

How to Get the Most Out of Your Bible Education.

ETHNOS360
BIBLE INSTITUTE

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A BIBLE EDUCATION: THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME

A Bible education in a full-time academic environment is an incredible opportunity, one you will probably never have a chance to do again. This education is only that though, it's just an opportunity. You can make the most of your time, or you can squander it. It's an opportunity to grow closer with God, but the education itself can't do that for you. So, seize this opportunity to look at Christ and establish an enduring friendship with Him.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matt is a missionary with Ethnos360 and has been working with incoming students to Ethnos360 Bible Institute for nearly three years.

THOUGHTS FROM EXPERIENCE

Not only did Matt receive a Bible education, but he is now on staff at Ethnos360 Bible Institute. Here are some of the things he struggled with while receiving his Bible education, as well as things he's observed the student body struggle with now.

So, let's get into it.

How do you get the most out of your Bible education?

CHAPTER ONE

LOOK BEYOND THE GRADES



A B C D F

Don't get me wrong, grades are a good thing.

If you are failing a class, it's usually a sign that you are struggling to comprehend the material, and if you are getting an 'A,' it might mean you are well engaged. However, grades (good or bad) can't tell you if you are working through the material on a personal level.

Grades aren't the ultimate test of spirituality.

Biblical knowledge does not equal maturity.

A Bible degree does not guarantee spiritual health.

The Christian life does not end with what you know.

The dangerous assumption you could make is that by graduating with a 3.5+ GPA (or maybe even just by graduating), you have therefore grown in your walk with the Lord.

WHAT IS YOUR BIBLE EDUCATION FOR ANYWAY?

I remember doing my first reading assignment in Bible School. I read the two chapters as quickly as possible, wrote my answers to the study questions, and checked off the box in my mind. As I walked away, it suddenly dawned on me: Wait, I actually want to *learn* this. My previous college experience had taught me to pass classes, but that wasn't the sole purpose of my Bible education.

The grades are good and you should care about them, but too often we can look at them as the end all, be all. Grades aren't the ultimate objective of your Bible Education; it's to know Jesus (John 17:3).

RESOURCE: [DANGEROUS CALLING](#)



One of the best books I've read about Christian ministry culture in America. [Dangerous Calling](#) is written specifically for pastors, but carries great principles for any believer, especially one currently receiving a Bible education.

**“Come to the Word for one purpose
and that is to meet the Lord. Not to
get your mind crammed full of things
about the sacred Word, but come to it
to meet the Lord.”**

– Norman Douty

CHAPTER TWO

WALK IN HUMILITY

It has almost become a cliché that every new seminary graduate is steeped in arrogance. There is something about knowledge (separated from our relationship with God) that makes us arrogant. Paul talked about this a long time ago in 1 Corinthians 8:1. The issue isn't your desire to know the Bible, but whether you allow what you know to impact your life. The solution isn't to stop learning or to steer clear of studying the Bible, the issue is the posture of your heart.

*“Your attitude should be the same as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!”
- Philippians 2:5-8*

LISTEN TO ADVICE

My mentor at Bible School had a very different personality than myself. I remember quite vividly when he gave me one of the most important challenges of my education, and specifically exposed an area of sin in my life.

I walked away from the meeting wrestling with his words. Now, looking back, I recognize that some of the most important things I've been told, I absolutely hated hearing in the moment.

Are we willing to hear truth from people who we don't click with?

I often find that if the truth isn't delivered to me in the *way* I want to hear it, then I simply disregard it. If I hear something and it bothers me, I have this tendency to throw it away without ever taking it to the Lord and considering its validity.

Humility cares more about being like Jesus than 'being right.' Humility considers truth even when the person speaking doesn't have the right motives, or doesn't have a deep relationship with us.



“The antithesis of spiritual is not academic. The antithesis of spiritual is unspiritual. And the academic can subsist in either a spiritual or an unspiritual mode.”

- Dr. Craig Blaising, Professor of Theology
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

CHAPTER THREE

LEARN TO MANAGE YOUR TIME

I worked about 35-40 hours a week my first semester while enrolled in classes full time at Bible school (I definitely wouldn't recommend that, by the way). There were times when it felt like all I did was attend class, work, finish homework, and sleep. However, God used this time to teach me a lot, especially in the realm of organization. I had to say 'no' to a lot of things that I wanted to do because I had to prioritize my education and finances.



