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Financial Aid

Challenges and tips for college students amid COVID-19



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"If ye continue in My word, then ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:31-32

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MY RASHIONALE

By **Jennifer Davis Rash**
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Develop a prayer system for students, teachers this fall

My friend Stuart spent the late hours of his birthday praying by name for each person who left a message on his Facebook wall that day.

I love how he gave such a precious gift to others on the day meant for him to receive all the special favors.

Reading his message reminded me of a friend who does something similar each year with the birthday cards she receives and the Christmas cards her family receives.

When it's time to put the cards away, she gathers them in a basket and each day pulls out one card. She prays specifically for that person or family during her morning prayer time before tossing out the card — I mean, filing the card in the important documents folder, of course.

On a similar note, I attempted to pray for each of the classmates of my graduating niece, nephew and dear friends this year during graduation season.

While sitting through two live graduation ceremonies and two online ceremonies, I prayed for each graduate — well, almost everyone — by name. My mind wandered a few times.

As each graduate's name was called to receive his or her diploma, I repeated the name in my mind and added a quick prayer specifically for the graduating senior.

The pace of the names announced as well as the fact we all sat silent and still during that time made it a simple exercise, but staying focused and diligent

through all the names required a bit of discipline and tenacity.

The opportunity to lift up so many young lives in a relatively short amount of time inspired me to look for more ways to do the same.

As your child, grandchild, other family member or friend's child starts to school this fall, in whatever form that takes, consider developing your own form of praying for your student and those who surround him or her.

It might mean placing the football team roster next to your Bible, so you can pray for each

player by name over the course of a week.

It could be asking for a group photo of the sorority or fraternity your student joins and praying every morning for each individual pictured.

Maybe once a month, you visit the website of our Alabama Baptist-connected schools — judson.edu, samford.edu and umobile.edu — and click around on their sites to find the list of faculty and staff members and pray for them by name.

And then once a quarter, you do the same for your alma ma-

ter — all of them starting with elementary school on up.

What if the nearly 1 million Alabama Baptists in our state all committed to consistent prayer for our students, teachers, administrative staff and school systems in general? Can you imagine the possibilities?

And while I want sports seasons to return as much as the next person, those aren't the types of prayers I'm describing.

Check out the articles in this issue for inspiration on how to pray for our students and those surrounding them this fall. 🙏

FOR THE FRESHMEN STUDENTS ...

College life can be overwhelming at first, but you can survive if you 'trust God, hang in there, jump one hurdle at a time'

By **Debbie Campbell**
The Alabama Baptist

College was a new adventure for me — a beginning of sorts — as I left the comforts of home, my home church and my hometown.

Moving into the dorm and meeting my roommate was scary at first, but as it turned out, we hit it off and had many of the same interests.

One hurdle behind me, I thought, as we organized our room and explored the campus together.

As an excited, eager college freshman, my confidence was growing. I was ready, or so I thought, to tackle those 16 semester hours.

How hard could it be? I had

just graduated top senior in my high school class. College couldn't be that much different, could it?

I signed up to take a foreign language. What was I thinking! I wasn't. French 101 was a disaster.

After three weeks trying to make it work, I knew I was going to fail that course, not to mention the history class with a professor who talked faster than superman could fly.

By midterm I was depressed, certain this was the first and last college semester of my life.

I wrote my parents a letter to ease the shock that when I came home for Christmas, I wouldn't be going back to college.

The next few weeks confirmed in

my mind that I would be saying goodbye to campus life.

At last, finals were over, and I headed for home.

The dreaded grades arrived during Christmas break.

Shock. They were good — and with the good grades came a renewed sense of hope.

I hit the spring semester with a growing confidence in God, not myself, along with a life verse, Matthew 6:33, to claim through the next three and a half years of college life.

And when my sophomore year rolled around, I felt at home on campus — an entirely different experience from that harrowing first semester.

My advice to college freshmen: Trust God. Hang in there. Jump one hurdle at a time. 🙏



CAMPBELL

Your Voice



Share your comments, letters to the editor, blog excerpts, social media posts

'Eternal significance' of mission excites, inspires return

By **Lonnie A. Burnett**
President, University of Mobile

From the fall of 1964 when I started Bienville Elementary School in Prichard, Alabama, to today as president of the University of Mobile, I have experienced 56 consecutive first days of school. While each has been exciting in its own way, this fall might be the

most significant. As our new and returning students arrive on our beautiful campus this fall, they will return to an institution that, although it might look and feel a little different, is focused on a never-changing mission that has never been more important.

The events of last spring sent shockwaves throughout the world

of higher education. While the University of Mobile's faculty, staff and students did a Herculean job of transitioning almost overnight and finishing the spring semester completely online, there are several reasons why, if we can all safely pull it off, the return to on-ground instruction this fall is so vital.

First, our students need reassurance that life is returning somewhat back to normal. To young adults who have experienced disruptions ranging from schools closing to parents losing employment, and to personal or family sickness, the return to a normal routine will be a welcomed relief.

A second but equally important need is the opportunity for our students to interact with their peers. Like the Old Testament illustration of "iron sharpening iron," there is a wonderful result when university students experience the benefit from interacting with other students, many from diverse backgrounds.

Finally, the most important benefit in our return will be the hands-on spiritual mentoring that takes place in our Christ-centered university. This is what makes a place like

the University of Mobile unique.

A school our size and with our Christian worldview has the amazing opportunity to not only provide our students with the very best in academic training but also to lead them into seeking and following

their God-given purpose. It is that mission, with its eternal significance, that excites me most about this upcoming return of the Rams.

Fall 2020 highlights:

► Classes will begin as scheduled on Aug. 17. All on-ground classes will end on Nov. 24.

► Faculty will have the option of giving a final exam during the last class

meeting or in an online format Nov. 30–Dec. 3.

► Clinical experiences and internships will follow their regular schedules.

► Commencement ceremonies for the spring and fall 2020 graduating classes will be moved from Dec. 12 to Dec. 5.

► Fall break, which was scheduled in October, has been cancelled.

► For more information visit, umobile.edu/coronavirus.



Photo courtesy of University of Mobile
Lonnie A. Burnett is president of University of Mobile.

Weekend of Prayer Over Alabama Students is Aug. 7–9

First Priority of Greater Birmingham encourages all Alabamians to join in praying for students, teachers, faculty and administration during Weekend of Prayer Over Alabama Students Aug. 7–9.

We are living in uncertain times and this new school year is filled with fear, stress and anxiety.

Please pray for the health and safety of each school campus. Be in constant prayer for students who don't know Christ. Pray that Christian students will be bold in sharing their faith and God will take away any fears they may have.

There are multiple ways you can be involved during the Weekend of Prayer:

► When you pass by a school, pray for that school. Make a

school zone your prayer zone and drive around the school as you pray.

► Plan a community-wide prayer walk around the schools in your area. Work with your local churches to plan these prayer walks.

► Take time to encourage students, teachers and administration. Call, text or mail them an encouraging card to let them know you are praying for them. Provide them with a specific Bible verse you plan to pray over them throughout this school year.

► Commission students before they return to school.

For resources to help organize a prayer walk or to find a walk near you, visit firstpriorityal.com/the-latest/weekend-of-prayer. (First Priority of Great Birmingham)

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

Christ-focused education more necessary than ever

By **Mark Tew**
President, Judson College

As the fall semester approaches, Judson is busy preparing to welcome students back to campus. Since March, Judson students have been studying remotely, and Judson has been working proactively to adapt during the current public health crisis. Personnel have continued to monitor the latest recommendations from health and governmental authorities, and the college will comply with all applicable requirements.

When students return to campus in early August, they will notice a few changes. Dining facilities and classrooms will be rearranged to accommodate physical distancing. Food service will no longer be self-serve. And sanitation stations will abound. Other precautions, including isolation as necessary, have been

developed in consultation with local medical professionals.

