

SUMMIT

Summer 2016
Volume 16 Issue 2

journal

4 Reasons Why Students Walk Away in College

INSIDE:

Do Muslims & Christians Worship
the Same God? (pg. 4)

Falsehoods About Finding Your Calling (pg. 11)

And more!



Why Students Walk Away

This article is adapted from an lecture given by John Stonestreet at a conference for educators at Bryan College.

We received an email in our office some years ago from a Christian school administrator in Pennsylvania. It shared the story of a girl, a student leader, who had attended the school from Kindergarten through 12th grade. The administrator explained that the girl had gone to a university, and after three months, she emailed her parents and said, “Please don’t pray for me anymore, I no longer believe in God.”

This is what the school administrator’s email said: “We had her for 12 years. They had her for three months. What happened?”

There’s an alarming epidemic of students who claim to be Christians who go to college and decide they’re no longer Christians. Gary Railsback did his Ph.D. dissertation at UCLA in 1991 on how students’ beliefs change at college, surveying colleges and universities all across the United States. His study found that, at every level, from junior colleges to Ivy League schools, both Christian colleges and secular institutions, somewhere between 1/3 to 1/2 of students who claimed to be a Christian going into college claimed not to be a Christian when they left.

“I approach the topic as someone who has, [change] for years now, been able/[change] to sit across the table from students. I’ve been on the phone with parents of students

who have walked away from their faith. I’ve spoken at many youth conferences and rallies. I worked with students at Bryan College, and I work with students at the Summit. I’ve been able to sit across the table from students, talking with them, helping them wrestle with challenges, and sometimes crying with them.”

I’d like to look now at four reasons students walk away from their faith. These aren’t the only reasons, of course, but they are four of the most important.

Reason #1: Students Don’t Know Who to Trust

The first reason — and I think this is fundamental — students walk away from their faith is simply that they don’t know who to trust.

I have to begin here, because of the hundreds of students on the verge of walking away from their faith that I’ve counseled, when I get past all their intellectual concerns to the core issue, I find 90 percent of the time it’s something that happened in their homes. For 90 percent of those, it goes back to something that happened with their dad. There is no substitute for the home in the lives of our students.

The home is what God has ordained in the lives of our students to give them their sense of faith and to give them their sense of identity. When the home falls apart, students are lost. And as the home goes, so goes the church.

I was asked to speak at a youth

discipleship meeting in Virginia a couple of years ago. Right before my last talk, a girl came up to me and said she had some questions for me. We sat down and she said, “John, why does God let bad things happen?” So we talked for about 45 minutes, and I felt like I nailed it. Then I looked at her and I realized she didn’t look very satisfied. She said, “I understand what you are trying to do and it makes sense now and everything, but you just weren’t able to help me.” I said, “I’m sorry, I really was hoping to be able to help you.” Then I asked if she had a mentor, a parent or an adult in her life that could help her wrestle through some of these questions, and she said, “Well, I used to have someone. My dad.” She went on to tell me before her dad became a Christian several years ago, he was a drug addict. He had one of those 180-degree miraculous conversions, had grown quickly and was passionate about the Lord and His word. He actually entered the ministry, and was co-pastoring a church.

She continued, “A year ago my dad came to our family and confessed that he was again addicted to cocaine.”

He went to the co-pastor of the church with the intention of stepping out of the teaching ministry, and remaining in the body of Christ for healing and reconciliation with his family. She told me that pastor took their family up in front of the congregation, flushed out the dirty see [walking away pg 6](#)

3 Myths That Shrink Faith and Drive Students From the Church

LifeWay did a study years ago showing that 70 percent of 23- to 30-year-olds drop out of church, and only about 35 percent return later to attend regularly. Sometimes we call this a problem with discipleship, evangelism, or faith formation, but we rarely call it what I think it is: the consequence of bad ideas.

I believe there are three faith-shrinking myths driving this generation out of the church, and we must prepare ourselves to recognize them and respond.

The first myth is that God isn't relevant to anything outside of church. Many Christians say, "I attended church because my grandparents attended and my parents attended. Now I attend because it's what we do."

