

# **STUDENTS! SEIZE THE SUMMER TO GROW IN GODLINESS NOT DECLINE IN LAZINESS!**

Geoffrey R. Kirkland  
**Christ Fellowship Bible Church**

Usually at this point in the late Spring/early Summer floods of students finish their last finals and have a lengthy few months of 'summer time' ahead of them. This brief article serves as an exhortation to the young people to seize the summer to grow in godliness rather than declining in laziness. Remember this: you will either grow more in godliness or decline further in laziness.

This article provides five simple exhortations for every Christian student.

## **1. Plan Your Time!**

If you don't plan you'll fail. If you don't busy yourself with the right things you'll make yourself busy with time-wasters. If you do not plan and organize a schedule the days will quickly pass and before you know it the summer will be over and you'll be heading back to school wondering: "what in the world did I accomplish over this summer?" So, plan your time! Plan to be diligent! Plan to work hard! If you have a job, work at it with all your heart. Be diligent in your work for your employer. Arrive on time and pray ahead of time. Ask God every morning that He would kindly bring opportunities across your path to proclaim the gospel, to talk of your Savior, and to warn sinners of the coming wrath who are living in immorality. Show them a great Savior! Be busy -- but be busy with godly things. Plan your time! Plan to be busy! Don't be a lazy-man who accomplishes nothing.

## **2. Study Your Bible!**

A godly man studies his Bible. A woman of God loves her God and fellowships with Him in the reading and study of His Word. Dear student, become a pro at your Bible. Study it. Learn it. Devote yourself to it. Invest time in it. Remain in it. Trust in it. Comfort your heart in it. Gladden your heart with its sweet and delightful promises every day. To refuse to go to that party is not a matter of legalistic or 'old-school' convictions; it's because you study your Bible and you want to please your God, not plunge into sensuality. To refuse to give into *that* temptation of watching *that* movie, going to *that* place, watching *that* scene, hanging with *that* friend is not a small issue; it is a glorious result that comes from the Spirit-given conviction as you study His Word and resolve to walk in purity. So, get a Bible plan. Read it. Study the Bible in the mornings and at night. Read it over lunch breaks if you have them. Ask a friend to read the Bible with you. Try to read through all four of the gospels in a month. Attempt to read the Proverbs each month. Try to read through the Books of Moses (Gen-Deut) this summer. Be diligent! Be optimistic. And study your Scriptures!

## **3. Down to Your Knees!**

You are only as powerful as you are persistent on your knees. Your strength to get you through the summer with all of the challenges that it *will* bring does not come from your might, your knowledge, your grades, your school, your credentials, your social acceptability and popularity. No! Your power to live life comes from your weakness and your daily and deliberate dependence upon God in Christ as you pray in the Spirit! Pour out your heart to Him! Pray to God, through Christ, in the power of the Spirit! You have access to God because of the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ with the Spirit who prays with you in silent prayers to the Father. What a remarkable and mind-blowing reality! So, student, down to your knees! Meet with God before you meet with men. Commune with God before you converse with people. Fellowship with God before you find yourself on Facebook. Trust in the Lord wholeheartedly before you open Twitter and 'tweet'. Pray in praise! Worship your God! Adore His character, attributes, gospel, deeds, redemption, and provisions (be specific!). Pray for your church family. Indeed, pray earnestly for your pastor, the elders, the families (husbands and wives), for the young people, and for the various ministries. Pray for the

missionaries to be strong and courageous. Pray for God to raise up more workers and send them out! O dear student, pray! And pray on! And pray fervently! Down to your knees and devote yourself to diligent prayer!

## 4. Serve Your Church!

Precious student, don't get the summer pass you by without plugging in *intentionally* and *busily* in your local church. Yes, busy yourself in the things of Christ! Yes, spend your time with the people of God. No time will ever be wasted in serving Christ and His Body, the Church. You should plan your summer around the Church and all of its activities. Let your local church be the sun of the solar system of your summer. Don't revolve your time around Facebook, movies, friends, parties, working out. Those are fine. But revolve your heart and days around the body of Christ. *This* is what will endure forevermore -- the people of God and the Word of God. So, a student may ask, *how, specifically, can I serve my church?*

