

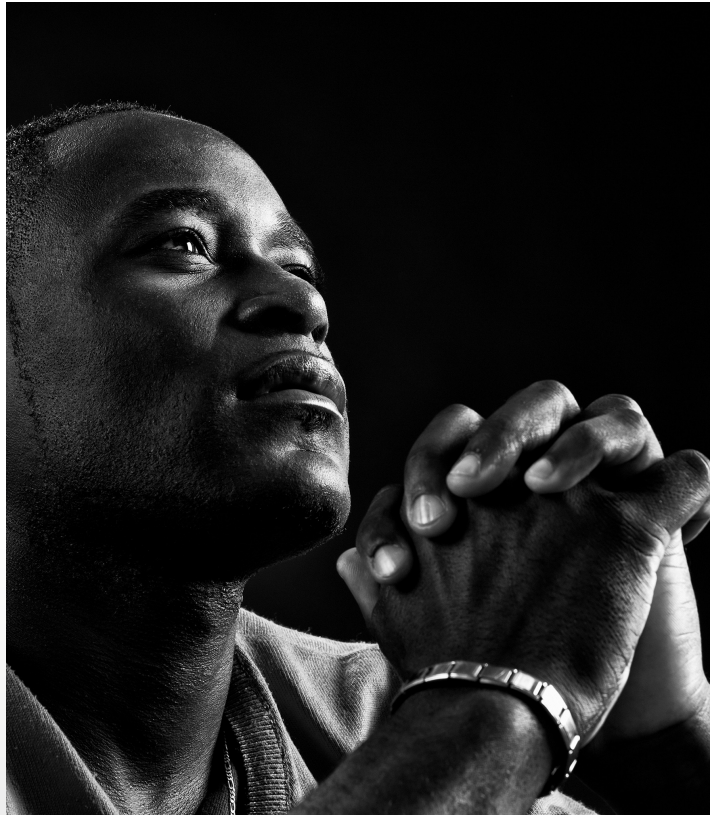
HOW TO STAY CHRISTIAN IN COLLEGE

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE ADVISING

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According to the Barna Group, roughly 70% of high school students who enter college as professing Christians, will leave with little to no faith.

These students usually don't return to faith, even after graduation, as Barna projects that 80% of those reared in the church will be “disengaged” by the time they are 29.

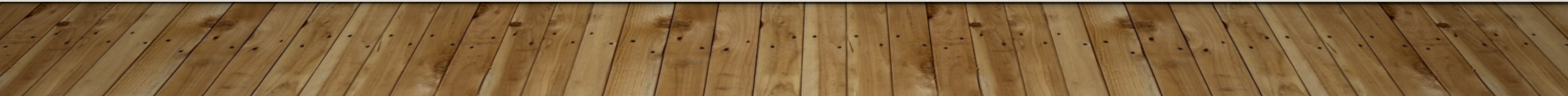


SO, WHAT CAN YOU DO TO BE
ONE OF THE 20% RAISED IN THE
CHURCH WHO REMAIN
FAITHFUL THROUGH COLLEGE
AND INTO THEIR TWENTIES?

PREPARE FOR WAR (ARTICLE BY JOHN PIPER)

RECOGNIZE THAT MAINTAINING A CHRISTIAN FAITH IS WAR

- [Ephesians 6:11](#) reminds us, “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”
- [Timothy 6:12](#) reads, “Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life”
- [Peter 5:8](#) declares, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”
- [James 4:7–8](#) says, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.”