Sometimes this ritual can get in the way of applying what we really believe. Those held captive by this myth go to church, but faith doesn't change how they vote, how they work, or anything about their life. The study of God is called "theology." It comes from the combination of the Greek words *theos* (God) and *logos* (thoughts). Our thoughts about God make up our theology.

Every person is a theologian. In fact, A.W. Tozer wrote that "whatever comes into our mind when we think about God is the most important thing about us." Our

thoughts don't change who God is, but they reveal how we apply what we believe about God to everything else.

Researchers at Baylor University studied what people thought about God. They found that those who believed God is "disengaged" were more likely to believe activities like abortion and same-sex marriage are not wrong at all. They don't believe God really cares about what is going on around us. But Paul writes in Colossians 2:3: "All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" are hidden in Christ. All of them.

We're finding that young adults are disengaging not because they don't want community. They are disengaging because they don't see how what is going on in the church is relevant to their culture. What does the church have to say about life and marriage? Young people are asking us to help them give wise answers to their friends about marriage, gender, equality, and those issues of life that mean something to them. That's a reasonable request. We shouldn't be afraid of those questions because God holds all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Students studying with us this summer will go through 56 hours of learning in the classroom. They'll go whitewater rafting, surfing, rock climbing, and have many



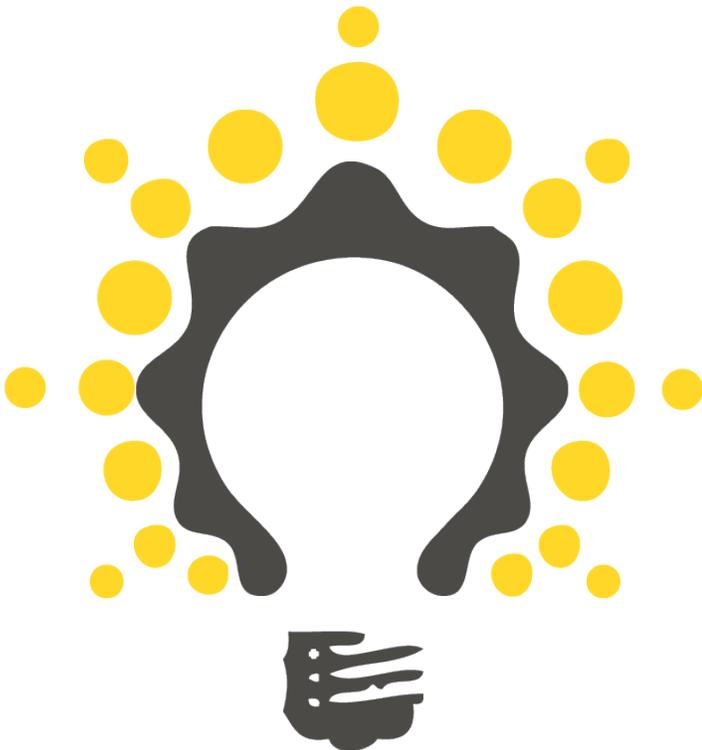
other great experiences. They'll hear some of the most compelling speakers on the topics of relationships, creation, gender identity, and a host of other subjects. After all this, students tell us that they feel closer to God. They tell us that they grow in their personal devotions. They grow in their understanding of a Christian worldview. They grow in their engagement with the world.

When students realize that God is relevant — things really begin to change for them.

The second myth is that faith is just about feeling. In fact, faith is also about thinking. Growing up, I went to a university with a strong Christian tradition. In one of my

see 3 myths pg 9

Do Muslims and Christians Worship the Same God?



Apologist Alan Shlemon is a speaker with Stand to Reason and a Summit faculty member. He regularly speaks to students at churches, colleges, and conferences across the country. Find him on Twitter at @AlanShlemon, and for more from Alan, visit StandtoReason.org.

Aaron Atwood: Alan, thanks so much for your time. I want to dive in. Today I want to ask you this question: Do Muslims and Christians worship the same God?

