiritual Journey



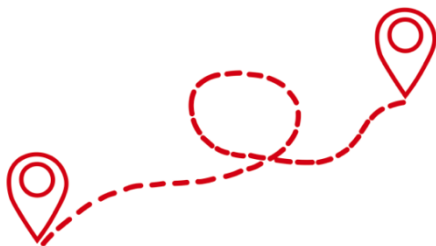
“There is no more powerful witness than a life transformed from the inside out.”

- Nate Mirza, Home Again



**Your testimony has power. This power can transform the lives of those around you, no matter where you go after your studies here in the U.S.** God calls us to make disciples, which we can do through sharing His truth, our testimony, and giving Him the glory for what He has done in our lives. Take time to reflect on your journey with Christ and all He has done for you, big and small. (Think Home) (Returnee Handbook).

1. How was your life before you decided to follow Jesus?
2. When did you begin following Jesus? What led you to that point?
3. How has your purpose in life changed since following Christ?



**Challenge:** Understanding how to share our testimony effectively in different cultures is important. Write down your testimony and how you would share it with a friend from your home context. If needed, research people who have gone before you and shared the Gospel in your home context.



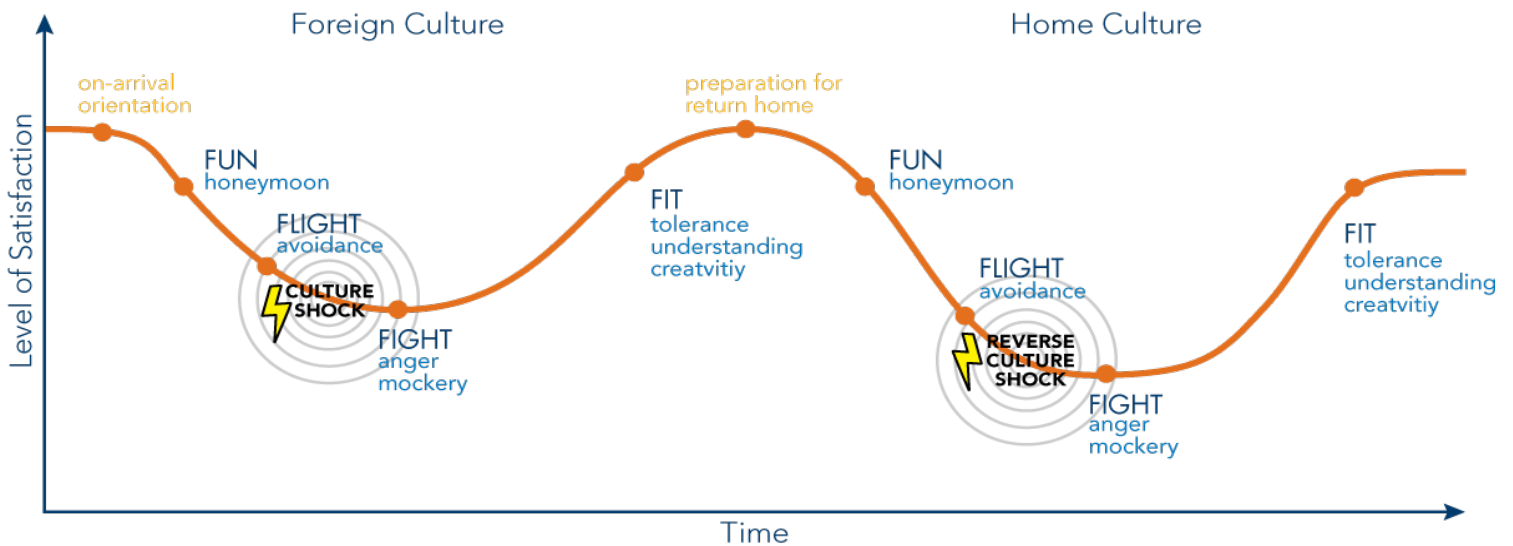


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## The U Curve

Just as you needed to adapt to your new environment when you arrived in the U.S., you will need to adapt to your new environment in the next place you will be going. Lysgaard (a sociology professor from the University of Oslo, Norway) developed a tool called the UCurve to help describe the transition phenomenon. It describes different feelings that people experience when entering a new environment. This curve will vary from person to person based on their experiences. (Think Home).

## STAGES OF TRANSITION



One may actually experience several high and low points in each transition. Also, multiple and simultaneous "U" curves may be experienced, with academic adjustment happening at a different rate than social or emotional transition, for example.

This diagram is available as a bookmark through the InterVarsity Store at [tiny.cc/bkmmk](http://tiny.cc/bkmmk)

Lisa Espineli Chinn & David Pollock © 2011 InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA

1. What blessings did you gain in the U.S. that you will leave behind? Take a minute to thank Jesus for them. How will you deal with the loss of these things?
2. Do you expect to feel the same discomfort adapting to your home culture when you return or to a new environment, as you felt when you arrived in the U.S. and had to adjust to a new culture? Why?

You can learn more about the U-Curve [here](#) (InterVarsity).





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## Processing Change

Change and growth are healthy. Just as you have changed as a person, you will continue to change as you develop more experiences in life. These changes also alter your perceptions. Understanding your current perceptions and how you have changed will prepare you to enter the next part of your life with more awareness and help you set realistic expectations. Therefore, it is important to begin to prepare for your journey post Chi Alpha by evaluating how you have changed. (Home Again).

Your journey post Chi Alpha is a unique opportunity to trust God more and allow Him to move in your life. God has not forgotten you. So, when you face events in your new context that will be different from what you expected, God will be in the middle of it all. Nothing surprises Him. He has your life in His hands.

1. What aspects of American culture do you enjoy or not enjoy?
2. What aspects of American culture do you want to take home with you?
3. Look at the potential changes below. Have you changed in any of these ways?