- ✓ **First, encourage believers.** Make it your point this summer to get to know a few people specifically in your church (not only in *your* age group; get to know some gray-haired, wise saints, and some younger folks). Encourage them in Christ, text them encouragements, pray for them, follow up with their prayer requests.
- ✓ **Second, write letters.** Yes, the old-school form of communication. It is a deliberate way to encourage folks, including your pastor, all your elders, those who have a part in the worship service, the missionaries, and other folks. It could be a letter via email or a hand-written letter delivered on Sunday. But write letters of encouragement. That may make someone's year!
- ✓ **Third, arrive early to all the church events, especially corporate worship.** Don't be lazy and arrive late. You don't do that to your final exam, neither should you do that when you meet with God. Get to church early, greet people, take the initiative to look out for new people, people you haven't met, the leadership team, and encourage the preacher with a brief word that you've been praying and interceding on his behalf all week that he may utter the oracles of God with unction. Arrive early and get in your seat and ready your heart a few minutes before service starts.
- ✓ **Fourth, stay late after the service.** Refuse to slip out during the closing song and adamantly reject leaving without shaking people's hands and talking *deliberately about the message just heard*. Stay late. Stay for a while. You're on summer break. Don't be selfish and just leave. Don't think about yourself only and not talk with folks. Don't rush out and refuse to encourage others and miss out on the encouragement that another may give to you. Stay and chat. Intentionally engage folks in sermon-minded conversations. Ask, "*what did you learn?*" or "*how did the Spirit convict you?*" or "*what must you change because of that message?*" Be intentional, be deliberate, stay late & see how God works!
- ✓ **Fifth, disciple someone.** You must be intentional with this or it'll never happen. The author to the Hebrews commands all believers to "encourage one another day after day ... so that you will not be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb 3:13). So, you, yes you, college student, *you* approach someone and ask to meet with them weekly (at Starbucks or your home or over lunch, or wherever) and talk about life for a bit, then open the Word and work through a Book of the Bible, and then pray for each other. Even seek to memorize some Scriptures. Make it your ambition to help others grow in Christ. Christ commands you to make disciples and teach others all that He commanded. So, why not do it *this* summer?
- ✓ **Sixth, have others over and show hospitality.** Again, this doesn't mean that you need to have a five-course meal every Friday night. But it does exhort you to consider having people over to your home. Yes, maybe after church, or before church, or on a Saturday -- and it doesn't even have to be for a "meal." Of course it can be. But it need not be a fancy ordeal. Keep it simple and make sure that your parents are aware and supportive of you having church folks over. Indeed, this doesn't need to be other students who are *only* your age. Try to ask an older couple to come over. Get to know them and their life and what they have learned in their journey with Christ. Ask your pastor and some elders to come over to pray with them and ask how you can pray for them as they struggle through the relentless demands, discouragements, and joys of ministry (all at the same time!). Be hospitable and welcome others into your home.

- ✓ **Seventh, evangelism outings are a must!** Get out onto the streets and deliberately share Christ with the lost. Get some tracts ([www.onemilliontracts.com](http://www.onemilliontracts.com)) and be intentional about handing them out (on cars, to cashiers at restaurants, to coworkers, to strangers sitting on a park bench, to those at the gym, and to any other living creature! Yes, share Christ! Your faith is real when you have an uncontrollable burden for the lost and you know hell exists, you believe in the immediate agony of hellfire and you are compelled, out of love and with compassion, to proclaim Christ to the lost. Ask your pastor to go out with you and share the gospel. Get some other students, and some other families, and go to a sporting event and hand out tracts and talk to people about Christ. You know the gospel -- of course you do. If you're converted, the truth that you know and believe in, *that's* what you must share with others. You don't need a degree in theology nor do you need to be an expert. God uses clay pots and weak messengers who faithfully impart the gospel (God's character, man's utter depravity and helplessness, God's provision in Christ and His atonement, His righteousness, and His resurrection, and the demand to repent of sin and turn to Christ in faith alone and to follow Him) so that His elect will believe and be saved! Do this! Be busy in winning souls!
- ✓ **Finally, get people together to pray.** Yes, have a few folks over after church to pray for the sermon, the flock, the families, the children, the lost. Pray for visitors. Pray for newcomers. Pray for the youth. Pray for the leaders. Get people together on a Monday night to seek God's face and earnestly plead for revival. If your church has a mid-week prayer meeting, *drop everything and attend it!* Make every possible effort to be there, be on time, participate, pray, and contribute. See God work and answer prayer! If your church doesn't have one, then get some folks together and pray through every member of the church, for the leadership, for the worship, for the purity of the church, for courage.

## 5. Read a Book!

You're already going to be quite busy if you take to heart what has already been encouraged of you. But even still, in addition to your reading of Scripture, pick a good Christian book to work through for the edification of your soul. Some examples may be: Mark Dever, *9 Marks of a Healthy Church*, or Thabiti Anyabwile, *What Is a Healthy Church Member?* Or, John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, or, Kevin DeYoung, *The Hole in Our Holiness*, or J.C. Ryle, *Holiness*, or Charles Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner*, or Al Baker, *Revival Prayer*, or Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*. Pick one of these books and work through it, little by little. Read it prayerfully, practically and apply it to your heart. And after you have applications on your heart, implement it into your life. Pray through *what* should change and then make diligent efforts to *make/incorporate* those changes in your life. Read a book and read it well. Chew on it. May your soul be edified by learning from other godly men who have imparted biblical truth for our edification.