Alan Shlemon: That's a great question. There's been a lot of discussion about that recently, amongst both Muslims and Christians, precipitated by the professor at Wheaton who claimed that, "Yes, we do worship the same God." Of course, that created a big stir.

Before I answer that question, I want to say that however we come down on this issue, it's not necessary for Christians and Muslims to worship the same God for us to get along and to be at peace with each other. It's perfectly OK if it turns out that Christians and Muslims

have radically different theologies on the nature of God; we can get along. When you think about it, that's the true definition of tolerance. Tolerance isn't agreement. Tolerance is disagreement with somebody, with someone who doesn't share your beliefs or practices, but you still respect them as an individual. I think that Christians and Muslims, if it turns out that we actually don't worship the same God and we have radically different theologies, we can still be at peace. We can still get along and we don't have to demonize each other.

I say this because there is this tendency amongst some believers to say, "We've got to have some sort of common ground, some sort of commonality, to bring our theologies closer together so that there can be harmony between Christians and Muslims."

Having said that, let's turn our attention to this question of whether or not Muslims and Christians worship the same God.

“Tolerance isn't agreement. Tolerance is disagreement with somebody, with someone who doesn't share your beliefs ... but you still respect them as an individual.”

The word "god" is actually not God's name. "God" is more like the title of a position than the name of a person. The position of God is a "what," but the person who fills that position is a "who." Imagine a political office, like the presidency of the United States. Right now, we're in an election cycle where there are many people who are trying to become the next President of the United States. The President of the United States, that position, is a "what," but the person who occupies

that position is a “who.” It’s a specific person, a specific name.

In the same way, “god” is the title of a position or an office. It turns out that, yes, both Christians and Muslims believe in the same “what” in that they believe in a God who creates, who answers prayer, who judges, etc., but each of them believe a different person occupies that role.

Aaron Atwood: That’s a great analogy.

Alan Shlemon: If you ask, then, who occupies that role, Muslims would say that the person who occupies the office of God is Allah, and Christians would say it is Yahweh. When you look at these individual persons, you’ll find they’re different on fundamental levels. For example, Muslims believe Allah is a unitarian God — there is only one person who is God — whereas Christians believe Yahweh is Trinitarian — three persons who all are God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There’s a huge difference between Allah and Yahweh.

Muslims believe Allah is impersonal. Christians believe Yahweh is personal. Muslims believe Allah is transcendent, meaning he’s created the universe but he is separate from that universe and doesn’t interact and come into the universe. Whereas Christians would say, “No, Yahweh is transcendent but He’s also imminent.” He enters into his creation (of course, Jesus is the perfect expression of this) and dialogues and interacts with his people. Muslims would never call Allah Father, but yet Christians would definitely call God Father.

These are fundamental differences. For Christians to deny the trinity would be heresy, but for Muslims, to affirm the trinity would be blasphemy. These aren’t just minor, superficial details. They’re fundamental to each religion. When you look then at the identity of Allah and Yahweh, you realize these are two different persons who are vying for the office of God. That’s why I say Christians and Muslims both believe in the same “what” — a God who creates and demands worship and so on and so forth — but we are worshiping a different “who” — that is, whoever we believe is the person that occupies the office of God.

Aaron Atwood: That makes sense, absolutely. Another question — don’t Muslims, though, consider parts of

the Bible to be revelation? How does that affect this question?

Alan Shlemon: That’s right. The Koran, it teaches there are three divine revelations in the Bible that are true revelations from Allah. They believe the Torah [the first five books of the Old Testament], the Psalms, and the Gospel are true revelations given by Allah to different prophets. They believe that Moses was a prophet of Allah and given the Torah. They believe King David was a prophet of Allah who was given the revelation of the Psalms. And they believe that Jesus was also a prophet of Allah who was given the revelation of the Gospel.

Having said that, though, they would say that the Torah, the Psalms, and the Gospel, although they were true revelations at one time, have since been corrupted either intentionally or unintentionally by Muslims and Christians and are not trustworthy in the form they exist in today. So while there are some similarities — for example, they would look to Jesus as a prophet, but they don’t believe him the son of God, nor the second person of the trinity, not God incarnate — they are not true revelations.