While the college cannot eliminate the threat of coronavirus, Judson has implemented measures to mitigate its spread on campus.

Facilitating our students' return to campus for classroom instruction is crucial because distinctive, Christ-focused education is more necessary today than ever before. Society reveals daily that far too few in our nation and world know the forgiveness of Jesus that brings reconciliation with God.



Photo courtesy of Judson College
Mark Tew is president of Judson College in Marion.

It is vital that institutions like Judson College, University of Mobile and Samford University achieve their God-ordained purpose to educate future citizens from a biblically informed, Christian worldview. The apostle said in 2 Peter 1:5 we are to add to [our] faith virtue and to virtue, knowledge. Scripture does not

command us to augment knowledge with faith. To the contrary, faith must be the basis and bedrock foundation upon which everything in life is built.

At Judson, we begin instruction from the assertion that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (Ps. 24:1). Education that is anything less is simply less education.

As a result, we at Judson educate our students' faith primarily so that we can educate their minds extraordinarily.

2020–21 highlights

- ▶ Fall classes will begin Aug. 13.
- ▶ Final exams are now scheduled to occur before Thanksgiving break.
- ▶ Commencement will be held April 30, 2021.
- ▶ Beginning in May 2021, Judson will offer a May-Mester and a June-July term.
- ▶ For more information, visit judson.edu.

'Trust in the Lord' as we approach fall 2020

By **Andrew Westmoreland**
President, Samford University

Colleges and universities across the United States are wrestling these days with some of the most challenging questions in the history of our institutions. Likewise, students and their parents are perplexed with the vast uncertainty associated with family and institutional planning for COVID-19. The frustration is particularly acute for students who will be entering college as freshmen this fall.

Through conversations with dozens of university presidents serving at institutions public and private, large and small, I know that folks everywhere are doing their best to make this next year as "normal" as possible. This is particularly true for our three Baptist-related institutions in Alabama: Judson College, University of Mobile and Samford University.

"Large group gatherings" may be limited and last-minute changes may be the rule, but all three institutions are seeking to preserve our hallmark: Christ-honoring ed-

ucation offered through personal interaction with competent, compassionate faculty members.

Never more than during these days have I relied on the hopeful and helpful wisdom of Proverbs 3:5: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." Trusting the

Lord — and with months of careful planning — we will eagerly reopen our doors in a few weeks. May God bless this entering Class of 2024.

Fall 2020 highlights:

- ▶ Commencement ceremonies for spring 2020 graduates will be held Aug. 13–15.
- ▶ Aug. 24 will be the first day of fall classes

for most students. Cumberland School of Law students will begin on Aug. 17.

- ▶ All on-campus instruction will end prior to the Thanksgiving holiday.
- ▶ Classes will be offered in several formats: in-person, hybrid and online.
- ▶ For more information, visit samford.edu/emergency/information/coronavirus.



Photo courtesy of Samford University
Andrew Westmoreland is president of Samford University in Birmingham.

From the *Twitterverse*

@myarnell

... It is necessary for us to remember: The Christian academy serves the churches and their ministries, not vice versa. We are second. Be humble. Serve.

@davidwhitlock

Those of us in higher education must remind ourselves that God's plan is for the Church. He died for the Church, redeemed the Church

and the Church — not Christian universities, seminaries or denominations — is what will be joined with Messiah in glory.

@IMB_SBC

"The faithful Christian college does not merely teach evangelism and missions — it is driven by them. A passion for the gospel infuses every class, every course, every major, every classroom and dormitory." — @AlbertMohler

“Let the wise hear and increase in learning.”

KING SOLOMON
Proverbs 1:5a

Financial aid

By Shawn Hendricks
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Financial aid challenges and tips for college students amid COVID-19

For families looking to afford college expenses this year, the COVID-19 pandemic has turned a lot of plans upside down. And as reports of rising pandemic numbers in the U.S. don't appear to be going away, some financial aid experts say the view isn't looking anymore clear going into the fall.

With many families experiencing cutbacks in hours, layoffs and other economic challenges this year, the financial outlook for them isn't what it was a few weeks or months ago.

And now with a lot of schools preparing cautious plans to reopen this fall while also weighing online learning opportunities, many prospective students are determining whether college is a realistic option this year.

"It's such uncharted territory,"

said Marie Batson, associate vice president for enrollment and director of financial aid at University of Mobile. "I've been working in enrollment and financial aid for 25 years here at the university ... things are just different, just a whole new ballgame."

Lower numbers

The number of students who typically applied for U.S. federal college aid fell by half in the spring, compared to levels the year before, according to the Associated Press. This raised concerns many students were planning to skip or postpone college education for now to enter the workforce or planning to attend community college.

While the number of applicants has gone up as colleges have ramped up efforts to encourage students to apply for federal aid, AP reported July 5, the numbers



123rf.com

are still lower than this time the year before. Overall, the report says, "applications were down by 70,000 as of June 19, representing a 3.7% drop for the entire application cycle."

To remain eligible for federal loans, students are required to attend school at least half-time, according to studentaid.gov. Most schools offered online teaching to allow students to complete assignments and meet the requirements.

And, according to the Department of Education, work study students were allowed to continue receiving funding as long as work

was started or continued through remote work or other arrangements. But payment schedules and policies on this varied from school to school, according to a Fox News report.

Many students are simply trying to figure out what their options are amid rapidly changing outlooks on jobs, the economy and COVID-19.

Increased call volume

"We have had an increased volume in the number of parents or students calling, wanting to know what can they do if their parent(s) have lost their job, or their hours

“It's such uncharted territory ... things are just different.”

MARIE BATSON

associate vice president for enrollment and director of financial aid
University of Mobile

have been cut back as a result of the COVID-19 shutdown,” said Batson, noting that students have also lost jobs as well.

“There were a lot of our students that may have had jobs,” she said, “and because everything shut down, they were laid off or let go for a short period of time so that makes a difference in their money.”

First steps

Before any decisions can be made on financial aid for college, students first need to determine how much federal financial aid is available through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Recipients are required to complete the FAFSA form every year they are enrolled in school.

While deadlines and requirements vary for state scholarships, students can begin applying for federal aid as early as Oct. 1 for the following academic year, according to Federal Student Aid office website.

Some of the determining factors on eligibility, the website says, include expected family contributions, the student’s year in school and cost of tuition, fees and books.

Effects of COVID-19

After completing the form, each school’s financial aid department can then help students determine how much aid they are eligible for at that school for that year.

But many families are concerned that their FAFSA information, which is reflective of their 2018 income, does not show an accurate picture of their current situation, said Page Bates, director of financial aid at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee.

“Many families have been highly affected by layoffs and furloughs resulting in a drastic decrease in accessible income,” Bates said. This has resulted in an increase in the number of students and parents requesting “Special Circumstance” consideration due to the change in income as a result of COVID-19,” Bates said.

“In this instance,” she noted, “the students and their parents need to speak with their institutions financial aid department for more information on this process.”

Another significant change has involved the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Since March, fed-

eral loan borrowers have been allowed to temporarily forgo making monthly payments to their federal loan debt from March 13 until Sept. 30.

Batson noted that as more students are calling with questions related to the changing financial landscape, the amount of time on the phone has significantly increased.

And since the pandemic caused many financial aid staff to work from home — at least for a time —

those calls and texts have come at all hours.

Both Bates and Batson encourage students and their families to not be afraid to reach out to their financial aid office for help.

“We understand how hard this crisis has been and how our students and their families have been impacted,” Bates said. And she noted that “no one knows what a student and their family has endured as a result of COVID-19 unless they ask for help.”

There are an “abundance of avenues that can be explored when searching for educational funding other than federal or state financial aid,” she said.