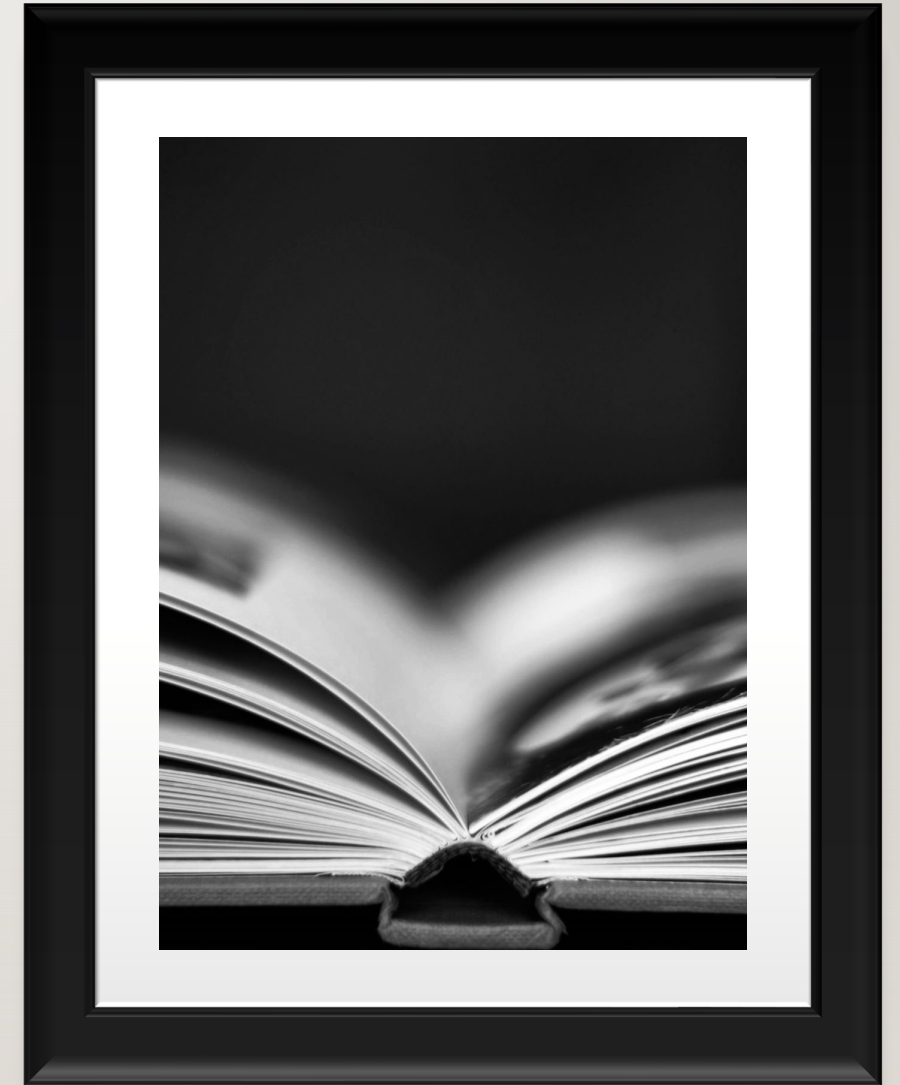


PREPARE BEFORE YOU GO TO COLLEGE

- Don't assume that you won't drift away — or that if you do drift away, you will eventually come back. We are all vulnerable. Ask God daily for an enduring passion for him. Ask him to give you joy in him alone. Ask him right now to keep your heart from wandering.
- You've been forming habits all your life, and now is the time to make sure you are forming good habits. Prioritize time in God's Word and being a part of the church **now**.
- Decide now what kind of person do you want to be. These are important questions to ask yourself before going to college. Honor your values and choices ahead of time. Flee from morally compromising situations and engage in life-giving things.

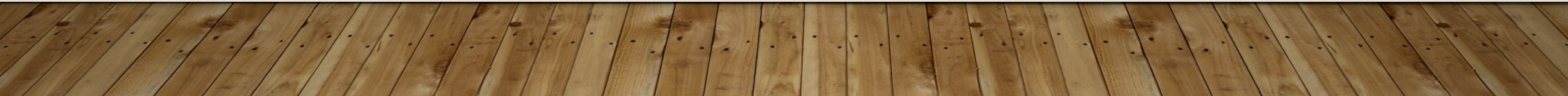
PRIORITIZE GOD AND HIS WORD WHILE ON CAMPUS

- Whether it be a morning devotional or a prayer walk around campus, be intentional with the time God has given you. Christianity is a personal relationship with the living God. Stay closely connected to Him by spending time in prayer and reading the Bible.
- The habits you set in the first two weeks of classes are the most important. This not only goes for extracurriculars and studying, but also for establishing consistent time with the Lord.
- Create spaces to have one-on-one time with God. Also, try reading with a pen and paper, jotting down insights, questions, and observations, asking God to open your eyes to see truth and to breathe life into his words (Psalm 119:18).



