



Christ & College
How To Stay Christian In College

John Calvin Young, '12

Introduction

- I am a college grad and a Christian
- I studied at:
 - Washington & Lee University, top-20 private liberal arts school in Virginia
 - Oxford University, top-5 university worldwide
- I came through all of that, and you can too.

The Questions

- Why do so many Christian kids leave the church?
- How can you stay Christian all through college?
- What do you need to know?

Preparation

- It's a battleground, stupid—this is not your home.
- It will be a bubble of alternate reality (it is not reality, but it is real)—you can't deny it, nor can you live in it forever.

Preparation

- Choosing a college is a big deal
 - A Christian school...
 - May offer a friendlier environment
 - Will have no hostile professors
 - But may be harder to live like a Christian where it simply presumed (easy to stagnate)
 - And may have limited financial resources
 - A secular school...
 - May have a higher-profile reputation
 - May have better scholarships available
 - May have strong Christian groups on campus
 - Will have a more adverse peer group and campus culture
 - May be easier to live a Christian life where it's a challenge
 - May have extremely biased professors & indoctrination courses
 - You may need to take some courses ahead if you can

Preparation

- Orientation Week
 - Prepare for culture shock and outright propaganda
 - Prepare for social acceptance of horrifying things and open sin
 - You must be prepared: don't embrace them, nor shy away and refuse to interact with people
 - Parents, your teens need to be able to stand, neither falling nor running.

Preparation

- Housing:
 - If possible, get a single room
 - A bad roommate can make your life a living hell
 - Weigh carefully the decision between living on and off-campus—it may have unexpected consequences.

Academics

- Classes:
 - Be wise as serpents, innocent as doves
 - Choose your battles
 - Be a good student; be prepared
- Professors:
 - Get to know your professors, and the department
 - Check them out ahead of time
 - Sit in the front, do good work, talk to them after class

Academics

- Subjects & Departments:
 - Be skeptical—don't take everything you're told at face value
 - Do outside research—professors will love it
 - Ask advice from parents and pastors as to what you should take
 - You don't necessarily want to take some subjects in a college setting
 - You don't have time to take some things, and keep your sanity

Church

- It's not just marking time—it's an anchor, a safe haven, and a lifeline
- It's outside the bubble, and yet close enough to understand what you're going through.
- It can be an excellent source of community, a safe place to be a Christian and just not worry about the flak.

Church

- It can be a good place to build relationships with professors, staff, and peers
- Different age brackets can give one much-needed perspective
- It can be an outlet for ministry, both to others your age and in the broader community
 - Don't discount the importance of a ride to church

Campus Christian Organizations

- Inescapably part of campus
- Low time commitment
- They offer a large opportunity for public outreach and ministry.
- Campus ministers are a critical resource
- Bible studies/small groups are awesome
- With their high visibility, they can provide a primary identification on campus

Social Life

- Friends:
 - Look for those whose primary identity is as a Christian.
 - You may face condemnation/backlash, even and especially from other Christians
 - Or you may face quiet pressure to change, which can feel more like success
 - Be careful about burning your bridges
 - Don't get desperate for a relationship

Social Life

- Fraternities/Greek Life is idealized on campus, and you'll almost never hear about the dark side
- Not all fraternities are created equal
 - But you don't know everything going in, and leaving is harder than staying out
 - And you may have to stand by your fraternity 'brothers' and watch shocking things done

Social Life

- Homeschoolers are often socially open, yet not adept in the dog-eat-dog social scene
 - Don't let acceptance drive you, nor rejection
 - You may have to make your own fun
 - Many college students haven't left middle school yet
 - Be real. Few things are in as short supply as real people on college campuses

Personal Life

- Ignore social boundaries. They can't do anything to you.
- Show Christ's love to the marginalized
- Balance the time you spend on- and off-campus
- Make sure you get your downtime
- Keep lines of communication open
- Don't let yourself stagnate
- Invest in, and know the difference between inner and outer circles

Conclusion

- Victory is possible.
- Temptation will be other than you expect, but you can survive in the Lord's strength
- Getting plugged in with the Christian community early is critical
- Academics are a challenge, but you needn't fear them—you know the answers
- Invest in close Christian friends, and reach out to a wider circle

Conclusion

- Show grace and love and merciful righteousness to your fellows
- Keep your lines of communication open, to your pastor, your parents, and your God

A final word

“Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of the His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.”
