

Grace and Jay Ministry

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Real Life Priorities

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*"I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad."
(Psalm 34:1-2)*

Hello everyone! Thank you for keeping up with us. The Huynh family wishes you a happy New Year. May God watch over you and guide you as you seek His wisdom and bring many blessings to you all.

I would like to share with you my experience in high school and college as an example of how keeping my priorities impacted my life thanks to the promises that God made.

Since I started college, I noticed more than ever how lost some people at my campus are. The word "lost" in this context means that they do not have God in their lives. To think that some students seek fulfillment through drugs, alcohol, parties, and sex is a sad thought. These young people keep putting off what should be their priorities, such as studying in college and, most importantly, reading the Bible and praying to God.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33).

The consequences can be detrimental when a student does not focus on school work, especially if the student relies on a scholarship. Generally, scholarships require the student to keep up a certain grade point average in order to keep the scholarship. If the student falls below that grade point, the student is in danger of losing the scholarship. Other students rely on loans which they have to pay back. It can be very easy to slack off and end up owing a lot of money because a student has to pay to retake a failed class or lose their scholarship. When you set your priorities straight, God will watch over you and be with you. The Bible tells us:

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." (Psalm 119:9).

For example, while I was in high school, I accumulated a multitude of accolades, especially in music and academics. One particularly special musical award that I received in my last year of high school was the John Philip Sousa Band Award. John Philip Sousa was an American conductor and composer. He is well known for his American marches that are still recognizable and highly esteemed to this day. This award is important to me because it is given to a chosen student who expresses great talent, leadership, and hard work in the band. I was honored when I was presented the award and taken by surprise! My band director did not tell our band which senior he picked for the award and I was not even going to be a music

major. However, I am thankful that the band staff recognized me for my talent and character and awarded me with such an esteemed honor.

By the time graduation came around, I was a member in the National Honors Society, ranked third in the top ten percent of my class, accepted into the University of Texas at Tyler, earned a scholarship from my university's band and Honors Program, and a few more accomplishments. Earning all of these awards is due to my diligence in caring for my soul and my grades. My accomplishments in high school was the first step preparing me for the next chapter of my life.

College highly depended on how I did in high school. I had to prepare for college by applying to universities, scholarships, and most importantly, know what career field I wanted to go into. Colleges are willing to give scholarships to students who worked hard in high school with good grades and volunteered for their community. The Lord had blessed me in my four years of high school with good grades, open opportunities, and a good reputation, so I was already on the right track when preparing for college.

When I was looking at colleges to apply to, I initially started my application for Baylor University, which is about fifteen to twenty minutes away from the town that I lived in. We were glad that there was a prestigious school nearby so that I would not have to worry about moving or living on the campus. The problem was that I wanted to study pharmacy, but Baylor only offered pre-pharmacy, which is two years of studying in Baylor. If I decided to go to Baylor, I would have to transfer to a pharmacy school after my two years at Baylor. That situation was not the most ideal plan because the pharmacy schools in Texas were in big cities like Austin and Houston. My family and I liked the charm of small towns, but for a while we didn't know what to do about my future studying as a pharmacist. During that time, we prayed to God asking Him what He thought was the best path for me. In whatever dilemma you're in, seek His counsel and He will show you the way, which is the good path.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6).

You might be wondering why I'm studying to be a pharmacist. Pharmacy is known to pay well, but a difficult field to study. I feel like God will be with me when the time comes and will bless me to be accepted into such a competitive field, but I must still work hard and keep up my grades and continue to tend to my relationship with God. I wish to study medicine in order to work close to people, people who may have lost faith and hope in their lives because of their illness. Not only will I potentially heal their bodies, but I will also heal their relationship with God by bringing them back to Him or strengthening their bond with Him. I'm not concerned about how much money I could make being a pharmacist. I want to be able to reach out to people through medicine because even if their bodies fail, at least their soul can be saved.

"When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them: They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Mark 2:17).

After waiting for some guidance from God, one of my mom's clients came in for a haircut and mentioned a new pharmacy school that was set to open in 2015 at the University of Texas at Tyler. My parents and I were excited because, after doing a little research about the town, we found that Tyler is also a small town, which is about three hours away from Robinson where we lived. I then applied to the University of Texas at Tyler as well. While I waited for the

university's response, my family and I prayed and asked for a sign from God whether or not He approved a move to Tyler to pursue a career in pharmacy.

After a few months of starting my last year of high school, I received good news and found out I was accepted into the University of Texas at Tyler. The next thing on the list was to take care of scholarships. The true confirmation from God was whether or not, after completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the university could offer me enough money to go to school with my tuition paid off. The reason why I needed to get what some call "a free ride" through college is because my parents cannot afford to send me to college. We also tried to stay away from loans because we wouldn't be able to pay them off. Since we were familiar with our financial situation, we knew that scholarships and grants were the only way I could go to college. Our family lives by faith and we believe that when the time comes, God will provide our needs. My family had to wait so that our FAFSA application could be processed in order to determine how much money I could receive. Meanwhile, I applied for outside scholarships, scholarships that other organizations besides the university offered.