### PHYSICAL

- Do you have any physical appearance changes?
- What different foods do you like now?
- How do you dress now compared to when you were back home?
- List other changes:

### SPIRITUAL

- What religious beliefs or practices have you adopted since living in the U.S.?
- What new spiritual disciplines are you practicing now?
- How have your views of religion changed?
- List other changes:

### SOCIAL & RELATIONSHIPS

- What friendships have you gained? What do you appreciate about them?
- Have you adopted any new mannerisms or attitudes towards certain things?
- Do you prefer living/being by yourself or with other people?
- How are you handling your emotions differently after being in the U.S.?
- List other changes:

### CULTURAL

- Have you adopted any new habits?
- What academic pursuits motivate you now?
- Have your views of the role of government changed?
- Have your goals in life changed? Would you consider yourself ambitious?
- Have your spending habits changed since being in the U.S.?
- List other changes:



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Read "Naomi: A Returnee Surprised by God" in *Think Home IFES Europe* (Pages 26-27) and answer the questions.

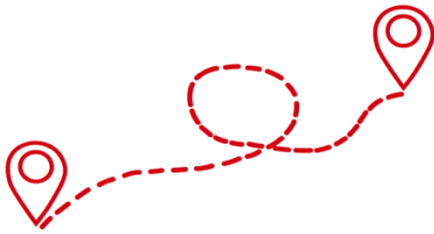




## Discerning God's Voice

Discerning His voice is critical and essential as you navigate your purpose and as God continues to use you in His kingdom. We cannot follow Him well if we cannot hear from Him. Life sometimes gets in the way of our relationship with God. Not only sin but stress, transition into a new context, and the chaos of being in unfamiliar environments can make us need outside voices that remind us of God's voice. When we are embedded in the Christian community, our fellow believers become an extension of God's voice speaking truth to us. But what happens when you find yourself as the only one for miles who knows God in your new context? Even if you have a few Christian friends, there may be challenges to being in a community with them. Therefore, every believer should develop the ability to discern when and what God is speaking to them. Your prayer life must become more about what He is saying to you than what you ask of Him to develop a hearing heart before God. If you do this, God can direct you into an abundant life. May we hear our Father clearly as we are in fellowship with Him. (Return to China).

1. Have you ever practiced listening to God while you pray?
2. How can you tell when God is speaking to you?



**Challenge:** The Bible helps us fully discern God's voice. Read the Bible today and ask God to speak to you through it. What has God been speaking to you from the Bible recently?



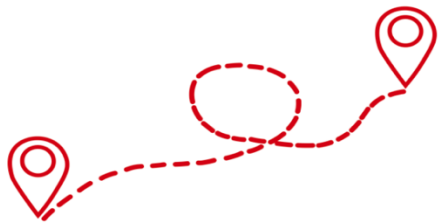


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## Being a Disciple

As you move into your new context, you will have the grand opportunity to continue your discipleship journey. We see many prophets, apostles, and servants of the Lord in Scripture working mighty miracles and living a power-filled life, no matter their context. The expression of their faith frequently showed up in signs, wonders, and miracles. When we study the book of Acts, we find such examples in the lives of Stephen, John, Peter, James, Paul, and others. The outward manifestations of miracles testified to the fact that these men had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13)! Through intense persecution, they stayed faithful. **Their strength through public trials came from stewarding their relationship with Jesus. They were His disciples. They prayed, read, and relished the Word and stayed as obedient followers of Jesus. This kind of discipleship helps our faith stand the test of time and trials.** As you begin to process your journey post Chi Alpha, it is vital to continue learning how to be a disciple of Jesus in the context you are currently in and where you will be going.

1. What makes someone a disciple of Jesus? With your current spiritual habits in mind, do you consider yourself a disciple of Jesus?
2. What do you think gave the disciples in Acts the power to stay faithful to God through trials?



**Challenge:** What things in your life help you be faithful to Jesus?

What things in your life are actively making it difficult to follow Jesus?

After you have thought through the above questions, craft a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound goal to help you follow God. Below are some examples:

1. Set a time during the day to devote 15 minutes to the reading of Scripture and another 15 to meditative prayer.
2. Choose a Christian book that might help you learn more about God and make it part of your weekly reading.
3. Spend time playing worship music and worshiping God throughout the week.
4. Fast and pray for situations that can only be helped by divine intervention.
5. Spend time listening to the Lord on walks outside, in your room, etc.



## **Making Disciples**

Not only will you continue to be a disciple of Jesus, but you will also have the grand opportunity to be a disciple-maker in your new context! The Great Commission commands us to go and make disciples of all nations. You may have found the great commission easier to follow during your academic years. Making disciples in your home nation or a new place may be challenging compared to your previous experiences. Our hardships do not let us out of our obedience to do everything God asks of us; however, how you disciple might change from being centered on small groups to individual conversations. The place you disciple might change from a dorm room to an office in your place of work. No matter what discipling others looks like in this season, it is our responsibility to look for opportunities to tell everyone we know about Jesus.

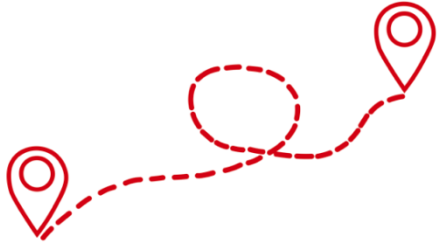
**“But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?” Romans 10:14 NLT**

No one is better suited to understand the point of view of the culture and lived experiences of the people in your home country than you! Think about the story of Moses. He was an alien in Egypt who reentered his people group to lead them. Moses was well suited to redeem his fellow Israelites because he was one of them. This is God’s design and a repeated pattern in the Bible. Just as Joseph helped redeem his family because he had experienced God’s faithfulness in his life, you too can be God’s hands extended into the lives of your fellow countrymen and women. All your experiences in God, spiritual gifts, and the training you have received will be testimonies that can bring others to God.