Serving students

“We are here to serve our students and will do all we can to lessen their burdens,” Bates said. “No student should be forced to give up his or her dream. [Students] should reach out so that their institution is aware they have concerns.”

What students need to know about the FAFSA during the pandemic

By **Anthony O’Neal**
Ramsey Solutions

If you have a college-bound teen or current college student, you probably already know filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is one of the best ways to apply for scholarships and grants to help cash flow that degree. And let’s be real, the FAFSA is already confusing enough on its own, so having to think about COVID-19 on top of that just adds to the stress.

But don’t worry. We’re about to break down what you and your kids need to know about the FAFSA this year.

What to Know About FAFSA Deadlines

The FAFSA form has three deadlines: federal, state and school. Here’s the lowdown:

► **Federal:** The federal government gives students a deadline of June 30 after the school year in which they need aid — for instance, June 30, 2021, for the 2020–21 school year — to file the FAFSA. They can apply as early as Oct. 1 prior to the school year in which they need aid.

► **State:** For some financial aid, like in-state scholarships and grants, deadlines vary by state. Certain states may be pushing back their deadlines, so check www.fafsa.gov to see how your state is handling it.

► **School:** The schools your kids are going to, or applying for, usually have earlier FAFSA dead-

lines than the federal deadline. But just like the state deadlines, each school might be responding differently to the coronavirus and changing its deadlines as a result.

Bottom line is this: your kids should check with their school’s financial aid office and state guidelines to make sure they have their FAFSA forms turned in on time. And even if your kids have already missed the school and state deadlines, there’s still time to make the federal one.

What to Know About FAFSA When Schools Are Closed

If the college or colleges on your kid’s list are currently closed, don’t stress. The U.S. Department of Education’s Central Processing System will still process your FAFSA info and send it to all the schools you list. That way, your kids will still be able to receive financial aid when schools do reopen. You can also check with each individual school to ensure they’re still processing FAFSA forms and to learn more about their plans for reopening.

What to Know About FAFSA When Your Income Changes

If you or your kids have lost work during this crazy time or your income has dropped a ton, know that you’re not alone. There are plans in place to help with those situations, and your child might be able to have their financial aid adjusted.

Make sure you and your child

both answer all the questions on the FAFSA form about income and include any tax documents they ask for. Be sure to reach out to the schools your child is applying to after you’ve submitted the form, so you can talk through any changes in your finances.

Remember, your kids can get scholarships, grants and student loans by filling out the FAFSA. Scholarships and grants are great, but student loans can seriously hurt their future. Be sure they read the fine print in their award letters before signing any agreement. Paying cash for college isn’t easy, especially right now, but it can be done with the help of work study programs, scholarships and other financial aid. Avoid student loans if possible.

If you and your kids need more tips on filling out the FAFSA and graduating debt-free, I’ve got you covered with some free resources. See them at anthonyoneal.com/resources.

EDITOR’S NOTE — Since 2003, Anthony has helped hundreds of thousands of people make smart decisions with their money, relationships and education. He’s a No. 1 national best-selling author of “Debt-Free Degree” and national bestselling author of “The Graduate Survival Guide.” He recently released “Destroy Your Student Loan Debt.” Follow Anthony on YouTube and Instagram @AnthonyO’Neal and online at anthonyoneal.com or facebook.com/aoneal.

GRADUATING WITH HONORS

By Lanell Downs Smith

Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Traditional Latin designations recognize graduates who excel in their academic coursework

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Graduates look forward to completing their course of study, celebrating the achievement and embarking on their chosen career. Those earning top marks can also anticipate an award of distinction known as “Latin honors.”

Derived from the Latin word “laude” or “with praise,” Latin honors convey distinction for exemplary academic success among students who meet or exceed certain benchmarks.

While standards are similar among schools, each institution develops its own requirements. Most standards fall within a close range, especially regarding the required grade point average (GPA) for each distinction.

The three most common Latin honors are cum laude, meaning “with honor,” magna cum laude or “with great honor” and summa cum laude — “with highest honor.”

Less common accolades are awarded for particular distinctions. Students achieving summa cum laude in a specific discipline can receive egregia cum laude or “with outstanding honor.” Maxima cum laude meaning

“with very great honor” may be awarded to those with a perfect academic record.

GPA standards

A minimum GPA is the traditional standard for achieving these honors and may be combined with requirements for completing a set number of credit hours.

GPA ranges vary among institutions, but generally:

- ▶ Cum laude goes to the top 25–35% of the class with a minimum GPA threshold beginning between 3.4 and 3.8.

- ▶ The top 10–15% of graduates who earn a minimum GPA of at least 3.6 to 3.9 receive the distinction of magna cum laude.

- ▶ Summa cum laude is

given to the top 1–5% of graduates earning a GPA of 3.8 or greater. Institutions occasionally reserve this honor for students with a perfect GPA of 4.0.

Colleges may award these distinctions based on a student’s class rank instead of their GPA, awarding the honors to the top percent of the graduating class.

Student rankings may depend on credits earned only at the final institution, but some colleges consider transfer credits in the determination. Academic or disciplinary infractions can disqualify a student from earning graduation honors.

“We currently base [those honors] on Samford earned hours,” said Michelle Joiner,



Photo by Sarah Fowler

About-to-be Judson College graduates line up for the processional into the commencement ceremony in June 2020.



Photo courtesy of Baptist College of Florida

Collin Dollar earned the distinction of magna cum laude at Baptist College of Florida, signified by a yellow stole.

tion of the Latin honors, Judson prohibits the wearing of other fraternity honor chords at the graduation ceremony.

“We want the students who earned these distinctions to stand out,” said Parham. “We place an emphasis on the Latin honors at commencement because that is a measure of a young woman’s cumulative GPA.”

A trend is growing toward Latin honors at the high school level and some schools have elected to discontinue the more traditional valedictorian and salutatorian awards.

Alabama high schools including Baldwin County schools, Huntsville City schools and private schools like Saint James School in Montgomery have embraced Latin honors to venerate more students for exceptional achievements.

“We typically had a group of students whose GPAs were either tied or were within a tenth of a point

of each other,” said Susan Atkins, Saint James academic dean. “Many would have over a 4.0 due to the AP program and weighted GPAs. We faced a dilemma about how to choose one person out of the group when they all had great accomplishments. So we started using this system so that we could recognize all of them as honor graduates.”

Valedictorians have traditionally delivered the high school graduation address. Saint James allows the senior class to elect the graduation speaker from a list of the top students.

High schools awarding Latin honors often require

graduates to meet the same types of benchmarks as colleges.

Some, like Saint James, stipulate additional standards, like the completion of College Board Advanced Placement courses, a minimum number of credits in science or foreign languages and documented hours of community service.

Latin honors allow high schools and universities to honor the achievements of a broader range of graduates.

“We had so many strong students with excellent academic accomplishments. We realized there was not an objective way to choose only one student from the group,” Atkins said. ☝



Photo courtesy of Lani Ashner

Honor graduate Jake Hastings prepares to give the 2019 graduation address at Saint James School.

assistant registrar at Samford University. “Our students have to earn at least 64 credit hours here at Samford to be eligible for a Latin honor and then it’s based on GPA ranges.”

Universities traditionally bestow Latin honors upon undergraduate students earning their bachelor’s degree, but some award similar honors to graduate students.

At Judson College, a cabinet of the highest academic

officials sets honors criteria in consultation with a counsel of academic division chairs.

Cords and stoles

Judson confers Latin honors at commencement. According to Stacey Parham, Judson College vice president for academic affairs, the awards are given in the form of stoles inscribed with the level of honor.

