



Student Support Program

THE CHURCH OF Jesus Christ

Your College CliffsNotes

Advice from a college senior on selecting a school, staying spiritual, and more



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It is fall semester of your senior year in high school. The talk around the halls is none other than...college! From getting copies of your transcripts to asking for letters of recommendation, senior year is flooded with college-related tasks that combine to determine where you spend the next four years of your life.

We find ourselves repeatedly answering the inevitable question, "So, where are you going to college?" or "What are your post-graduation plans?" These questions are difficult to answer when you yourself have yet to figure out the answer to the question "Where does God want me to be?"

Spring is the season of

acceptance — and rejection — letters, and the decision deadline is looming. What do you do?

School Showdown

My struggle began when I got acceptance letters from the University of California, Irvine, which is about 15 minutes from the Irvine Branch, and the University of California, Berkeley, which is roughly two hours from the nearest branch. I contemplated my decision for weeks ... and then months.

During the time that I was waiting for the Lord to respond, I recalled Psalm 27:14: "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord." So, I continued to wait.

By the end of my senior year, most of my classmates and even several *teachers* knew me as the girl who said no to Berkeley, a prestigious public university.

What they failed to understand was that it doesn't matter what school I decide to attend. What matters is that I know I'm exactly where God wants me to be. His plan is much greater than anything I can ever imagine — just like my favorite verse from Matthew 6:33 reads: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all his righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you."

The floor did not have to shake; I did not have a dream that showed me the school I was to attend; nor did a voice speak to me revealing the name

of my future university. The Lord simply gave me the feeling of certainty that UC Irvine was where I needed to be.

Accepting the fact that I had to move six hours away from home was hard for me — and harder for my parents. Have you ever felt like God directed you to do something and you felt as though you were stepping off the edge of a building and you didn't know if you were going to fall or fly? Well, that's how I felt the day I packed and moved away.

Making Critical Life Choices

So how do we really know? How do we determine whether the Lord is speaking to us and we're not leaning on our own judgment? Sometimes we may wonder, "Does God really have a plan for my life? Does He truly understand me? Does He care about my happiness?"

In times like these, we need to focus our attention off of ourselves and onto the One who is truly in control. We need to muster up the courage to put our plans and our will second to that of our heavenly Father's. Sometimes listening to our heavenly Father can be harder than listening to our earthly father, who speaks in a loud voice, because God sometimes speaks in a quiet, tender voice.

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What is the solution? *Constantly* listen to what God has to say. We have a tendency to only

listen hard when we have a big decision to make, but if we make an effort to continually listen to what the Lord has to say each day, then we can definitely expect God to make Himself heard, whether it's through prayer, reading, or even music.

It can be difficult to not get caught up in the moment when making big decisions, but we must remember to take a step back and allow God to execute his perfect blueprints, whether we're deciding what college to attend, what job to take, or what career field to pursue. God wants to be included, and He wants the best for us guaranteed!

Dorm Room Must-Haves

God knows that college isn't easy and that we enter a new, uncharted world where temptation is prevalent, alcohol and drugs are idolized, and faith is questioned, but college can also be the greatest time of your life, full of growth and spiritual maturing.

Along with bed sheets, eating utensils, towels, and other dorm room essentials, here is my recommended college checklist:

- **Word of God** – When waters become rough, you have an anchor.
- **Courage** – You'll stand firm in what you believe even when people disagree with you.
- **Church directory for the nearest branch** – You are NOT alone. (Trust me!)
- **Fruit bowl** – To gather your fruits for the Lord.
- **Laundry detergent** – To wash away unwanted distractions.
- **Pen and notepad** – To jot down the blessings the Lord has given you since arriving. (You may need multiple notepads!)

- **Subscription to the SSP articles and online hangouts** – They provide spiritual clarity amid worldly confusion.

Almost four years later, my college graduation is soon approaching. No matter where God tells me to go, I know that He is with me, and I won't be afraid to take that leap of faith. The song "Just Might Change Your Life" by Sidewalk Prophets says, "It just might change your life, you're on the edge now, take one step and you just might find you'll fly. You never know what will happen next, don't be afraid to let go this time, it just might change your life." 🎵 🎵 🎵

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