One further point on whether Christians and Muslims worship the same God — All you have to do is ask one simple question: If Jesus appeared in downtown Detroit today, what would happen? While Christians in that area would see Jesus and would bow down to worship him, no Muslim in Detroit would bow down and worship Jesus as God. For Christians to worship that man Jesus would be a great act of devotion, but for Muslims to worship that man Jesus would be to commit the greatest sin in Islam, the sin of shirk, which is unpardonable and guarantees you go to hell. Based on that alone, I think it’s clear that Christians and Muslims do not worship the same God. It’s an easy way to distill the whole idea of “who” and “what,” the office of God and the person of Yahweh or Allah.

Aaron Atwood: That’s really helpful. As a follow-up, Alan, it’s common to hear the claim that “all roads lead ultimately to the same God.” How would you respond to something like that?

Alan Shlemon: This reminds me of an illustration I heard J.P. Moreland use. He asked the people he was

see **from the podcast** pg 8

WALKING AWAY

cont. from page 2

laundry, and kicked us out of the church.

“John,” she said, “I’m mad at my dad because he let us down. I’m mad at that pastor because he said he was our friend and he stabbed us in the back. I’m mad at all the people of that church because they said that they were behind us and they weren’t, and I’m mad at God. I know I’m not supposed to be mad at God, so I’m mad at myself.”

Suddenly it hit me. Her question wasn’t “Why does God let bad things happen?” It was “Why did God let that happen to me?” And that’s a very different question.

She had heard her whole life that the two things she can count on are her family and her church. Then those two things collapsed. The problem here isn’t moral failures. Our own worldview says we’re going to sin. We’re going to fail morally. We hate that, but that’s what’s going to happen. The important thing is that we have a culture of Christian morality while still having a culture of grace. I’ve met far too many young people who tell me, “Yeah, I’ve blown it, and if I ever confessed it to my dad, or my school, or my pastor, they would never forgive me.”

We tell our kids that God loves them so much that he would rather die than live without them, and that God has grace that can cover all of their sins, and yet we do not create an environment of grace in our homes and schools and churches.

This is a very personal issue for me, because I have a close friend who grew up in a Christian school

who blew it morally as a ninth grader and was never forgiven. So much so that as a 12th grader, even though her life had completely changed, she was never allowed in positions of leadership because of that mistake. It warped her picture of God, so much that when she had a child later on, she confided to me that she was scared that God was going to do something to her child to pay her back for everything that she’d done. Is that God? If that’s the example we set, is it any wonder children grow up with a poor idea

“If we don’t know that we’re made in the image of God, how are we to know what redemption or wholeness even means?”

of God? We need to figure this out, because the message of the cross is at its fundamental state a message of grace.

Reason #2: Students Don’t Know Who They Are

The second reason why I see young people walking away from their faith is because they don’t know who they are. In Psalm 135, David spends the first 14 verses telling us why we ought to worship God: because he’s great, he’s gracious, he’s faithful, he’s eternal, he’s sovereign, he’s good, and so

on. Then, in verse 15, he says you should worship God not only because of who God is, but because of what happens if you worship someone or something else. David writes:

15 The idols of the nations are silver and gold,

made by human hands.

16 They have mouths, but cannot speak,

eyes, but cannot see.

17 They have ears, but cannot hear,

nor is there breath in their mouths.

18 Those who make them will be like them,

and so will all who trust in them.

We know that. We know it’s silly for a man to take a block of wood and carve an ear on one half and pray to it. But David doesn’t stop there. He goes on to say that when we worship false gods, something happens to us. In verse 18 he writes, “Those who make idols will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.”

What if it’s true? What if God structured the world in such a way that we literally *become* what we worship? Now, we know that’s true with Christianity — the point of Christianity is that we’re transformed in the image of God and to the image of his son. But what if it’s true the other way? What if, when worshipping an idol, it causes us to forget who we are? Our young people are growing up in a culture that assumes that God is at best irrelevant and at worst non-existent.

Because they don't know God, they don't know themselves.