To highlight the distinc-

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JUDSON
COLLEGE



College campuses as

Missions field

By Margaret Colson
The Alabama Baptist

Baptist Campus Ministries focus on discipleship, missions mobilization and gospel outreach to students

As a sophomore, he went to the Baptist Campus Ministries at University of North Alabama and “began to ask deep questions about following Jesus and what it actually means. He grew up

in a Southern Baptist church. However, during the quarantine, he realized he did not have a faith of his own. He had been walking with his parent’s faith and decided he needed to follow Jesus,” reported Matt Daniels, BCM campus minister at UNA.

A young student arrived a little late and alone for worship at the BCM on the campus of University of Alabama at Birmingham. Over the next three years, as the young man got to know other students and leaders at BCM, he went from be-

ing “a first-time attendee at the BCM, eventually a new Christian and ultimately a BCM leader,” said Bill Morrison, BCM lead campus minister at UAB.

Ben Crocker recalls his days as a student at Auburn University at Montgom-

ery, when BCM “was my lifeline. The Lord used my local BCM to connect me to the lost on my campus, to older guys to disciple me and to missionaries overseas who helped bring the gospel to the nations. It was so impactful; the Lord drew



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Photo by Matt Daniels

UNA Baptist campus minister Matt Daniels meets via Zoom with students sent home from campus due to the coronavirus.

campuses today. In Alabama alone there are over 300,000 college students — with perhaps more than 200,000 without a personal relationship with Jesus. The college campus is certainly one of Alabama’s most critical missions field,” Nuss said.

The COVID-19 pandemic, he said, “will for sure change much of our thinking and approach to ministry. Most likely there will be less ‘gathering’ of students and more ‘sending’ students to the campus missions field.”

But BCM leaders are committed to “appropriate safety measures” relative to the pandemic, he said.

Alabama Baptist collegiate ministry “will continue our longstanding focus on reaching, discipling and mobilizing college students,” Nuss said. “BCM, church collegiate ministry and our recent collegiate church planting efforts are strong and busy gearing up

for what promises to be one of the most challenging fall semesters in recent history.”

Being involved

Nuss expressed gratitude for Alabama Baptists’ role in collegiate ministry through their financial gifts through the Cooperative Program, as well as through churches becoming involved in collegiate ministry.

“Almost every church is a college church, and minis-

try to college students isn’t limited to churches in large college communities,” Nuss said.

With fall semester quickly approaching, Nuss urges parents and youth pastors to connect high school graduates and current college students to a BCM and to a local church on or near their campus.

This connection can be made at bcmlink.org/connect.

me back to campus ministry years later to serve my alma mater as [interim] campus minister.”

These stories of lives changed through BCM reflect a snapshot of the scope of Alabama Baptists’ collegiate ministry.

“I am admittedly biased, but I believe that collegiate ministry may be one of the most important things Alabama Baptists and Southern Baptists can do to spread the gospel, win the lost, ensure a future missions force and staff the local church for

the future,” said Mike Nuss, director of the office of collegiate and student ministries for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Serving students

Nuss directs the ministry of 17 full-time BCM campus ministers and 21 volunteer and part-time campus ministers across Alabama who serve thousands of college students.

“The missionaries, pastors, deacons, WMU leaders, church lay leaders of tomorrow are on college



Photo courtesy of Lee Dymond

Students from Auburn University at Montgomery serve in Puerto Rico over spring break in 2018, encouraging a local church and assisting in disaster relief work.

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Networking

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Alumni groups provide mentoring opportunities, connecting points for students, graduates

Lona Fontaine's connections to her alma mater have been really, really long lasting. She's kept strong ties to Judson College ever since she graduated in 1935, and as she's ticked off birthdays past the century mark, her fellow

alumnae have been right there celebrating with her.

This past January, she turned 107, and Beth Poole, Judson's alumni director, along with Judson President Mark Tew, first lady Ann Tew and members of Fontaine's alumnae association

chapter gathered around her to present her a special gift.

Beforehand, current Judson students had gathered on campus to record two timely songs for her — "Happy Birthday" and "There Will Always Be a Judson."

Poole said the second song

especially meant a lot to Fontaine.

'Strong bond'

"At 107, she still remembers the words to that song," Poole said. "It's just that strong bond of the memories and all that Judson has

meant to our alumnae."

It's a bond that continues. Poole said some Judson alumnae classes still get together every year for vacation or reunite on J-Day, Judson's homecoming.

"It's a friendship that lasts a lifetime," she said.



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Not only that — J-Day and other regular get-togethers present an opportunity for Judson alumnae to network, an important component of the lifelong Judson experience, Poole said.

“We have a lot of alumnae who are involved with the college and want to know about our students to reach out to them and mentor them,” she said. “We have had alumnae weekends where we invite our students to come have lunch with our alumnae and (seat) them based on their major and the alumna’s profession.”

Students also regularly shadow alumnae and have opportunities to make connections in their field, something Poole said is “so important.”

Casey Ramey, director of alumni programs at Samford University, agrees.

“The mission of the alumni association is to create a lifelong and worldwide community of alumni,” she said. “Networking is very important as we build that community and look to foster the growth of the individual.”

Having a friend

Ramey noted that one great thing about being a part of an alumni association is no matter where you go, no matter where you move, you’ll be able to connect with someone in that city who is also a Samford alum.

“You’ll already have a friend,” she said. “A lot of times we’ll have alumni who reach out to our office and say ‘I am moving to a new city’ or that they are beginning their professional career and embarking on that new chapter in their lives. Through alumni connections, they can begin to build their network whether it’s for professional development

or just that they need to find a church and a dry cleaner and get to know their new city better.”

One way Samford has grown these connections is through regional chapters, which provide instant connections as well as a way for alumni to share job opportunities with each other.

“It’s a way to encourage and support one another,” Ramey said. “It goes much further than just your time as a student; this is the next chapter, and it’s a great way to continue your Samford story.”

Allie Ratcliff, director of alumni relations for University of Mobile, said the transition to the next chapter of involvement comes easily for UM graduates.

“We’re already such a tightknit community as students at UM that the transition to alumni just kind of comes naturally,” she said.

“It really is a family.”

And as a “family,” they use a platform called Handshake that’s similar to LinkedIn and helps alumni connect with others in their field and find job openings. They also have a career services center that works hard to generate ways for alumni in the workforce to get on campus and interact with students, Ratcliff said.

Connecting dots

“Being able to connect the dots whenever we can is really something special,” she said.

Todd Greer, UM’s vice president for academic affairs, has also worked hard to implement these kinds of opportunities. In his previous role as dean of the school of business, he started an advisory group of alumni and community leaders to help students connect their education to the “real world.”

“They come in as mentors and advocates for our students,” Greer said. “They’re sounding boards for our students to be able



Photo courtesy of Judson College

Above: President Mark Tew (right) and others celebrate with Judson alumna Iona Fontaine on her 107th birthday. **Right:** Rebekah Lipscomb (left) and Susan W. Turner visit at a UM alumni and friends event in November 2019.



Photo courtesy of UM

to say, ‘Oh, you’re thinking about going into this? Let me talk to you about what that looks like.’”

For more information, visit judson.edu/myjudson-alumnae, samford.edu/alumni or umobile.edu/alumni.

It’s created expansion of their network in new and great ways, something that’s possible because their

alumni “want to be involved and pour back in,” Greer said.

“It means so much more

when students hear [insights about their career path] from people who are leading organizations and on the front line,” he said.

It’s a relationship that starts on campus and just keeps going throughout life because everyone involved “recognizes that it’s bigger than just them,” Greer said. “We hope we can cultivate this more and more.”

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Help college students get a ‘faith start’ by encouraging them throughout high school

By **Margaret Colson**
The Alabama Baptist

How can parents and church leaders help students transition from high school into college, so they not only succeed educationally and personally but also more importantly grow spiritually in their Christian faith?