## **Telling Your Family about Jesus**

It is not easy to tell your family that you are Christian. Many world cultures look at the Christian faith with suspicion, and the unfortunate episodes in history where faith was used as an excuse for terrible things have compounded the issue. So, it is important to be wise about your approach to sharing your faith with your family. Find a trusted Christian friend or mentor and ask them if they would help you roleplay having the conversation with your family. Share with this person how things could go wrong if you declared your faith to your family and ask them to help you develop effective ways to share the truth that would not end in breach of the relationship between you and your family. Most importantly, you should engage Christian friends to pray for you as you begin sharing about Jesus with your family.

1. When did you last actively share your faith with someone?
2. Practice sharing the Gospel. What would you say if you were talking to someone from your new context?
3. In Matthew 10, Jesus sends the twelve disciples out to go and declare that the Kingdom of heaven has come. He says in verse 16, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves." What does it mean to be shrewd as snakes yet innocent as doves?



**Challenge:** Write a prayer to Jesus asking Him to bring people into your life now and in the future so you can share the Gospel with them. Ask Him for wisdom on how to share the Gospel in your new context. Ask Him to grow your heart for those who do not know Him in your new context. Go a step further and research how other people have shared the Gospel in your new context.



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## Walking in the Power of the Holy Spirit

**Watch this video on The Holy Spirit:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nvpj9Wg6ZEO&t>



What are your key takeaways from this video?

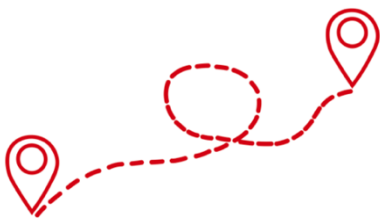
What is God speaking to you?

## Spiritual Warfare

Even before you were born, a fight has raged over your eternal destiny in the heavenly. When we give our lives to Jesus, we are immediately engaged in an epic battle. Forces that we cannot see or hear attempt to divert our attention from heaven to earthly things daily. God's enemy, the devil, hates us because we are dearly loved by God. He fashions accusations against us that separate us from others until he separates us even from God. Even facing these realities, God has equipped us to be strong in the battle. **He won the victory over every spiritual battle on the cross.** But just because the victory is won does not mean the devil will leave the territory he has lost. The fight continues even though the battle is over. Paul talks about putting on the full armor of God and being ready for battle in Ephesians Chapter 6. We must put on this armor and continue to enforce the victory of God in our lives. In 2 Timothy 2:1, Paul tells Timothy, his spiritual son, "So you then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (NIV). As a disciple of Jesus, you are a great asset in the victorious fight!

The strength that Paul calls for here is internal and given to you because of God's grace. Wherever God sends you, you will find times when your strength is lacking. Adapting to new weather patterns and pace of life, or getting re-accustomed to the food if you return to your country, could take great effort. Your family may consciously or subconsciously wear you down because you became a disciple of Christ in the U.S. All these things are prime opportunities for the enemy to mount spiritual battles against you. But it is also an opportunity for you to rely on God, to stay strong in the faith, and to pray until He delivers you. God cares more about molding you into Christlikeness, refining your character, and perfecting your faith than merely ensuring your comfort.

1. What are the most spiritually, physically, and emotionally taxing things expect to face as you head into your journey post Chi Alpha?
2. How do you react when you experience pushback or opposition to you being a person of faith?
3. What spiritual attacks might you face back home?



**Challenge:** Have you experienced spiritual warfare? Pray and ask God to deliver you. Call or text a trusted mentor or friend and ask them to keep praying for you until God's help arrives.



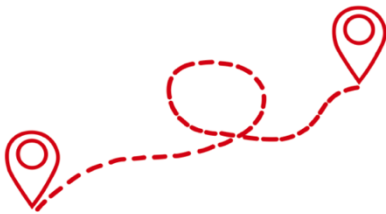
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## Living in Obedience

Jesus tells His disciples in John 14:15 that to love Him is to obey Him. Obedience has a negative connotation in a world that aches for personal expression and freedom from authority, especially in the Western context. God's way of keeping us safe and joyful in Him is all directly connected to how well we obey Him. As we read Scripture and pray, obedience is paramount to hearing Him clearly and often. As you move from where you are now to where the Holy Spirit is leading you, obeying Him will bring fruitfulness and direction. However, when you leave behind the Christian community that has supported you during your student years, it might be harder to obey God without finding new Christian community. Aspects of your new living context may go against the grain of God's word. It takes a committed heart to stay strong and obey God when the obedience could make our situation uncomfortable, cost us our reputation, or bring us rejection.

God knows these things and the sacrifice it would take for you to follow Him fully. 1 Samuel 15:22 says, "To obey is better than sacrifice" (NIV). There is nothing more pleasing to God than obedience. There is nothing that will bring you closer to God than obedience. Obedience is God's love language.

1. Do you find it easy to obey God? What stands in the way of you obeying God fully in this season?
2. What do you think will stand in the way of you obeying God fully in your upcoming new season?
3. What is a way you can obey God in this season of transition?



**Challenge:** As internationals, the fear of man is the foremost reason we disobey God. Prayerfully consider your fears that keep you from obeying God. Bring them before the Lord in prayer and ask Him to help you overcome those fears and help you be a bold follower of Jesus.

**"Fearing people is a dangerous trap, but trusting the Lord means safety."  
Proverbs 29:25 NLT**



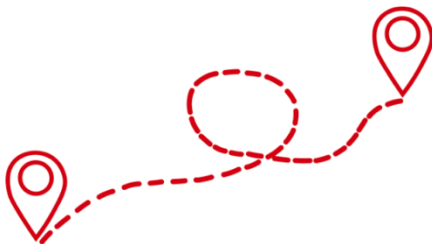
## Experiencing the Holy Spirit

Scripture calls the Holy Spirit a helper who will teach and guide you. "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26 ESV). The Holy Spirit is available to you. He wants to guide you and be your source of strength through all the changes, challenges, and excitement of your Journey post Chi Alpha.

