

## TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR THE CHRISTIAN STUDENT

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*2 Timothy 2:15 provides some relevant and practical pointers for students. Below I set out in modern terms ten such instructions that may, with God's help, assist Christian students during what can be difficult and formative years.*

### 1. Remember

**Thou shalt remember the Lord your God in prayer every morning before going to school or college.**

Get in tune with God before the concert of the day begins. Let us be like the psalmist and our Lord Jesus himself, and make our prayer to heaven early in the morning and meditate on the Scriptures before anything else occupies our thoughts (Joshua 1:8).

*'My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up' (Psalm 5:3).*

*'And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed' (Mark 1:35).*

Let prayer be the key that unlocks the day and bolts the night before we sleep. Read the Word first before your textbook. *'Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts' (Jeremiah 15:16).*

Let us get our priorities right first thing in the day (Matthew 6:33).

### 2. No idols

**Thou shalt have no other idols, distractions and obsession before God.**

Do not be obsessed with sports, TV, leisure, computers or any idolising activity that robs you of your devotion to God and your precious time in studies (Exodus 20:1-4). Exercise moderation in all things (Philippians 4:5).

Not even our studies should be placed before our love, worship and devotion to Christ. Have less of sleep, listless dreaming, TV and leisure, and more discipline in honest, hard work and heart work. Spend quality time with God in 'quiet times' as well (Psalm 46:10).

### 3. Do it now

**Thou shalt remember and practise the DIN principle.**

This is a principle familiar to many students at the Far Eastern Bible College. We call it the 'Do it now' or 'Delay it not' principle (Ephesians 5:16-17). Do not procrastinate in doing your homework. Don't put things off till tomorrow but strive to finish all schoolwork by the same day/week if possible.

Remember that 'procrastination is the thief of time' and we are often robbed without knowing it. Precious time is lost when we delay. Discipline and diligence are required to achieve this. It has been said that success is 1% intelligence, 99% diligence; 1% inspiration, 99% perspiration.

#### **4. Plan ahead**

**Thou shalt plan and organise your time systematically.**

Effective and fruitful studying is all about proper planning and organisation. We have to allocate time for different subjects and keep to our plan with diligence. Plan your work and work your plan.

If you are weaker in some subjects, give more time to these and use the best time of the day to study them. Consistency should be the order of the day, redeeming the time always and walking circumspectly (Colossians 4:5).

Practice makes perfect. Do not give up easily, but press on with patience and endurance (Hebrews 12:1-2).

#### **5. Take heed**

**Thou shalt pay rapt attention to the teacher in class.**

The teacher is there to help you. Attentiveness in class is the key to memory and understanding. Nothing beats listening intently and following what the teacher is trying to explain in class.

It aids revision later and goes a long way in promoting understanding. Lazy and dreamy students rarely do well in their examinations. Do not miss lessons, and stay alert in class.

#### **6. Ask questions**

**Thou shalt ask questions when in doubt.**

It takes humility and interest to ask questions when you are unsure. Ignorance is not bliss. Do not let doubt and difficulty accumulate, but clarify them and make sure you understand. This will make it easier to study the subject and do well.

Do not keep silent or be afraid to ask the teacher. Triumph in the learning battle by asking good questions, the answers to which will improve your knowledge and understanding. Every question answered and understood is a victory for you.

#### **7. Make notes**

**Thou shalt make simple notes and highlight important points during the lesson or revision class.**

One effective way to study fruitfully is to make short notes and highlight in your textbook (with different colours) important points emphasised by the teacher.

Look out for golden phrases spoken by the teacher, like 'This is important', 'Do not forget this formula', or 'Remember this'. Do this consistently throughout your course and you will have half the battle won before the examination. If possible, read the lesson to be taught in advance to prepare yourself for the class, and revise it again afterwards.

## **8. Memorise**

**Thou shalt practise the art of memorising important facts regularly.**

To remember things requires conscious effort. Very few of us will remember something on hearing it the first time. It takes a consistent endeavour to put it in our memory banks.

Daily, regular revision and recall are required, just like memorising a Scripture verse (Psalm 119:9-11). Use time-savers like waiting for the bus, lunch time and other unproductive time for this.

Have small cards or other devices to help you. Remember to 'save' what you have learnt; your brain can be an old-fashioned 386 processor or a state of the art Pentium III, depending on how you use it. Use mnemonics if necessary (acronyms, etc.). Build up a good memory of facts and figures, and be ready for tests and examinations all the time.

## **9. Help others**

**Thou shalt be willing to help other struggling students.**

You may be wondering how this helps you. By being able to explain to other students, you crystallise your own thoughts. If you can teach and explain it to others, you have grasped it yourself!

In helping other students, the blessings return to you. Selfishness is a curse but altruism has its own reward and blessing (Hebrews 6:10). Make sure that you know it yourself first and then help others willingly.

As Christians, we should not be selfish, hoarding notes, books and resource materials and denying them to other students. This is counter-productive and does not edify.

## **10. Don't cheat**

**Thou shalt not cheat in tests, assessments and examinations, nor covet your friends' grades.**

Those who copy their friend's assignments instead of doing it themselves are losers in the end. Instead of gaining knowledge or the ability to solve problems, they deprive themselves of an opportunity to learn and grow with each exercise.

Do your own work and tutorial assignments by yourself, and God will bless and honour you because you maintain your integrity and honesty. Dishonesty never pays. Whatever you sow, you also reap (Galatians 6:7-9).

Have a persevering spirit and do not give up easily. Determination and gumption are required of successful students. By God's sufficient grace, you can make it. Remember 1 Corinthians 10:13, and God will preserve you.

Study hard, bearing a good Christian testimony. Be content with whatever success God gives you, and give thanks to him always (1 Timothy 6:6). Do not compare, complain or murmur against the Lord or others.

## **Conclusion**

As a Christian, studying is not just about passing examinations. The ultimate examination in life is passed by building up skills, attitudes and knowledge that can be used in the Master's service, and applying them in real life.

Traits like honesty, integrity, clarity of thought, diligence, perseverance, selflessness, patience, meekness, faith, organisation, together with writing and oral skills, are important for work, ministry and relationships.

It is not just intelligence, but heart-work and God's mercy that are needed for success, whether in academic or real-life pursuits. Let us run the race well and finish the course without disqualification.

*'Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway' (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).*

And remember to give thanks to God. We need to pray daily for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead and help us in all these things (Galatians 5:22-23).

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