If we don't know that we're made in the image of God, how are we to know what redemption or wholeness even means? In his book *What's Wrong with the World*, G.K. Chesterton wrote that "the huge modern heresy is to alter the human soul to fit modern social conditions instead of altering modern social conditions to fit the human soul." When you embrace a false worldview, you forget who you are.

Reason #3: Students Don't Know What They're For

When you embrace a wrong worldview, you also forget what you're for. God saves us to live. Robert Johnson writes in *The World According to God* it's not just that God wants you to give 100 percent of your life to him, he is going to give 100 percent of your life to *you*. We just have to go live it. There's a reason that Proverbs tells us that where there is no vision the people perish, that they cast off restraint. You know what makes a difference? A common vision. Give young people a why. Then they can live with any what.

T.S. Eliot talked about this in his article "The Aims of Education." He said there are two questions that confront us about education. Number one, what is it that we *do*, and number two, what are we *for*? Now, when you meet a senior in high school, what do you ask him? What are you going to do, right? What's the more fundamental question? T.S. Eliot says if we want to know

what education is for, we need to ask "What is man for?" We answer that question with the Bible.

This is really important: We tell kids what to do with the Bible, but we often fail to tell them what the Bible is for.

“The Bible is not a rule book; it's a map, a guide, a framework for life.”

Christ saves us for himself. That's what gives kids value, not what they look like or what they do. They're valuable because God has created them to bear his image and has called them to build his kingdom. The Bible is not a rule book; it's a map, a guide, a framework for life.

Reason #4: Students Just Don't "Get" Christianity

Finally, young people just don't get Christianity. They don't know why they believe. Part of the problem is their questions have been discouraged or not taken seriously. We've given our kids a lot of answers without helping them wrestle with their own questions. Now, it is important they ask questions in the right way. There's a difference between earnestly seeking truth and skepticism or picking fights. That being said, any question is a good question if they ask it in a right way. If Christianity is true, it can handle the questions.

Another aspect of the problem is practical atheism. This is an in-

sight from the book *The Way of the Modern World* by Craig Gay. He says the problem isn't that people don't believe in God. The problem is that people live as if God is irrelevant, as if they were practical atheists. Our goal as Christian parents, teachers, or grandparents isn't to make them behave like Christians but to help them *be* Christians for the rest of their lives. Fundamentally, we've missed the goal if we look *at* the word of God not *through* the Word of God. The Bible is not only a book to be memorized and learned. We do memorize it and learn it, but why? Because the Bible is that which God has given us for understanding the world that we live in. That's what the Bible is for.

Now What?

Now, let me turn the page here. I want to talk about the the characteristics of the kids who get it, who live lives of faithfulness.

I get much of this from a book called *The Fabric of Faithfulness* by Steven Garber. Steven Garber had the same question about students leaving the faith, but took a different angle and studied those students who got it, those who are making a difference with their faith. He found they have three main characteristics.

First, they have a Christian worldview. They know what they believe, and they know why they believe. Their worldview is big enough for the world. They've been trained not to be taken captive by hollow and deceptive philosophy, but rather to take every thought captive and

WALKING AWAY

cont. from page 7

make it obedient to Christ.

They know that regardless of where their life takes them — education, parenting, politics, arts, science, etc. — they are able to glorify God through their work. I love what C.S. Lewis says, that what we want is not more books about Christianity, but rather more good books by Christians on other subjects.

Second, Garber said young people who stay faithful are those who

choose their community based on others who have a biblical worldview. They surround themselves with people who have a common coherent vision for life in the world.

Finally, the third characteristic. I end with this because it has the most direct personal application. Character. Not character qualities, character. Garber says character is something that is not just taught; it's caught. That's why mentors are

vitaly important. Kids' lives are changed by life-on-life mentoring by someone else who embodies their worldview to them. This is of utmost significance. As Jeff Myers has said, the kids that make it are the kids that have great parents or a good mentor. There are no exceptions to this. Walk through life with your kids, and find someone who can walk with you through your life. That's what makes the difference.