Every believer is drawn to God by the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit's wooing, you and I could have never become part of God's family. We can have a greater fellowship with the third person of the Godhead through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This baptism is an immersion in the fullness of the person of God. It allows you to be filled from the inside out with the power of God to know His will and to do His will. The sign of speaking in tongues usually accompanies the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but the most discernible change is the empowerment and enabling to be witnesses of Jesus. The Holy Spirit changes us internally so that day by day, we become more like Jesus.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a free gift of God given to all believers (Acts 2:38-39). If you have not been baptized in the Holy Spirit, know that it is your portion as a child of God promised to you by the Father. God simply gives you the gift as you pray and ask Him persistently.

1. Have you experienced baptism in the Holy Spirit, or has anyone else explained it to you? If not, who will you ask to help you learn more about this?
2. Read Acts chapter 2. What were some things you observed as you read that occurred when the disciples were baptized in the Holy Spirit?
3. If you are baptized in the Holy Spirit, how do you rely on the Holy Spirit? How will He comfort and help you during your journey post Chi Alpha?



**Challenge:** The Holy Spirit is the powerhouse that enables every believer to live a wholesome Christian life. You need this gift in your life. If you have already been baptized in the Holy Spirit, take a few minutes to thank God for the gift and praise Him in your prayer language. Ask to be filled even more. If you have not received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, set aside some time during your regular prayer time each day and ask God for the baptism. Pray often and ask until the Lord baptizes you in His Spirit.



## *BEING FULL OF THE SPIRIT*

by Cynthia Gandhi Dobbs

The book of Acts begins with the last words of Jesus to His disciples before He ascended to the Father. With His last words, Jesus addresses the importance of being filled with the Spirit. Jesus considered this a prerequisite to being a witness to Him in their own homes, their towns, their countries and the nations. He exhorted the disciples to wait and pray for the baptism in the Holy Spirit to fall upon them. As they prayed, the Spirit fell, and the new church emerged with the fire of the Holy Spirit in her. Even today God wants to fill each of us with His Spirit. While a portion of His Spirit is given as a deposit to us as we become believers, the baptism of the Spirit is an immersive experience in the Spirit of God that marks us for life and ministry. The first initiates our journey of faith, the second empowers our journey.



**SCRIPTURE: READ THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES ALOUD.**

**LUKE 11:9-13** And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!



**JOHN 7:37-39** On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

**ACTS 2:17** And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.



### OBSERVATION

1. In Luke 11:9-13, what is Jesus instructing us to ask for? What will happen if we ask for this?

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2. In John 7:37-39, what happens to those who believe in Jesus?

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3. Putting these two scriptures together what do we need to do to be baptized in the Holy Spirit?

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4. In the last days what does Acts 2:17 say the Spirit will be poured out on?

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### *All Sons and Daughters*

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an empowering experience that equips us to be better witnesses to Jesus' death and resurrection life. It is a recurring immersive experience for a Christian who believes God and has asked and waited on Him to be baptized in the Spirit. God makes no special demands or restrictions to receive the baptism. His desire is that all His sons and daughters receive the fullness of the Spirit. We must desire as He desires and ask with faith for us and every believer to be baptized by His Spirit.



## APPLICATION

If you have been Baptized in the Holy Spirit, spend some time today praying in your prayer language. If you have not been baptized in the Holy Spirit, reach out to a mentor or pastor who has experienced this and ask them any questions you may have about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.



## PRAY

Spend time praying for the fullness of the Spirit of God to be present in you. Petition God for more of Him, and ask Him to reveal things that hinder you from walking in the fullness of God. Make a decision as you pray to repent and turn away from these things.

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## TELL

Share with a Christian friend your discoveries about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Who will you share this with?

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## Counting the Cost

Watch this video on Counting the Cost:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLU7-8d1hN4>



What are your key takeaways from this video?  
What is God speaking to you?

## Challenges

As an international student, you had the privilege to leave home and study in the U.S. The experiences you've gained, the relationships you've built, and the ways you have been stretched and challenged have all made for a rich experience. Sometimes, looking back, you can see that the times you grew the most were the most challenging seasons. You have learned to lean on God for wisdom, help, and strength to face any difficulty you've encountered in your time here. As you prepare to transition, it is essential to prepare your heart and mind for the challenges you will face where you're going next as well. There will be unique challenges, but thankfully, God remains the same. Jesus wanted us believers to know that just because we follow Him doesn't mean life will always be easy. In John 16:33, He says, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (NIV). You must "count the cost" of living for Jesus in a different, perhaps more challenging, environment. As you do so, remember that this world is not your home; Heaven is! And Jesus has already defeated sin and death and done the hard work for us!



"I think my life has re-prioritized since I came to the U.S. I will be 'different' in some ways, and it will be difficult to explain to others, or they might not totally understand."

- a former International Student who returned to their home country



1. What challenges have you faced and overcome during your time in the U.S.?
2. How has Jesus provided for you during those challenges?
3. Look at the following chart of potential challenges past International Students have faced when moving into a new context. Which ones resonate with you?
4. Write a prayer asking Jesus to give you wisdom and provision amid any challenges faced during your journey post Chi Alpha.





## People and Relationships

We are social beings, and God created us to be in relationship with others. Your relationships will be critical to your success as you transition out of a student environment. However, as a believer, your relationships may look different from before as you count the cost. Relatives and friends may try to discourage or disregard your faith. Rejection and even hostility are painful realities that many face. (Think Home).

1. How have your family and friends changed since you left?
2. Do you have any concerns about reuniting with your community? Or finding a new community?
3. What will you do if you are rejected by the people you love most?
4. Will your new faith make your life uncomfortable or endanger you?