You have quite a few things to juggle, so how do you get it all right? How do you choose the right things and manage them?

Now on staff at Ethnos360 Bible Institute, I've watched students struggle in classes, and miss important meetings simply because they were unorganized.

WHAT TO AVOID

A lot of students are on two ends of the spectrum. (1) You can drastically over-commit and find yourself too busy to follow through entirely (disorganized out of busyness), or (2) you can be lazy, and choose movies over homework (disorganized out of laziness).



1. Disorganized Out of Busyness

When you are new to college, everything sounds fun and exciting. You want to make new friends and get connected. I personally lived under a desperate fear of missing out. Even though I'm more introverted, I signed up for a lot of extracurricular activities without first getting my bearings around classes, homework, and my job.

2. Disorganized Out of Laziness

On the other end of the spectrum is laziness. Sometimes it's the

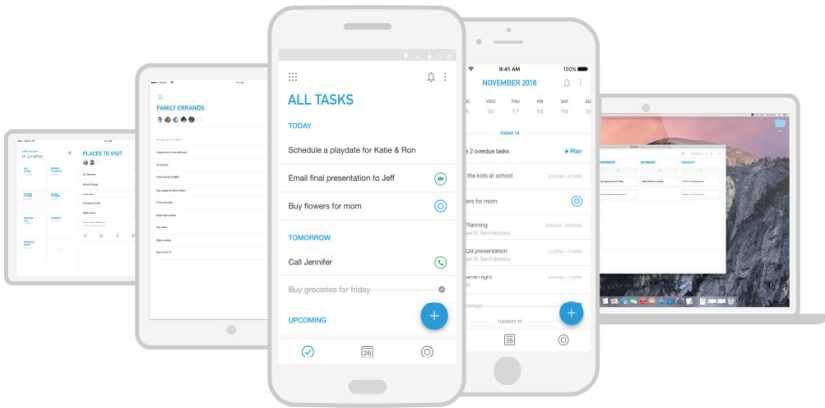
3. Make a Calendar

Add important things to your calendar. Often, your classes will have a schedule (with tests etc.). Put that into your Calendar along with any big upcoming assignments. Usually your email client, like Google or Outlook, has a good calendar, so use it!

4. Use a Daily To-Do List

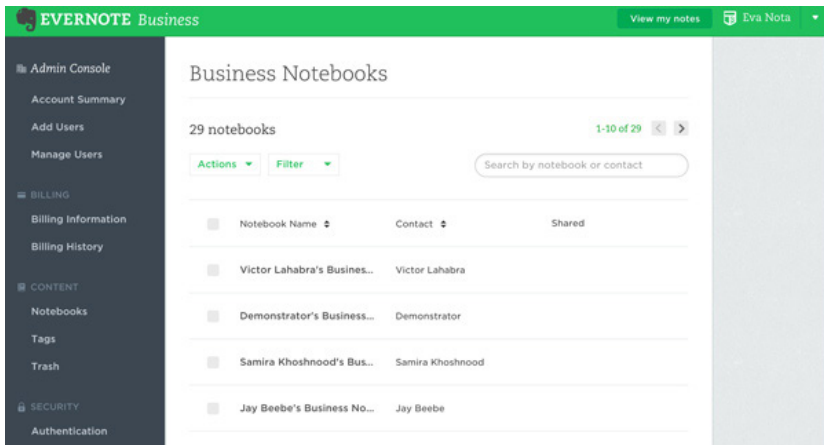
Here are some great apps that I would recommend using during your Bible education. It will help you to remember those little, random details.

RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATION APP: [ANY.DO](https://any.do)



[Any.Do](https://any.do): Put together a check list on your phone. I use this on an almost daily basis. If I remember something, or have an idea, I just add it to my checklist. It's not a great app for dates or meetings, so check out the recommendation below.

ANOTHER ORGANIZATION APP WE LOVE: [EVERNOTE](#)



[Evernote](#): It's one of the most popular apps in the world for a reason. It's pretty much free for individuals, and makes note taking an absolute breeze. You can sync all your notes between your photo, tablet and computer too.