Approximately 70–80% of “incoming college students move away from their faith in college,” said Chris Mills, student missions mobilizer for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Because of that startling statistic, Alabama Baptist leaders recently led a Q-and-A webinar, “Transitions: How to Successfully Transition Your Students from High School to College.”

First 3 weeks

“The first three weeks of college are extremely important,” said Mills.

Those first weeks of college “determine patterns” for students, he said, and also establish “connections” that may endure for the students’ entire college career.



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Of Alabama's approximately 300,000 college students, as many as 200,000 "do not have a relationship with Jesus, are not engaged in church, are not engaged in living out their faith," he said.

Cleve Mallory, student pastor at Eastmont Baptist Church in Montgomery, said time and again he has

seen students "who were raised in a church context" drift away from their faith.

To help counter what has become a "norm," Mallory challenges his fellow student leaders not to procrastinate but rather to "have purpose in what we're doing ... and communicate that."

When students are involved in a youth ministry, he said, church leaders, other adult leaders and parents must "speak vision into them" using positive reinforcement, stating phrases

such as, "I can't wait to see how God uses you on your college campus." Such statements create "a vision that they can see and that they can attain," he said.

He also challenges campus ministry leaders to hold students "accountable on campus in a biblical way and ... push them and challenge them ... to take deeper steps in their faith, where they can take ownership of who they are and who Christ is wanting them to become when they have stepped away from the umbrella of mother and father."

Staying focused

Keeping Christian students focused on their faith happens most often through local churches, Baptist Campus Ministries and other campus ministries.

Alabama Baptists currently have BCM on the

campuses of every four-year public college in the state, as well as on many community college campuses.

An Alabama Baptist transitions team has noted at least three characteristics that demonstrate a student's readiness to make a successful transition from high school to college:

- 1. Ability** to communicate the gospel
- 2. Capacity** to share a personal salvation testimony
- 3. Capability** to participate in beneficial ways in small groups.

Campus ministers and student pastors need to connect before students make the transition to college. Bill Morrison, BCM lead campus minister at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, urges student leaders in Alabama Baptist churches to give campus ministers "access to graduating seniors before the summer of their freshman year."

The SBOM office of collegiate and student minis-

tries offers a simple online form at bcmlink.org for individuals to provide contact information for graduating seniors so that campus ministers can contact them before they arrive on campus as freshmen.

Staying connected

Even after students have transitioned to college, stu-

dent pastors can keep their relationships strong with the students by connecting through technology or occasionally visiting the college campuses.

The challenge and beauty of youth ministry, Mallory said, is "we never get to know how successful we've truly been until they're beyond our reach."✠

To view the webinar in its entirety and access the form to provide information on soon-to-be college freshmen, go to bcmlink.org/connect.

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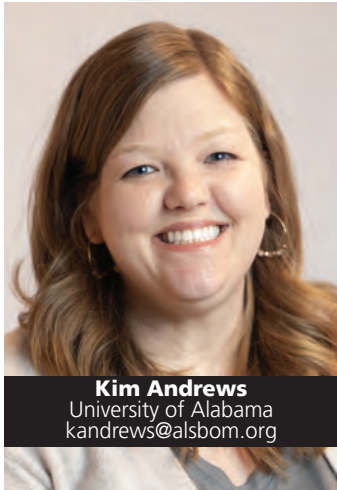
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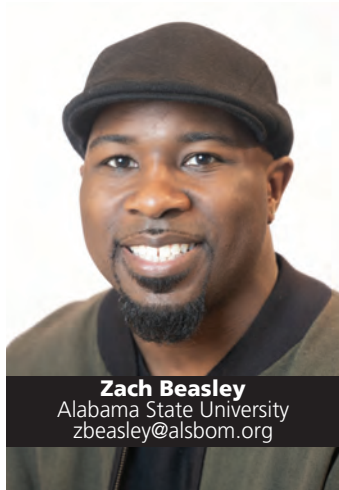
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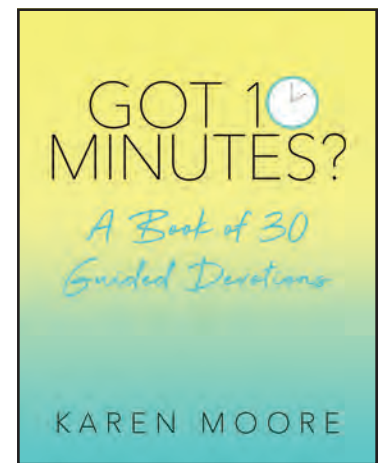


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GOT 10 MINUTES?



By Karen Moore

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The World Is Full of Choices

“Discretion will watch over you, and understanding will guard you.”

PROVERBS 2:11 (HCSB)

Devotional Moment

You may be getting ready to make your way back to school or back to your offices after being home for several weeks.

Whether you’re a freshman headed out to college for the first time or someone who works outside your home, it may be helpful to stop and look at the world with fresh eyes. Wherever you find yourself, things will be different than they were before. The first semester of school may be tempered by smaller classes and on-line course options. Your office building may have a

third of its normal capacity of workers at any one time as we continue to weather the virus of 2020.



MOORE

You will face new choices and often you will fend for yourself. Proverbs 2:11 is a good reminder that God has given you some built-in allies. He provided interior armor that can serve you well. Discretion speaks to your choices and the judgments you make as you

are presented with new ideas, people and obstacles. Understanding reflects the wisdom of those choices and the opportunity you have to do the right thing.

The message then is to remember who you are and whose you are, seeking God’s direction and counsel for every choice you make. Go forward with confidence that God is with you wherever you may be.

Prayer

Lord, watch over me as I walk out into the world.

Help me be wise about the choices I make. Grant me joy in the things I do. Amen.

Action Step

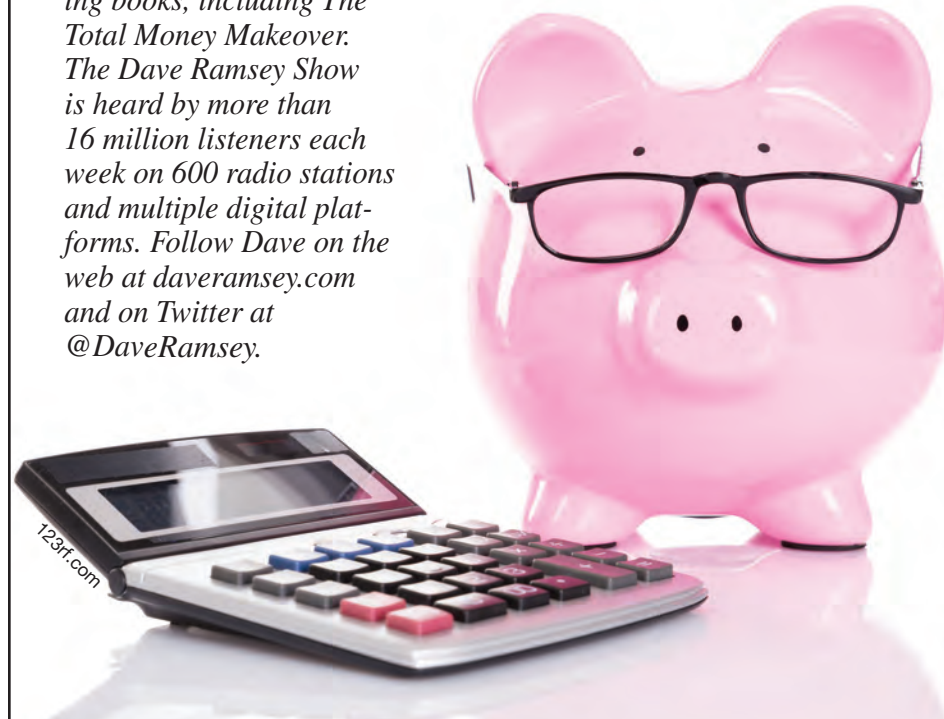
Think back on an unwise choice you made. Reflect on how things may have gone differently if you had taken 10 minutes to ask God for His help.