**These questions may be difficult to work through, but always remember that the power of the Holy Spirit gives you the grace and wisdom you need for any and every situation.** When you choose to honor God above pleasing others (Galatians 1:10), He will reward you and use those choices to influence others. Though people in your life may not support your decision to follow Christ, it is important to pray for them and ask God to help you forgive and love them. Jesus desires everyone to know Him, and you may be the only example they have of someone who loves Jesus. Remember, He is worthy of any cost you may have to pay, for He has paid the ultimate price for you. What you gain with Christ is better than anything the world has to offer.

## Jesus is With You

What does it mean to count the cost? In Philippians 3:7-11, Paul writes about how losing everything would be worth it, as long as he could know Christ. Paul knew the challenges and hardships and what it could mean to suffer for Jesus. He was willing to face any hardship for the reward of a relationship and intimacy with Jesus. (Think Home).

**“I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God’s way of making us right with himself depends on faith. I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!”**

**Philippians 3:7-11 NLT**



As you think about hardships and difficulties you may face as a believer in your next season of life, try to use this same lens that Paul used. Believe that any trials you face will draw you closer to Jesus and will be worth the reward of knowing Him, both in this life and in Heaven. This doesn't mean you shouldn't work through potential questions and problems, but it does mean you can face the answers to those tough questions with the strength, hope, and promises Jesus gives us in His Word. He will be with you to help you navigate challenging situations. He offers peace. Your friendship with Him is your greatest asset as you face any challenge in life.

### **Jesus is Worthy**

Why do we count the cost? Why do we love Jesus so much that we give Him all our preferences, comfort, and lives? Because He did it first. He loved us first. He gave His all for us first. Jesus is worthy of everything. He is worthy of your plans, of your experiences, of your comfort, and worthy of others knowing Him.

**"We love because he first loved us."**

**1 John 4:19 NIV**

**"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."**

**John 3:16 NIV**

### **Embracing Joy in Transition**

The Apostle Paul wrote four books of the New Testament (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon) while he was in prison. This man endured isolation, beatings, and much suffering because of his bold witness for Christ. Yet, through it all, he kept such a joyous perspective and encouraged others (through his letters) while alone in his cell. Reading about his joy and contentment despite his terrible circumstances is inspiring. He knew what it meant to suffer for Christ. He knew the glory that was to come. He knew that even through the persecution, Jesus would be victorious in the end. When you suffer for Christ during hardship, He brings life and the opportunity to share the Gospel.

**“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in as much as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And 'If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?' So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.” 1 Peter 4:12-19 NIV**

As you transition to where God is guiding you, remember that even when circumstances are difficult or not what you expected, God has joy for you as you return! Think of what it will be like to enjoy your favorite foods again, not have to translate everything from English, and enjoy relaxation time with family and friends you’ve grown up with. Remember that your family will be excited and enjoy you returning home, too, so soak up the attention and joy of reconnecting with them! You can embrace this transition as an assignment from God and ask Him to equip you with everything you need, including joy! He is sovereign and will lead you and work His purposes in and through you. Learn to love what He loves and see others the way He does. God loves your family and your friends, and you can enjoy this opportunity to see them in a new light, not only as people you love but who God dearly loves as well.

**Read “Moses: The Reluctant Returnee” in *Think Home IFES Europe* (Page 29) and answer the questions.**





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## Being with Jesus

You may return to a culture where the values differ from American values. You may go to a brand-new culture or continue in American culture. You may hear your native language spoken at home, at work, or in the grocery store. Church may be different! How Christians gather, where they gather, and how they worship will probably not look the same as it does on your campus. **Despite all these differences, one major factor will not change when you return: Jesus will be with you. Not only that, but He will also be the same God you have come to know in the United States.**

Jesus promised His disciples—and He promises us—to be with us wherever we go. We always have direct access to our King! Therefore, spending daily time with Jesus is vital. When we spend daily time with Jesus, sitting in His presence, praying, and reading His words, we are reminded that we are not alone. We gain a fresh perspective that Jesus' power, presence, and peace are what we need when many other things have changed. **As you prepare to commit to abide with Jesus, remember that Jesus speaks your language. He doesn't need a translator! If you are not already doing it, start experimenting with praying in your language and reading a translation of the Bible in your language.**

**"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me."**

**John 15:4 NLT**

## Spiritual Habits

As you are on your journey post Chi Alpha with Jesus, you will continue to have many wonderful experiences and challenging moments. Jesus promises to be there with you through it all. Having strong spiritual habits now and going forward into the new context Jesus is bringing you into is vital for a full and fruitful life. As we spend time with Jesus daily, we learn His voice, who He is, and who He says we are. As you move into your new context, work, life, family, friends, and more will take up your time. As these things are good, it is important to remain strong in our spiritual habits. We spend daily time in prayer and the Bible. We rest in the presence of Jesus on the Sabbath. We continue to grow close to Him as we live our lives for Him.

**For more information on Spiritual Habits, refer to Richard Foster's  
"Celebration of Discipline."**





## **Biblical Foundations**

God's vision for creation is something called the Kingdom of God. God's goal and desire is that everyone, everywhere, worship Him and live submitted to His will. As we live in God's kingdom, we live according to His truth and His purpose for our life. Most cultures do not operate in the same way as the Kingdom of God. Your home culture may have different values, beliefs, and ideas about truth. As you interact with people from your home culture and other cultures, you will be faced with a question: Will you live as a son or daughter in the Kingdom of God, or will you live as a resident of the kingdom of the culture in which you live?

If you are going to resist the continual pull of the culture around you towards drifting from living in the Kingdom of God, you need to be firmly grounded in the Truth. You need to be reminded of who God is. Here are some things about who God is for you to consider. (Home Again).

**He is in control. He is powerful.  
His love is perfect. He is the Creator.  
He is your Savior.**

When you remember how big God is, the world will seem a little smaller in comparison. You also need to be reminded of who you are.