FROM THE PODCAST

cont. from page 5

speaking with if they had ever seen or met his mother. These three people said, "No," and he asked one person, "What do you think my mother is like?" One person said, "I don't know. Maybe she's five foot three, weighs 130 pounds, has blond hair." Then he asked the other person, "What do you think my mom is like?" "Five

“Different religions have different, contradictory ideas about the nature of God. They can't all be correct.”

foot five, maybe 150 pounds, got brown hair." Then he asked somebody else, "What do you think my mother is like?" The person says, "I don't know, five foot nine, 190 pounds, black hair."

Then he said, "OK, can all three of you be correct? Can my mom be five foot three, five foot five, and five foot nine at the same time?" They say, "No, she's only got one height." "Can my mom be 130, 150, 190 pounds all at the same time?" "No, she's only got one weight." "Can she have blond hair, brown hair, black hair, all at

the same time, without going to a salon" The answer is, "No, she's only got one color hair."

In the same way, different religions have different ideas about the nature of God. Some say God is personal. Some say God is impersonal. Some say God is triune. Some say God is not triune. Some say there's one God. Some say there are many gods and some there's no God. Different religions have different, contradictory ideas about the nature of God. They can't all be correct.

Aaron Atwood: That's great Alan. Let me ask one more question: What if someone retorts with the claim that while all religions are off by a little bit, ultimately God's going to say, "Hey, you tried hard. You did the best that you could with what you knew, so OK."

Alan Shlemon: That presumes there is only one God who's making a decision and not a thousand gods. It presumes that the God is personal, that he has thoughts, and that he is not a pantheistic God equated with the universe. All these presumptions are built into that one statement. You can't assume they are true. You have to prove that they're true.

To hear the full interview with Alan, visit the archive at summit.org/podcast.

graduate classes, I asked the professor how he incorporated Jesus into his class. He looked at me with horror and said, “Why would I do that? I wouldn’t dare to drag him down to this level.”

I don’t understand how he could have that approach, because if all the treasures of wisdom are in Christ, then wouldn’t Christ also be in the classroom? If we are all theologians, then we are also philosophers. Again, two Greek words: *phileo* (brotherly love) and *sophia* (wisdom). If we are Christians, we should love wisdom. I understand why most Christians don’t love philosophy, because they’ve had to sit through a philosophy class and had a professor say, “How do you know that any of you are not just made up in my imagination.”

I can only imagine all those students’ next call home. Mom says, “Hey son, how are classes?”

“Well, today I learned that I don’t exist,” the son responds.

Moms around the world should call the tuition office and let them know that their son or daughter has been told they don’t exist — then stop paying the tuition check. I promise you that the tuition office will prove their existence!

If we as Christians don’t step in and start grappling with the biggest questions of our age, then we are making Christianity irrelevant. C.S. Lewis, Francis Schaeffer, Summit’s founder David Noebel, all represent people of faith who’ve not backed away from taking on the big issues of the day.

Paul writes in Colossians 2:7, “Be

rooted and built up.” There is truth. Know it and determine how to live based on it.

The final myth: Right and wrong depend on the situation.

This assertion makes us all ethicists. One study says that up to 90 percent of Americans believe morality is relative to the situation. I was speaking and a student came to me and said, “My professor says all the time that morality is relative. What should I do?”

I suggested that he go up after class and take his wallet. When he asks for it back, tell him, “Professor, there are no absolutes, stop imposing your morality on me.”

“What do I do if he gives me the wallet?” the student asked me.

I suggested that he take his car keys too!

The professor who says that there are no absolute truths and then picks out the truths he wants to be true for him is being a dictator, not an ethicist. Don’t get me wrong. I don’t believe that this post-modern perspective means we’re all going to become rapists and murderers.

However, if the majority of people don’t know what is true, when murderers and rapists rule the world, you won’t know how to stop them or even if you should. In a world where groups like ISIS are running rampant, this should give us all pause.

How does all of this come together?

When these myths — God is irrelevant, faith is about feeling not thinking, and there is no morality —

take hold, you can see why young people would walk away from the church. But, if we are truly theologians, philosophers, and ethicists, then we have an obligation to live according to our beliefs.