EDITOR’S NOTE — Karen Moore is the author of over 100 inspirational and devotional books. She loves to spend time with God every morning.

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EDITOR’S NOTE — Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including The Total Money Makeover. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 16 million listeners each week on 600 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.

Dave says: Let situation guide savings plan



Dear Dave,

What percentage of our income should we save for our kids’ education? We know you recommend setting aside 15% for retirement, but do you have a similar rule that applies to paying for college?

— Andrew

Dear Andrew,

I don’t really have a rule, or percentage, for how much you should save toward a college fund. If you’re following the [Ramsey budgeting] Baby Steps, I recommend getting 15% of your income going toward retirement before saving for college. After you’ve got your

retirement savings rolling, put what you can, based on your own unique situation, toward college funding.

If you’ve got teenagers in the house, you need to get serious about college funding soon — like right now. There’s no rush if they’re toddlers, but you might want to start looking at things like a 529 or an ESA (Education Savings Account).

The thing is, there are just too many variables, the main one being the ages of the kids, to set a strict percentage. You’ve also got to consider things like where you’re thinking about them going to school, how much you want to save and other factors.

— Dave

FIRST IN A SERIES

In their

OWN WORDS:

Alabama Baptists and the COVID-19 pandemic

By Madison Young
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Madison Young on being a senior in high school – ‘Not everything is going to go your way’

I'm Madison Young. I'm 17 years old and a student at Ranburne High School in Ranburne, Alabama. I go to Macedonia

Baptist Church in Cleburne County. My parents are Wendy and Chad Young, and I have two older brothers, Clayton and Sam. We're

a very tightknit family; we do everything together.

At [the beginning of the pandemic], I was with my friend at a tennis match, and we were kind of joking about how people were overreacting. Then they said school was out until the end of April, and I said, "Oh my goodness; this is crazy." I was kind of in denial. Then we got a call that school was canceled for the rest of the year, and that's when reality set in. I thought, "Oh my

goodness. This is real, and I'm not going to go back to high school." I was really angry at first.

I've been waiting for this for 13 years! I've been in school; I have a graduation; I want to spend this last year with my friends, and I'm not even going to get that. I was really upset.

Lost time

I go to a very small school; my senior class is 55 maybe. You would think be-

cause we're so small we'd be really tightknit, but we really weren't up until this year.

I started talking to people I normally wouldn't talk to, and we all started to bond, and then this happened. That was one of the things I was looking forward to — just spending the last couple of months with my classmates.

And then of course, my senior prom got canceled. I'm a girl. I love to dress up and look like a princess. That definitely stunk. That

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was one of my biggest disappointments. I love prom so I was very prepared. I was supposed to go to two proms actually. So those dresses are just hanging up in my spare bedroom, and I just go look at them sometimes and think about it.

Missing traditions

We always have a senior breakfast where we all go to the (school) lunchroom and eat together for the last time.

And of course, there's graduation. That's probably the biggest, biggest thing to me. You go to school for 13 years to walk across the field, and I was going to get to shake my dad's hand (he's the superintendent of Cleburne County Schools) and have him hand me my diploma. I was really excited to go up in front of my classmates, my family, my friends and be like, "I did it!"

My biggest challenge (during the shutdown) was not being able to go out with my friends because I'm a social butterfly. I like to be out a lot, hang out with my friends or go eat with my friends — really just do anything.

It felt really weird to not be able to go see them as much as I normally would.

First, I looked at the situation from a very selfish outlook. This isn't how I wanted things to be, how I wanted

my senior year to go. Then as it got more real and as it evolved into something else, I realized that not everything is going to go your way.

And then our church started doing Zoom meetings on Wednesday nights. We were on Zoom ... and our message was about disappointments and about how God doesn't make the bad things happen, but He allows them to happen. Everything has a reason. I started to explore in my mind about the reasons why this could happen, and I realized I have a lot more free time now. I can't hang out with my friends, so I would sit in my room. I would see a devotion, and I would read it.

I finally developed a mindset of looking at the bright side. I got to spend more time with my family, and I was less distracted by worldly things. I could sit at home and enjoy family time and watch a sermon on TV with my family. It was just an eye-opener for me. I started off in a bitter

fashion, but it made me realize that sometimes He'll put those roadblocks there so you can look around and see what you would have missed if this wouldn't have happened.

I've definitely appreciated my grandparents a lot more. Our family is very close-



Photo courtesy of Madison Young
Madison Young (second from left) and her friends prior to the 2019 homecoming dance at Ranburne High School. The students missed their prom in the spring of 2020 due to the pandemic.

knit so we haven't been able to see them as much. One of my grandmothers had a birthday, and we would normally go over and spend the whole day with her. We really couldn't do that, and it made me very appreciative of normal times. It's the little things that you take for granted, like seeing your grandmother. It's stuff you don't think about on a daily basis that has changed. It makes me more grateful. It opens your eyes to the blessings that God has given you.

I made her a cake and took it to her, and she sat on her front porch and we talked to her. We talked about memories of my granddad and all our family. It was very special.

Some friends and I had a social-distancing picnic. We all brought our own food, and we all sat 6 feet apart from each other. We just sat around and talked and that was really fun — different, but it was just fun getting to see how creative we could get with our plans due to coronavirus.

My brother's wife had a baby about 4 months ago.

We've been able to see them because we've been around them since the beginning.

They live just down the road from us, so we've been able to see them a lot, which is a very big blessing because I don't think I could last too long without seeing her (the baby).

Adapting to change

I've been raised in church my whole life. My dad's a deacon, and my mom works

in the nursery. I love going to church. I've always loved the people there. I got saved when I was 12 or 13. I've known the Bible stories my whole life. One day it hit me very hard that eternity only comes with Jesus. Everything is going to fade one day; the only thing that will last is Him.

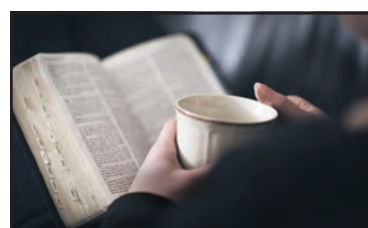
I want everything to be perfect all the time, and I want everything to be my plans. So I think the hardest thing for me was having to let go and let God take control of everything. Ever since I've done that, everything has been so much better.

Of course, I struggle. Of course, I'm not perfect at all. I'm not perfect, but I serve a God who is. You just have to keep your eyes on Him.

EDITOR'S NOTE — As told to Margaret Colson. In Their Own Words is an oral history of Alabama Baptists during COVID-19. The interview has been edited for clarity and space.



Photo by Jonathan Fordham
Madison Young receives her diploma during graduation exercises on June 8, while her dad, Chad, looks on.



Theology 101
will return next week.

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Seminaries

By Margaret Colson
The Alabama Baptist

Southern Baptist seminaries adopt 2020-21 budgets, plan for fall semester

Southern Baptists' six seminaries have adopted 2020-21 budgets that reflect not only a continued com-

mitment to theological education but also the reality of financial concerns resulting from COVID-19. All six seminaries tentatively

plan to resume on-campus classes for the 2020 fall semester, pending any new developments or restrictions related to the pandemic.

\$1.9 million from the original 2020-21 proposed budget. The 2020-21 budget is an approximate \$1.4 million increase over the previous year's budget of approximately \$25.4 million.

a budget of \$30.3 million, an overall reduction of \$932,000 from the previous year's \$31.2 million budget. Included in the budget was a 5% cut to student tuition.



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Gateway Seminary

In its March meeting, Gateway Seminary's board of trustees approved a 2020-21 budget of \$11.5 million, representing a reduction of 2.1% (\$250,000) from the previous year's budget and a reduction of 3.8% (\$450,000) from the original 2020-21 budget proposal of \$11.95 million.