**You are a child of God. You are loved unconditionally.  
You are filled with the Holy Spirit.**

Your value, identity, and worth are not based on your level of approval or performance. You can fully live in God's kingdom and not go along with the world. If you remain grounded in the truth of who God is and who you are, you will thrive wherever God sends you.

**"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." Romans 12:2 NLT**

Spending daily time with Jesus, studying and memorizing Scripture, and reading from Christian authors are all essential ways to grow in your knowledge of the truth. We recommend talking to your discipler about good resources to take with you and learning about what resources will be accessible to you after you graduate.

**Read "God's Instructions Through Joshua" in *Think Home IFES Europe* (Page 47) and answer the questions.**







## Connecting with Local Believers

Finding a community of believers when you move home may be challenging. There may be fewer churches, which are harder to find, or you may have to travel far to church. Because of security concerns, there may be specific steps that you must take before even being invited to a church. If you are to confront these challenges and commit to prioritizing community, a strong belief in the significance of community to your faith is imperative.

Why is community so important? First, when we are trying to learn how to follow Jesus in a new environment, it is helpful to have disciplers who can show us the way and encourage us. You will face different questions and challenges as you live for Jesus at home or in a completely new place. Having friends who can offer prayer, wisdom, and encouragement is important. Second, being in community provides the opportunity to serve. God knows we work better together as a team. When you bring your gifts and passions to your Christian community, you can do things for God's kingdom that you could never do alone. God wants community for you, and He will provide it as you seek Him. (Think Home).

**"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."  
Hebrews 10:24 NIV**

Chi Alpha wants to help you find a local group of believers wherever Jesus sends you after your university studies! Talk to your discipler about how to get connected. As you get connected, continue to take ownership of building relationships in the church or faith community. If a church or faith-based community is not the right fit, contact your discipler to find a better fit.

1. In what ways do you think you will need community when you return home?
2. What sacrifices might you need to make to prioritize community?
3. What connections can you begin to make now to prepare to join a community when you return home?



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## **Taking Responsibility to Share Christ**

One international Chi Alpha staff member describes spiritual responsibility as “miracle growth” for our souls. We experience excitement and joy when we join God in His mission to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. God has designed you for this exact purpose. He created you and placed you in your home culture as a child. Then, God brought you to the United States, where you encountered Him, and as a result, your life was radically changed! And now, God is sending you in your journey post Chi Alpha to a place where your friends, family, and co-workers desperately need the Gospel. At one point in your life, you had not encountered Jesus and had no good news to share. Now, you have eternal hope and peace in Christ to share with those around you.

This responsibility to share Christ with others is best lived alongside the community of believers where God sends you. Learning the best ways to share the Gospel in your new context will take time and persistence. Take advantage of those who have experience and learn from them. Sharing the Gospel is a spiritual exercise. Our ultimate battle is not fought with words or actions but in the spiritual realm with prayer and faith. As a community, you must pray often together for the souls of those you tell about Jesus. As you do this, you will be amazed by how the Holy Spirit moves.

1. What gifts has God given you?
  - a. Examples: serving, prophesying, hospitality, preaching, encouraging, leading, pastoring, teaching, etc.
2. How can you use these gifts on your journey post Chi Alpha?
3. Do you need any training before using these gifts in your new context?



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## Having a Kingdom Mindset

During His time on earth, Jesus taught us about the Kingdom of God and what it means to have a kingdom mindset, even among stress and hardship. This can be true during your journey post Chi Alpha and beyond. However, He also promised that as we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, God will help us with our transitions, stress, and worries (Matthew 6:31-34). God is our king; he rules over every aspect of our lives - our social position, work, family, and all decisions we make. He asks us to seek Him in all these areas and to live by the values of the kingdom in every situation.

In addition, He has given you specific skills and abilities that you can use in His kingdom. Maybe you are very good at coding, design, or other professional skills. Each of us also has interpersonal skills that can help us interact with people and build strong relationships. Some of our talents and abilities bring joy to our lives and the lives of others, such as when someone can play beautiful music or cook delicious meals to share.

List the skills and abilities that God has given you:

### Professional Skills

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### Relational Skills

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### Other Talents/Abilities

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Think of three ways to use your unique gifts to positively influence the people around you at work and in your community.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Leading with Influence**

You may find a difference in how people from your home community perceive you as you graduate from a university in the United States. You may have a better job, more money, and more influence than you have had before and maybe more than many others in your community have. It may be easy to have an attitude of superiority toward your community because of your experience abroad. However, Jesus taught that kingdom leadership comes from a position of serving others and not from superior knowledge or position.

The key is living out this kingdom value in a way that communicates love and service to others as you graduate and move into positions of leadership and influence. Your heart of service will need to be expressed differently depending on the culture you are entering.

**"Jesus called the Twelve and said, 'Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.'" Mark 9:35 NIV**

1. What job or social position will you have after you graduate?
2. How will people from your home culture perceive this job or position?
3. How will you live out the kingdom values of humility and service in your new role?
4. Read Matthew 5:1-12. These are called the "Beatitudes". Pray to Jesus, asking Him to reveal which attitudes you need strength in.



## Being a Christian at Home

1 Timothy 3:1-7 gives some instructions about how Christian leaders should act at home. Whether you return home to visit or live after graduation, you must navigate how to share your relationship with Jesus with your family. You may be returning to a very supportive family environment, or you may face a lot of opposition or rejection from your family for choosing to follow Christ. As you navigate loving and honoring your family and walking in obedience to Christ, being a Christian at home can require a lot of strength and courage from the Holy Spirit. As you submit to Christ daily, pray that He will help you reflect His character in your family relationships, especially when it is difficult. Also, pray that your life will be lived in a way that leads your family members to desire a relationship with Christ. (Returnee Handbook).