CHAPTER FOUR

SEEK OUT DISCIPLESHIP

We need to ‘seek out’ discipleship because it rarely happens naturally. Unfortunately, there aren’t usually mature Christians looking for college students to disciple. You will have to be intentional about establishing a mentor and consistent discipleship in your life.

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!”

- Ecclesiastes 4:9–10

FIND A MENTOR

Talk to someone you know and trust. It’s nice to have someone within your academic environment, but that isn’t a necessity. Set up a time to meet and discuss life. It doesn’t need to be incredibly official, but tell them that you are looking for discipleship. This clarity will help your mentor have the right expectations. We all need someone who is older and wiser speaking into our lives.

MAKE TIME TO TALK WITH YOUR TEACHERS

Did you find something confusing in class? Grab a teacher right after the lecture or set up an appointment during their office

hours. Be intentional about wading through the confusion so you are getting the most out of classes.

BENEFITS OF HAVING A MENTOR

- 1. Process More of What You Are Learning in Classes**
- 2. Have an Established Support System**
- 3. Learn from Someone Else's Life Experience**
- 4. Be Challenged in Your Walk with the Lord**
- 5. Receive Guidance Through Challenging Situations**

I didn't do a lot of things right when I was a student, but one thing I am proud of is that I was very intentional about meeting with a mentor frequently. I had some of my most important (and challenging) conversations with my mentor, Keith. God used him to help me and to challenge me in my walk with God.



“Bible School provides opportunity to seek help and investment in areas of struggle that we all face. Finding older believers to talk through our walk with the Lord is crucial to the growth process.

Dalton Dueck, Dean of Students

Ethnos360 Bible Institute

CHAPTER FIVE

GET INVOLVED IN MINISTRY

One of the best things I did while attending Bible School was serving in a local youth group. It helped me begin to apply what I was learning in a real-world setting. While I would caution anyone about over-extending themselves (see the section on time management), it's important to be serving in some capacity, somewhere.

Put yourself in a situation where you are caring and loving people. There is something about serving that will make what you are learning deeper and richer.

FIRST, GO TO CHURCH!

If you aren't attending a college near your home church, I would highly recommend connecting with a local church quickly. It can be deceptively easy to tell yourself, "I'm studying the Bible all week; why do I need to go to church?" I've heard that excuse (and probably used it myself) a number of times.

You won't be in Bible College forever. Establish the lifestyle that will sustain you in the long run. It is crucial to be living life with local believers, and to be engaging in the local church outside of your college context.

IDEAS FOR MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES WITH YOUR LOCAL CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

- ◇ **Youth Ministry / Youth Small Group Leader**
- ◇ **Children’s Ministry (Sunday School, Awana, Vacation Bible School, etc.)**
- ◇ **Church (Music, Sound booth, etc.)**
- ◇ **Evangelism and Outreach Programs**
- ◇ **English as Second Language (ESL)**

CONCLUSION

Remember, that your Bible Education can't guarantee you a continuous walk with the Lord. That has to be your decision.

I didn't earn rollover minutes for my faith by getting a Bible education. The biggest challenge for myself after graduating (and for many students I've seen graduate) was believing I was 'all set' for a while. At points, I've been reliant on my past knowledge instead of continuing to pursue God.

It is exciting to graduate and receive your diploma, but never underestimate your need for daily time to commune with God. You aren't done studying after you receive a formal Bible education; in fact, you are just beginning to scratch the surface. Use your time as a springboard.

While you are receiving your Bible education, choose to pursue Jesus to make the most of your time. Jesus waits for us in His Word, so use a Bible education to seek after Him and His goodness.

ETHNOS360

BIBLE INSTITUTE

WHERE BIBLE EDUCATION AND MISSIONS ARE ONE

Ethnos360 Bible Institute is a two-year Bible School in southeast Wisconsin with a full online program as well.

Ethnos360 Bible Institute has been training missionaries and ministry leaders for more than sixty years and offers a solid Bible education with a unique focus of cross-cultural missions. Strong biblical teaching, intentional discipleship from staff, and a close Christian community help prepare men and women for a life of ministry.

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