Midwestern Seminary

On March 30, trustees of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary adopted a budget of approximately \$26.8 million, a reduction of

New Orleans Seminary

On June 2, trustees of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary approved a 2020-21 budget of \$21.55 million, approximately 9% less than the 2019-20 budget of \$23.5 million and 10% less than the original 2020-21 budget proposal.

Southeastern Seminary

On June 15, trustees of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary adopted

Southern Seminary

In an April 21 meeting, trustees of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary approved a 2020-21 budget of \$37.2 million, down from a 2019-20 budget of \$53.2 million, reflecting a 30% reduction. The seminary's board of trustees authorized its financial board to approve increasing or decreasing the budget, based on ongoing financial realities. Included in the budget was a 15% cut to student tuition.

Southwestern Seminary

On July 14, trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary approved a 2020-21 budget of \$29.7 million, approximately 6% less than the 2019-20 budget.

EDITOR'S NOTE — The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the spring 2020 semester and forced cancellations of SBC seminaries' traditional commencement exercises due to restrictions on public gatherings.

Look for a list of seminary graduates from Alabama in the Aug. 6 issue of TAB.



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Like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy covers our state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 2

Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



STAYING SOBER Proverbs 23:17–21, 29–35

The Promise (17–18)

Solomon warns the believer not to allow his heart to envy sinners. The “heart” refers to the seat of human decision-making. The verb “envy” describes a strong emotional craving to possess something. Coveting focuses on the object of desire while envying focuses on the person who has the object of desire.

The Christian’s hope is to be continually with God. God is to be our guide now, and after this life He will receive us into glory (Ps. 73:24). With this hope for the present and for the future, how can we possibly envy sinners?

The Lord will show us the path of life, and we will have everlasting joy (Ps. 16:8–11). We are to choose to love the Lord above all else.

Instead of envying sinful role models, believers should constantly recognize the presence of the Lord and our absolute dependence on Him. The general principle here is that if a believer follows this counsel, then he or she will experience a future of hope and fulfillment, not destruction. Believers are to fear the Lord, finding their security and hope in Him alone.

The Petition (19–21)

The repeated exhortations in the book of Proverbs to listen remind us of Jesus’ earnest and affectionate call to use our ears (Matt. 11:15; 13:9). They show the great importance of listening as the first step to becoming wise. For wisdom, no less than faith, comes from what is heard (Rom. 10:17).

Solomon proclaims a warning against temptation. God’s creatures abuse His gifts. Wine becomes the occasion of excess. Gluttonous eating degrades the soul and enslaves the body. We are warned not to be one of them and not to associate with them. Can we be among lepers, figuratively speaking, and not catch the disease? The best way to show them love is not to sit down with them but to work for their conversion. And if this is not effective, then avoid them (1 Cor. 15:33).

Solomon is pouring out his heart and soul to his son. Do not think that the enemy wants you to be happy. His malice holds out a poisoned bait. Poverty and shame are temporal fruits, but the eternal ruin of his deceived victims is his far more deadly design.

Look to Christ. Turn from your sin to Christ (Rom. 13:13–14).

The Portrait (29–32)

Here a drunkard is looking at himself in the mirror. Let him see his own face. Let him hang up this picture in his home. Let him hang up this picture in the place he frequents. Every sin brings its own woe and sorrow. Wisdom is calling out to warn us to avoid the allurements of sin. Often a seemingly harmless look leads into a fatal temptation.

The drunkard has woe and sorrow. The drunkard also experiences everything from physical fights with those around him to domestic disputes between spouses. He is prone to constant complaining and arguing. The drunkard oftentimes will have injuries and will be unable to remember how he acquired them and the reason for his bloodshot eyes.

Solomon answers his series of rapid-fire questions by pointing to the person who lingers over wine and constantly looks for mixed wine. These people keep on drinking alcohol until they become intoxicated. Solomon concludes this section with a warning about the deceptive danger of strong drink. It has an initial attraction but eventually turns deadly.

The Problem (33–35)

Solomon compared the drunkard’s inebriation to someone attempting to sleep in a small ship as it is being tossed about by the waves of the sea. The drunkard ends up with a complete loss of control.

Drinking strong drink can lead to an addiction that is very difficult to overcome. But we must remember the gospel of Jesus Christ and its power to save us from all sin. 🌈

Bible Studies for Life

By Roy E. Ciampa, Ph.D., S. Louis and Ann W. Armstrong
Professor of Religion, Samford University



WE PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER Ephesians 3:14–21

Pray for the power and presence of Christ to be manifested through His Church. (14–17a)

Paul indicates he commonly prays on his knees, a posture that reflected his submission to God and His authority. God’s authority is reflected in the title of “Father” and in the reference to His naming of every family (in Greek the “father ... family” connection reflects a bit of wordplay: “patera ... patria”). A father’s role in naming his children reflected his authority over them and the rest of the family.

The reference to God as Father also evokes the idea of the inheritance He may give His children (see Eph. 1:11, 14, 18) and in verse 16, we are told that it is out of the Father’s riches (the riches of His glory) that He grants us the wonderful privileges that are outlined later in this passage.

Jesus had modeled praying to God as Father and had taught His disciples to do the same (Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2). Paul models the same pattern here.

The proto-Trinitarian nature of Paul’s prayer is worth noting: It is a prayer to the Father (vv. 14–15), to be realized by the Spirit (v. 16) in terms of greater knowledge of and conformity to Christ (v. 17) and thus to God (vv. 18–19).

“Strengthened with power” (v. 16) is a pleonasm (using two different words where one would suffice) that reinforces the idea of the awesome power or strength that God provides by His Spirit so that Christ’s life might be fully reflected in our own lives.

Of course, Christ lives and dwells in all who have put their faith in Him. As believers, the Ephesians already had Christ living in them, but Paul is talking about the life of Christ being made more and more powerfully manifest and dominant in our lives.

Pray for a deeper sense of God’s love. (17b–19)

Paul refers to God’s love as a

four-dimensional reality (with breadth, length, height and depth), and raises the paradoxical hope of knowing that which is beyond knowledge: the incomprehensible love of Christ.

For the Church to be “rooted and grounded” in love is to fully comprehend God’s love shown to us in Christ. That happens in part by experiencing that love within the body of Christ (see the references to love in Ephesians 1:4, 15; 2:4; 3:17, 19; 4:2, 15–16; 5:2, 25, 28, 33; 6:23–24).

The Spirit reminds us and assures us of Christ’s love and expresses that love for each of us through the members of the Church who have also been transformed by that love.

Pray that God would be glorified through His Church. (20–21)

The Church exists to glorify God. As John Piper has said, “Missions exists because worship doesn’t.” As God’s priestly people, we live to glorify Him and to act in ways that lead others to do the same.

When Paul writes that God is “able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us” (v. 20), he doesn’t mean God will give us a Mercedes instead of a Ford or a mansion instead of an apartment.

He mentioned God’s power in verse 16 and clarified in verse 17 that that power was focused on making the life of Christ more and more dominant in our own lives. God’s power is also at work in other ways to benefit the Church, but the focus is always on powerfully empowering the Church to manifest Christ’s love and holiness to a world in need of Christ’s love and life.

We need the Church because we need each other to glorify God as we are called to do — glorifying Him when we gather on Sundays and every other day of our lives as we support each other in pursuing God’s will, righteousness and Kingdom above all competing priorities. 🌈

FUTURE OF ENTERTAINMENT

By Shawn Hendricks
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

A growing missions field: Hollywood careers and the future of family-friendly content

The odds of succeeding in the entertainment industry are already low, but for filmmakers, writers and TV producers who hold Christian values, the industry can be an even more hostile environment.