**"Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. 'Honor your father and mother.' This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, 'things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.'" Ephesians 6:1-3 NLT**

## Honoring Parents and Obeying God

As Christians, we have an identity as the sons and daughters of God (Galatians 3:26). However, God also wants us to continue to build good relationships with our parents and other family members. If your parents are not believers (and sometimes even when they are), you will need to navigate obeying God and honoring your parents when these seem to be in conflict.

Honor must be an attitude of the heart that expresses itself in words and actions. If you can share your commitment to follow Jesus in words first, and then express this through your heart and actions, this has the advantage of giving your family the reason for some of the commitments you have or some of the changes in your life. Serving in the small things that your parents would appreciate, such as remembering to call, doing dishes, or picking up something for them at the store, can communicate that you love and honor them. It is also important to show gratitude for everything they do for you.

If honoring your parents in your culture would involve doing something that would cause you to be disobedient to Christ, then obedience to Christ is the first commitment of a Christian. You can humbly explain why you cannot do what your parents are asking or set limits on how you will participate while communicating that you still value the relationship and quality time with them. Do not be afraid if you experience opposition or persecution. God will be with you. Setting the bar at the beginning for what you will or won't do as a follower of Christ and being consistent with this can be helpful so people will know what to expect. Even if your family does not understand or is angry at first, if you persist in your obedience to Christ and your love and service to them, you can often, over time, have a good relationship, respecting one another.







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## Being a Christian at Work

You will likely spend many hours weekly pursuing your career and growing in leadership and influence. The Bible has a lot to say about work and money. Researching and understanding God's heart for those topics is worth the time and effort. You may find some values in your work culture are very different from those of God's kingdom. Then, through prayer and discernment, you can find practical ways to live these kingdom values through your job. Here are some Scriptures to start your study.

**Colossians 3:23**

**2 Timothy 2:15-16**

**Matthew 25:14-30**

**2 Chronicles 29:10-17**

**Luke 16:10**

**Luke 6:38**

Read the Scriptures above. List some of the kingdom values related to work and money that these Scriptures teach:

### Work

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### Money

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**What is one way you can live out these kingdom values in your new context through your job?**

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## Godly Decision Making

Sometimes, it is tempting to separate our lives into 'spiritual' things such as reading the Bible and prayer and not see the spiritual impact of other aspects of our lives. However, every decision you make as a believer can have a spiritual impact on your life and the lives of others. As you live for the King of Kings, where you decide to work and live, who you spend time with, how you spend your money, and who you marry are all kingdom decisions. "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect" (Romans 12:2 NLT). As you make decisions through prayer, fasting, and the solid foundation of God's word, you will build a life in Christ that can withstand the stress of any future changes and transitions (Matthew 7:24-27).

1. When you have a decision to make, how do you seek the Lord regarding that decision?
2. What is one decision in front of you right now that you will commit to seek the Lord about before making a choice?

Every culture has a mixture of beautiful aspects that uniquely reflect God and humanity. And every culture has aspects that are commonly accepted but not in alignment with how God calls us to live as His people. We often assume that we do things correctly in our own culture. Jesus affirmed good things about His culture and spoke highly of how the culture followed God's law. However, he was also willing to confront people and culture when they placed cultural practices above kingdom values.

**"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill, and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former." Matthew 23:23 NIV**

1. How does your home culture reflect God's character and beauty?
2. What are some things in your culture that are widely accepted but conflict with how God's people should live?



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Read "Paul: Love is Greater Than Knowledge" in *Think Home IFES Europe* (Page 28) and answer the questions.





## Creating a Plan of Action

### Post Chi Alpha Connection Form

Is God sending you to a new place or back to your home country? As you transition from your Chi Alpha community to a different context, we want to ensure you are connected to a community of local believers. We have relationships with people who love Jesus and who want to welcome you and be your contact as you transition to the new place. **Please work with your Chi Alpha leader and ask them to submit the [connection form](#).**

It is important to plan for your journey post Chi Alpha. However, as you think ahead, it is also important to hold your plans loosely as you give them to Jesus. Look to Him as your true North and ask Him for direction each step of the way. Prepare with a heart posture of letting Him lead you - even if it is not where you initially thought you would go.

### Plan to Finish Your Current Season Well

As God leads you towards the next season of your life, one of the best things you can do to set yourself up for success is to finish well in the place where you have been. Are you serving in a leadership role? Then, finish your commitment faithfully and communicate clearly to your current team about where God is leading you next and when you will be stepping down. Continue seeking the Lord through the transition and find time, even when you are busy, for the people who have been there for you during your university years. Take time to rest and reflect before jumping into new roles and experiences. (Think Home).

Your community should send you to your new place and season of life. Talk with your leadership about a good time for a sendoff with a commissioning prayer. Have them pray for your future ministry and the new relationships you will have in the next season. Identify key relationships that will continue supporting you through the next few months as you settle into the new place.

**"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."  
2 Timothy 4:7 NIV**



## Plan your Time with Jesus in Your New Place

During transition times, your life rhythm will change or may be irregular for a while until you start a job or settle into a new routine. Finding a consistent time for prayer and reading Scripture can be challenging during these times. As best as possible, think through what the next few months will look like and plan for consistent time with the Lord. (Think Home).

### Devotional Plan

1. What time of day? \_\_\_\_\_  
(early morning, or on a bus ride to work, or lunch break...)
2. How much time? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How will you remind yourself to be consistent? \_\_\_\_\_  
(alarm on your phone, no Bible=no breakfast, etc...)
4. What will you do during your devotions? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Read the Bible, sing a song to Jesus, pray, etc.)

### Two words that can help you during your daily prayer and Bible reading time are PRAY and SOAP.

PRAY can help you as you pray and spend time with the Lord.