My high school was very helpful to the seniors who were going to graduate by always informing us of any new scholarship opportunities throughout the year. It was also helpful to have teachers who believed in me and helped me prepare my scholarships. Some scholarships required the students to write essays such as the scholarship that I received from the Educators Credit Union Bank in Robinson. Only six students in my region were chosen for the honor and I remember the process of applying for this scholarship to be one of the more intense ones. With the help of my band directors for giving me recommendation letters, my dad's membership for the bank, the essay that I wrote for the scholarship, and God's blessing, I was able to add \$1,500 dollars to my scholarship. Thank God for His promise:

"Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel." (Psalm 20:4).

I was very honored and pleased to meet the other five students who also won the scholarship. It is clear that they are very intelligent young people who are also serious about their education. It was a great experience to be invited to bank's annual meeting to be honored alongside five other promising students. I was able to achieve all these great things in high school through God, but also because I strived to stay focused on my school work. I made sure to read the Bible and pray every day while being careful about my future and my studies.

I just finished my first semester in college which turned out to be a success with exceptional grades thanks to the support of my parents and of course most importantly, God. I was able to acquire a number of scholarships that paid off my entire first year of college with some left over to study during the summer.

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Phillip 4:19).

An important idea to remember is the consequence of faltering from the path that God prepared for us. I know that there are some students that go to my university that cannot keep their scholarships because they did not keep up with their work and made terrible grades. It is not uncommon that the reason some of the students made bad grades because they made bad choices. College students are able to access drugs, alcohol, and even hook-up with strangers for fun. Some college students who get to experience freedom from their parents for the first time are probably more likely to do those things rather than to go sit down and study.

These sins cause them to lose total focus on their responsibilities in college and thus they get academic suspension, meaning that their scholarship is in danger of being taken away from them because of their low grades. They might drop out due to extreme debt and stress.

“My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.” (Proverbs 3:1-7).

However, some students do not have enough scholarships to last them throughout the year, so they focus more on working hard in order to pay off their loans and survive the semester. A student may still avoid partying and try to focus on school work, but will still experience high stress because of other commitments, such as work or taking care of loved ones. Even if you try hard to study and stay focus, if you are not taking the time to bring God into your life every day, such as reading the Bible, then God will not take part of your life. In other words, if you are lost, no matter how hard you study and work, God won't be on your side until you finally make the effort to come forward to God, confess and repent, and then change. Not having God by your side will prove to be a disaster and life will never seem to go your way.

“Happy is the man that feareth God always, but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into evil.” (Proverbs 28:14).

I am thankful to God that He has provided me with the means to stay in school, but for those who feel like life isn't treating them well or if they feel abandoned by God, I assure you that if you input your talents and work into God, then He will give you what you deserve and reward your faith with His special gift to you. It is important to keep your eye on what is most important in your life. God should always be number one. Everything He gave you He can also take away and your whole life depends on Him. As Christians, we should never forget God and we should understand that there are tasks that we are responsible for and must complete in order to please God and fulfill our purpose.

“But godliness with contentment is great gain.” (1 Timothy 6:6).

I would like to give gratitude to God for bringing me this far in an important chapter of my life. He made it possible for me to bring Him glory and to help me learn from my mistakes. Thank you to my parents for supporting me and for teaching my brother and me all that we need to know to live a holy life. There are some parents out there that don't teach their children the best way to please God or don't even care about their children's activities, so I am thankful that I have parents who are so involved in God's work. I am grateful to the University of Texas at Tyler and its donors who made my journey towards being a pharmacist possible. There are those that God has blessed with material wealth, such as the university's donors, and it is a blessing that those who have more to give are willing to do so. I also thank foundations like the Educators Credit Union that take initiative to invest in young people's lives.

“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” (Matthew 5:7).

To my teachers: I thank you for working long hours even when teaching isn't always spectacular. Your service means a lot because you chose to teach and inspire a generation, despite the pay. I would like to especially thank Mr. Vetter and Mrs. Williamson, my band

directors, for helping me with my scholarships and always pushing me to reach my goals and to remain on task.

There are many on the staff in Robinson High School that has shown me and my brother, Jay, such kindness with small actions that actually show how much they care for the students such as Mrs. Bennett, the school librarian. Furthermore, I always hear other people complaining about how high school never taught them any useful real life knowledge, but I'm glad to say that there are teachers in Robinson that take the time to listen to our concerns and teach us how to buy a house, how to write a check and balance a checkbook, and how taxes work.

Next, I would like to thank my uncles, aunts, and good family friends. The world can sometimes bring a young person down with all of the temptations and false messages that can be passed around, but you, the uncles, aunts, and family friends, encouraged me to follow the Word of God.

Finally, I thank those who are a part of the church, who support our mission, and are a big part of the movement to spread the word of God.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." (Psalm 90:12).

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01/01/2016