A group of film and television leaders shared their thoughts on their faith and calling to the entertainment industry during the National Religious Broadcasters convention in Nashville earlier this year.

Dave Alan Johnson, a writer and director who has worked with Steven Spielberg, DreamWorks and Paramount, recalled a conversation he had with his wife years ago after becoming discouraged from “fighting the wars” of the film industry. He wondered aloud if he should “chuck this whole thing and go be a missionary some place.”

Missionaries needed

Johnson, who also was executive producer of “October Baby” (2011), a film about a young woman who survived a failed abortion, recalled his wife’s response to his frustration.

“She looked at me and said, ‘Name me one place on earth that needs missionaries more than where you are right now?’ That moment changed my life,” Johnson said.

“So I went back to the same job the next day,” he said. “I was running a show. Hundreds of people working for me. Did the same thing,



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but [it] was a completely different day and I understood why I had been placed where I’d been placed, why I’d been placed and given the gifts I’d been given and sort of every day since then have been on that road.”

Michael Van Dyck, founder of Inspired Entertainment, said he had his own “Damascus Road” experience in 1986 after committing his life to Christ. For the past 27 years, he’s been a television packaging agent in Beverly Hills and has packaged such mainstream television hits as “24” for Fox. Some people chuckle, Van Dyck said, when he tells them that God told him to come to Hollywood and get involved in the entertainment business.

But it’s a decision he said he has

taken seriously. Today, he spends “100%” of his time helping package family-friendly and faith-based content.

“When I speak to young people that want to be in the industry, the one thing that is so critical ... I’m not a church history buff, but when pioneer missionaries established missions fields, blood was shed. ... Your life will come under radical, radical attack. And if it’s not God’s purpose and plan for your life, get out now ... It’s not a game.”

Adding value to others

Paul Castro, co-founder and chief creative officer of Torchlyte, shared some tips for aspiring writers wanting to break into the industry.

Best known for writing “August

Rush” (2007), a film about a musically gifted orphan who tries to find his birth parents, Castro said they should first get the right training and then focus less on accolades and more on the type of life they want to be remembered for living.

It’s not who you know in Hollywood, Castro said, “it’s who you know that you can add value to.”

Getting faith-based, family-friendly content to the masses is only getting more difficult, Johnson said.

“Hollywood does not share my values,” he said. “They’re never going to.

“Occasionally, they allow things or things get snuck through or God puts things through that reflect our values. But that’s becoming harder and harder and harder to do. It’s always been hard.”

For faith-based messages to have the best impact, he said, it is going to take a very large and consistent financial investment.

“I really have come to the conclusion that we have to have our own platforms,” he said. “We’re never going to have huge, huge impact until we have our own launching pads.”

And success takes a lot of perseverance, said Van Dyck, who left a lucrative position to begin a new career in the entertainment industry.

“I found myself penniless in the mailroom, thinking this is not a calling, this is a nightmare. But God had me right where He wanted me. ... The Lord keeps you going.”✠

5 ways *the coronavirus will change college admissions this fall*

By Robert Massa

Adjunct Professor, Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California

An experienced college administrator offers insights to future students

At some point — likely long before this fall's entering class graduates from college — the COVID-19 pandemic will be over and life as we knew it will return. In the meantime, Robert Massa, a former admissions dean from Johns Hopkins University and Dickinson College who teaches about higher education at the University of Southern California, has some observations that might help students who will start college in 2020 and 2021.

1. More time

Colleges will likely be flexible in allowing students to apply, even at this late date. Depending on how close a college is to filling its class, it may be flexible.

2. A better shot

Because of the economic consequences of the coronavirus, as many as a fifth of students think they may have to abandon their first choice college to attend a school that is more affordable, according to a survey conducted in March.

In addition, that survey found that a college closer to home would be a more viable choice than a first-choice institution for 35% of students.

Taking these factors into consideration, colleges are likely to admit more students than they did

last year because they expect that more of their admitted students will ultimately opt to stay closer to home or to attend a more affordable school.

3. Bigger scholarships

Colleges are worried that the health concerns and the economic fallout from the pandemic will result in more students declining admission offers.

For this reason, I believe colleges will be likely to offer students more money in an effort to get them to enroll. The competition for student enrollments will be intense.

4. More need-based aid may be available

If a family is affected by the economic fallout from COVID-19, they may appeal for additional need-based financial aid. The financial aid system estimates parents' ability to pay on income that was earned two years ago.

Due to COVID-19, income earned in the first quarter of 2020 may not predict a family's total 2020 income.

For that reason, it will be important for families to work with the financial aid office of the colleges on their list to help them take a lower family income into account when calculating the family's eligibility for financial aid.

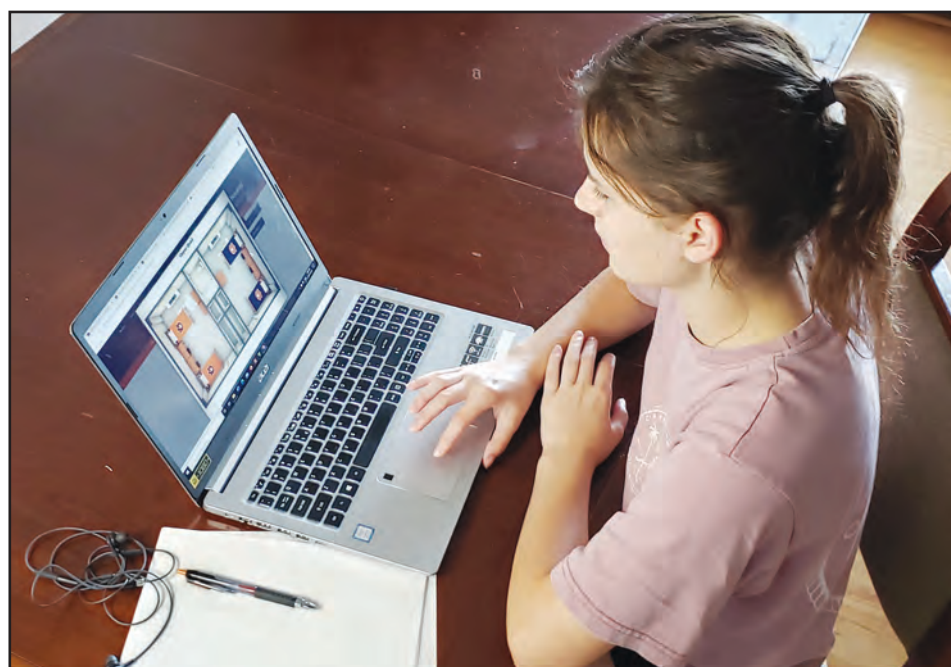


Photo by Carrie B. McWhorter

High school senior Stella McWhorter takes a virtual tour of Auburn University. As campuses closed this spring due to COVID-19, college admissions officials shifted to virtual tours and videoconferences to reach prospective students.

It is important for families to explain the need for more financial aid during the application process or certainly pre-deposit — not after paying an enrollment deposit.

5. More virtual visits

In the past, I always advised students to schedule a day to visit the campus of a school they might attend.

Among other things, I would tell them to request a meeting with a faculty member in a major they might consider, to sit in on at least one class and to meet with an admissions officer and a financial aid adviser if appropriate.

The big open houses for admitted students are great because you get to meet potential classmates,

but they are not the same as visiting campus during a school day.

Many colleges are now hosting virtual visits complete with live tour guides and interactive Q&A sessions. Some have also built upon existing social network platforms to encourage engagement with members of their campus community.

In addition to these staged visit programs, you can also request to meet with a professor on a video chat. You can even ask to visit an online class.

The visit really isn't about the buildings or the beauty of the physical space. It's about the people with whom you will live and learn. Hopefully you can get a good feel for that through the virtual version. 🌈

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