All these come together in times of crisis. I suspect some of the crises we’re seeing now are going to escalate. As Christians, we must determine definitively what is right and wrong. Culturally we must have an understanding of the times in which we live and a reason for our hope. But let me also encourage you that many of these crises happen in homes on your street rather than the White House. Cars break down on the side of the road, couples have marriage issues, and young people wrestle with their own identities. These are the moments we are called to redeem as ambassadors for his kingdom.

Watching as a generation turns their back on faith resonates so deeply with me because I was one of those young people that walked away from the church. But it was the willingness of people in the church to walk alongside me and show me how the church was relevant to my every day that brought me back. They showed me that church wasn’t one more thing — it is the centerpiece. Jesus is the pivot of all history. In that spirit, we can see what God might be doing to draw together the generations, and rise up and meet the great crises of our culture and those seemingly mundane crises that could bring someone to faith in Christ.

SUMMIT OXFORD

A Word From One of Our Oxford Alumni

Lessons From Oxford

At a moment when our foundations seem to be crumbling nearly everywhere I look, Summit Oxford has helped me find a firm footing.

Our worldviews course has been wide-ranging and very intensive. But I am not leaving Oxford with a list of proof-texts and bullet points, though I have populated my notebook with them. Rather, to take a phrase from Dr. Michael Ward, my “intellectual muscle” has been strengthened. More importantly, I have learned how to use it, to wrestle well, to ask the right questions, and to bring my findings to bear on how I am to live my life.

Summit Oxford has prepared me to be a Christian scholar, a lifelong student of God, his word, and his world. This term has been pivotal in my de-

velopment as a follower of Christ. To borrow an illustration from C.S. Lewis’ “Meditation in a Toolshed,” I have learned to look *at* the Bible carefully, to traverse its texts, to drink in divine wisdom. But more importantly, I have learned to look *along* it. By it I see everything else. Through it I come to share God’s affections and aversions.

Here, at the end of the Hilary Term, on the closing day of our worldviews course, I am confident that to glorify God is to live an informed faithfulness that empowers me better to love my neighbors, even my enemies.

Jacqueline Frenkel is a graduate of Summit Oxford and Hillsdale College, and pictured with her fiancé and fellow graduate, Alex Graham.



a summer term in

OXFORD

STUDY ABROAD WITH PURPOSE

With summer, autumn, and spring terms, providing a unique course in worldview coupled with Oxford tutorials, Summit Oxford cultivates scholarly skills and virtues for church and culture.

"Imagine studying for a semester in the land of Lewis, Tolkien, and Churchill, being tutored by world-class scholars at Oxford's top colleges. And imagine being mentored throughout by Kevin James Bywater, whom I believe is one of today's most gifted worldview scholars. If you are looking for an experience that you'll cherish the rest of your life, one that will rocket you toward your academic and professional pursuits, there is nothing like Summit Oxford!"

— DR. JEFF MYERS

- Live in England for 8 or 15 weeks
- Become a member of an Oxford college
- Explore the foundations of Christian convictions
- Converse about controversies and concerns
- Receive up to 8 or 17 credit hours

Visit summitoxford.org and apply today!

summit
OXFORD
summitoxford.org

Summer Term
June – August

Autumn Term
September – December

Spring Term
January – April

Four Falsehoods About Finding Your Calling

As followers of Christ, we often hear fellow believers seeking God's will in the midst of a career change, wondering what vocation they have been designed for. Perhaps you yourself are currently in one of these places of discernment. There is plenty of good material available on vocation, but for now, let's explore four faulty statements about calling and career discernment.

1. "God's will is that I do a certain job; my task is to discover what that is."

Actually ... maybe not. In the webinar "Decision-Making and God's Will," Summit VP of Programs Eric Smith argues from Scripture that we've missed the mark on what exactly the "will of God" is and means when it comes to vocational discernment. "God's will for your life" is actually much less about what job you land and much more about obedience wherever you find yourself.