BE INVOLVED WITH A MINISTRY ON CAMPUS

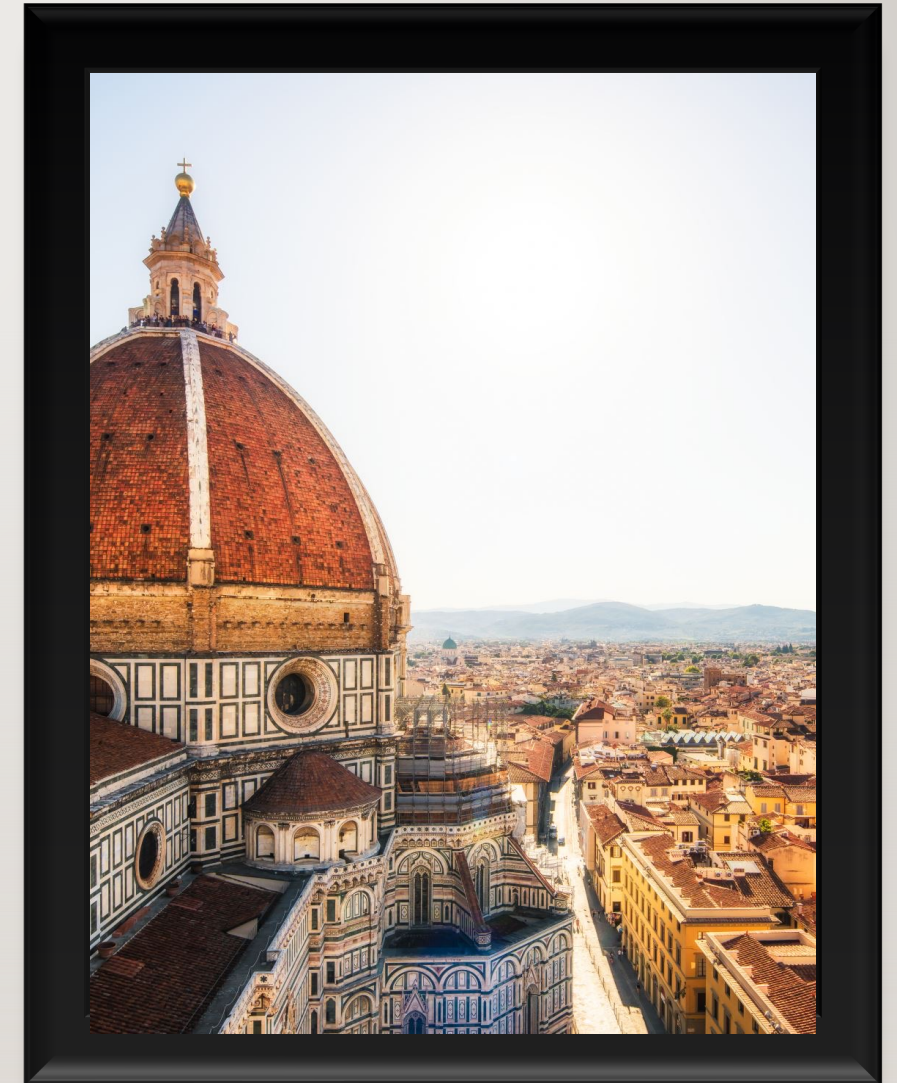
- Seek out other believers from the beginning. Join a Christian student group right away, or even better, connect with a campus ministry before leaving home. Many organizations will offer fun activities the week before classes start.
- Look [here](#) for a list of retreats available before freshman year starts to help get you connected.
- Before you move, you can check out ministries online or at orientation. Start following them on social media to see what their meetings are like, and when and where they gather.
- Once you get there, jump right in. All organizations will be reaching out to freshman, so just go!
- Do not just show up, get involved in leadership, or go on spring break or summer project/missions.