**P:** Praise: Start your time with the Lord in thanksgiving and praise.

**R:** Repent: Confess any sins or attitudes that need to change and ask for forgiveness.

**A:** Ask: Bring any concerns or requests for yourself or others.

**Y:** Yield: Surrender to the Lord and listen to anything He wants to speak to you.

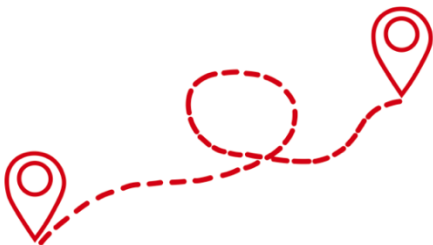
SOAP is a method that can help you in your reading of Scripture.

**S:** Scripture: Read a portion of the Bible.

**O:** Observation: Observe what is happening in the text and what it says about God and people.

**A:** Application: Apply what you see in the scripture to your own life.

**P:** Prayer: Ask God to help you live out what you read in the Scripture.



**Challenge:** Do you have a Bible in your native language? If not, ask your discipler to help you get one! There are many resources online as well for Bibles in many languages.

Jesus wants to speak and abide with you in your native language!



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## **Plan Your Connection to Local Believers in the New Place**

A new church or fellowship will not be the same as the one you experienced while you were in Chi Alpha. Approach your new church or fellowship expecting things to be different and possibly difficult initially. When one international student returned to Japan, he had to travel for two hours to attend church, and he quickly realized that everyone was older than him. It was very different from his experience in Chi Alpha. However, connecting with local believers is vital for your spiritual health. We are called to be a part of our local community. You will grow and be more fruitful by intentionally making an effort to be part of a church wherever God sends you.

***“So, in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” Romans 12:5 NIV***

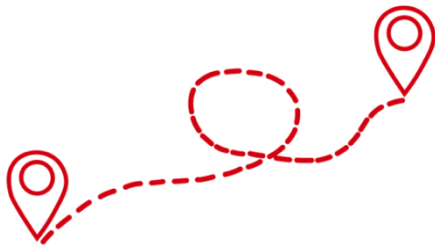
1. To find connection, who can you talk to about options for local churches?
2. Who will you connect with when you arrive in the new place?
3. When and how will you connect with them?



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## Plan for Representing Christ and Sharing Him with Others

Claire was an international student from Kenya who studied in India. She came to know Christ in India and returned to Kenya, where she was able to share Christ with her family, help start a church that would plant many other churches, and be a Godly influence in her military position. Being a life-long disciple-maker does not happen by accident. Begin praying about who God will send into your life as you transition to a new place of ministry. If you do not plan for ministry, you will find that you do not have time for it with your work and family responsibilities. At the same time, you need to give yourself grace as you experience many unexpected changes and adjust to your new place. (Think Home).



**Challenge:** Begin to pray for the challenges you will face as you graduate and start the next season of life. Be expectant that God will walk with you and help you through every difficulty. Journal your concerns and how God responded to build your faith as you walk with Him through transition.

1. What spheres of influence will you have where God is sending you?
2. What are some of the gifts that you have that you can use to minister to others?
3. What has God spoken to you about your purpose and mission in your new place?
4. How will you live out your faith in your workplace? What values and practices will set you apart as a follower of Christ?
5. How will you share your faith in the context you will be going to? (Be specific about who you would like to share with and how you plan to do it)
6. Who are those you are sharing your faith with? How will they react to your testimony?
7. In what way will you serve the local church?





## **Commissioning**

As you have read and reflected through these chapters, you have had time to process where you are going next and what some of the challenges and changes will be. Hopefully, this has been encouraging and helpful as you prepare for the next part of your journey. As you transition from where you have been a student to a new job or a new place, it is natural to be excited for what will come next while, at the same time, feeling sad about what you are leaving behind.

We are praying for you, believing that Jesus is sending you on purpose and that you will be a lifelong disciple-maker who will see transformation in your family, community, and nation. Go in the peace and power of Christ, overcome the challenges, and continue to hear His voice. As you focus on following Christ, your true North, wherever He guides you, you will experience the joy of what God wants to do through you as you reflect His glory to the nations. What a joy it is to follow Jesus! What a joy it is to live a life full of Him!



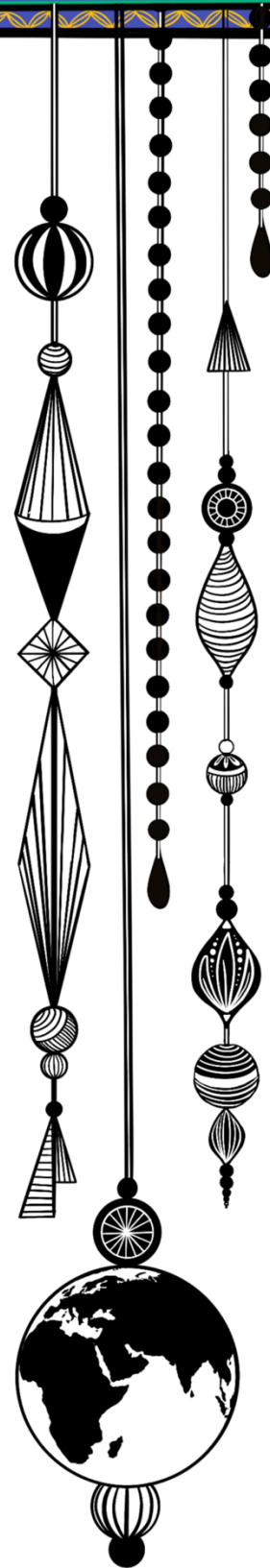
## Commissioning Prayer

As you go, remember that you are not alone. We pray you will be encouraged because you are surrounded by many more who have re-entered the marketplace and your nations. And because you are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, strip off every weight that slows you down, especially the sin that so easily trips you up. And run with endurance the race God has set before you. This is done by keeping your eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects your faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.  
(Hebrews 12:1-2)

We pray that Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him and that your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. May you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then, you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.  
(Ephesians 3:17-20)

And we are certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns (Philippians 1:6). Now all glory to God, who can keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time!  
(Jude 1:24-25)

AMEN





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