Should we still seek God in our decision-making? Absolutely! A faithful believer invites God into their lives every step of the way. But many Christians mistakenly equate seeking God with waiting on God. This waiting often looks like sitting back until the way forward becomes obvious and easy. But, as Summit President Dr. Jeff Myers explains,

"Scripture says, 'A man makes his plans, but God guides his step.' Let me ask you a question. How is God going to guide your steps if you're not moving anywhere? You have to get off of dead center and begin doing something."

2. "There's one perfect job fit for each of us."

You'll be glad to know this actually isn't true. According to some career discernment experts, there are dozens of vocations (especially when you consider options of paid employment and volunteer opportunities) that would be a good fit taking into account various combinations of your skills, interests, and personality traits.

And there's always room to grow and change. According to jobsearch.com, average workers change their career 10-15 times over the course of their working life. So don't be paralyzed by finding the perfect thing, right now.

3. "I should study what interests me and go into whatever career that leads to."

This approach sometimes works but often doesn't. Many high school guidance counselors, for instance, ask students what subjects they did well in and then suggest studying more of the same in college. So if you did well in math, you could study engineering; if you did well in biology, you could go pre-med; and if you loved history, you can study ... more history. But that simplistic approach doesn't take into account why a student did well in those particular subjects (world's best teacher? world's easiest grader?) and why they didn't do as well in other subjects (if they did poorly in English, for instance, could that have been aggravated by a dry textbook, a lackluster lecturer, or even a learning disability like dyslexia?).

A better approach to determining a course of undergraduate study is to look at what types of careers fit best (based on one's skills, interests, personality, and values) and then study something that prepares folks to go into those fields.

4. "My paid employment is the primary arena in which to express my calling."

Many of us hold to this view, though we may never have expressed it outright. What's interesting about it, though, is that it assumes that the proper living out of one's calling leads to financial remuneration. But what if that perspective comes more from the culture at large than the scriptures that guide us? It may very well be that you can get paid handsomely to live out of your gifts for the glory of God. It may also be that the work you find yourself in may not utilize many of your best talents, but there's room to use them in a volunteer setting. Pay or no pay, there likely is a way to do the things you're made for.

Could you or your student use some help in discerning your design? Summit's Ultimate Career Direct Package is a window into your skills, interests, personality, and values, helping you to make wise college and career decisions. For more information, visit <http://www.summit-careerdirect.com/>.



American Christian College
 dba Summit Ministries
 PO Box 207
 Manitou Springs, CO 80829

NON-PROFIT ORG.
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 Newton, KS
 PERMIT 867

INSIDE: Why Students Walk Away in College

Address Service
 Requested

SUMMIT
 COME TO A SUMMIT
 STUDENT CONFERENCE
 THIS SUMMER!

"I CONSIDER SUMMIT MINISTRIES
 TO BE ONE OF THE VERY BEST
 RESOURCES AVAILABLE, AND I
 DON'T SAY THAT LIGHTLY."
 - DR. JAMES DOBSON

TOPICS

- Biblical Foundations & Worldview
- Reliability of Scripture • Marriage / Family
- Masculinity / Femininity • Pop Culture • Leadership
- Evangelism • Abortion • Homosexuality • Bioethics • Intelligent Design • Economics • Religious Freedom • Social Justice • Worldview Analysis (and more)

FAITH FOR LIFE

2016 STUDENT CONFERENCES

COLORADO

- Session 1 | May 15 – May 28
- Session 2 | May 29 – June 11
- Session 3 | June 12 – June 25
- Session 4 | June 26 – July 9
- Session 5 | July 17 – July 30
- Session 6 | July 31 – August 13
- Session 7 | August 14 – August 27

CALIFORNIA

June 19 – July 2

TENNESSEE

- Session 1 | July 3 – July 16
- Session 2 | July 17 – July 30

WANT MORE INFORMATION
 ON SESSION DETAILS?

visit summit.org



The Journal is the monthly publication of American Christian College (dba Summit Ministries), a nonprofit, educational, religious corporation operating under the laws of the states of Oklahoma and Colorado.

PO Box 207, Manitou Springs, Colorado 80829 | Phone: 866.786.6483 | URL: www.summit.org | Email: aaron@summit.org