FIND A CHURCH

THE CHURCH SHOULD REMAIN CENTRAL TO THE RHYTHM OF YOUR LIFE

- Honor the Sabbath - Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God (Exodus 20:8)
- God has designed corporate worship and the preaching of his word and fellowship of his people to be an essential part of maintaining a military discipline in your life with joy and triumph
- Find real Christian fellowship. Plug into a church **and** a small group or on-campus ministry. The people around us influence us far more than we realize



BE INVOLVED IN THE CHURCH

*ALL OF YOU TOGETHER ARE
CHRIST'S BODY, AND EACH ONE
OF YOU IS A SEPARATE AND
NECESSARY PART OF IT (1
CORINTHIANS 12:27 NLT)*

- Before you move, you can check out churches online. Once you get there, make this a priority. You might have to church hop a few times to find the place where you can be fed and also where you can give.
- Do not just show up on Sundays, but to go to Sunday school class, community group, or Bible study. Surrounding yourself by all kinds of people, of all ages, in all stages of life, will strengthen your faith, give you wisdom, and add much joy to your life.
- Find a mentor in the church, a bible study or one-on-one discipleship
- Churches are made up of broken people striving to follow Jesus, so no church is perfect. Find a church that is alive and full of Jesus and is making an impact within the community for the Kingdom.



SEEK CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIPS

HAVING GOOD CHRISTIAN FRIENDS IN COLLEGE
REDUCES THE PRESSURE TO CONFORM

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- As you approach your freshman year, decide what kinds of friendships you will cultivate
 - [Hebrews 3:12–13](#) says, “Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another.”
 - Exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”
 - God has designed human beings so that no battle is to be fought alone, none. Jesus never sent anyone out on a solo reconnaissance mission--never. They were always two by two, and Paul’s missionary adventures were always in teams. We’re not designed to meet the enemy alone.

BE A GOOD FRIEND

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A HANDFUL OF CHRISTIAN COMRADES IN ARMS WHO ARE SPEAKING INTO YOUR LIFE AND LISTENING TO YOUR HEART

- Friends have a profound influence on the way we think and behave. We must be careful and wise with our choice of companions (Exod. 23:2; Prov. 13:20; Ps. 1:1–2).
- God’s Word warns us that “bad company ruins good morals” (1 Cor. 15:33). Be cautious and intentional, then, with the company you keep. And be sure to remember Jesus is the ultimate friend—“a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (Prov. 18:24). He loves you, and he will never fail you or forsake you (Rom. 5:8; 2 Tim. 4:16–17).
- If you date, date well. Do not date unbelievers
- Decide *now* that you won’t place yourself in compromising situations, especially as you have more freedom than you’ve ever before experienced. Sexual purity is the will of God for your life, so make it a high priority (1 Thess. 4:3–5; 1 Cor. 6:19–20).

ASK FOR HELP AND REMEMBER THE GOSPEL

LIVE A LIFE OF PRAYER AND DEPENDENCE ON GOD

- Plead with God to go before you to prepare the way.
- Never presume that you can do anything on your own. Live a life of dependence on God.
- Be weak in the presence of God so that you can be strong in the presence of men.
- Jesus conquered sin, death, and hell, and he did it all for you—for all who turn from sin and rest in him alone for salvation.
- Let go of the past mistakes, failures, and hurts and allow the message of God's forgiveness in Christ to bring healing for the brokenness of the past.
- Stay in touch with Mom and Dad, and home pastor or youth pastor. They are there and open to questions – no judgement. They will understand and welcome your honesty.





If you genuinely know the Lord, and see evidences of transforming grace in your life, don't be afraid that you'll fall away. He will hold you fast. He will strengthen you and help you. He will uphold you with his righteous right hand ([Isaiah 41:10](#)). If you are his, then you can be sure "that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" ([Philippians 1:6](#)).

PARENTS AND PASTORS CAN HELP PREPARE YOU:

EVERY COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENT SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR THESE QUESTIONS/SITUATIONS

- Be ready to answer:
 - What does it mean to be a Christian?
 - Why are you a Christian?
 - How can a God of love allow for so much suffering?
- How will you respond when:
 - You have to stand up for Jesus (in conversation or in actions)?
 - You sin and someone calls you a hypocrite?
 - A professor attempts to deconstruct your faith?

STRATEGIES TO TRANSITION WELL

- Know how to cook your meals and clean a bathroom, especially how do your own laundry
- Know how to keep track of your bank account, pay bills, and manage your money
- If you have a car, know how to change a tire or call for help (AAA or other service)
- Have a copy of your medical card, and know where nearby clinic or ER is located
- Be wise about your safety - be aware of your surroundings and cautious of situations
- Know how to take care of yourself if you get sick, and when to see a doctor





ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Website that is very helpful when researching professors:
<https://www.ratemyprofessors.com>
- Keep a 3.0 average (or more) to keep your scholarships
- Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence – 1 Peter 3:15



HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!