



ENCOURAGING U!
**A³¹ DAY DEVOTIONAL
FOR PARENTS
OF NEW UNION STUDENTS**

August 19, 2011

Dear Parents:

Welcome to the Union University family! We are so grateful that your son or daughter has chosen Union University! Each one has been prayed for by name this summer as our staff, faculty and administration have eagerly anticipated their arrival! Beginning their college years is truly an exciting time in your child's life! At Union, we consider it an honor that you have entrusted your son or daughter to us and that we have the privilege of getting to know them, investing in their life, providing them with the finest Christ-centered higher education, and facilitating their character development.

We realize, however, that their new beginning at Union means a very significant transition for you as well. Please know that we are praying for you. The following devotionals have been written specifically for you as parents of new Union students. It is our desire that you will find encouragement and peace in the scriptures shared and in the words of wisdom from some of the individuals at Union who will be journeying alongside your son or daughter during their college days.

If there is any way we can be of assistance to you in the days ahead, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to this year with great joy, and faith in the One who is "able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine." Ephesians 3:20

Blessings!

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"Your word is a lamp for my feet, and a light on my path." Psalm 119:105 HCSB

Union University's Theme Verse, 2011-2012

Save the Date

September 30 – October 1, 2011



www.uu.edu/events/familyweekend

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Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. Hebrews 13:18

A faculty mentor once said, “90% of the students in a given professor’s classes are there to pay the bills. The remaining 10%, however, could never pay enough to offset the importance of that professor in their lives.” I think there’s something to that idea.

Because I went to college for so many years (I jokingly tell my children that I completed the twenty-fifth grade!), I had a large number of teachers and staff members who greatly influenced my life. Some were confidants, some were mentors, some set my mind on fire, and some exasperated me with their ideas and attitudes. Faculty members in particular loomed large in my life, in ways positive and negative.

Union spends a great deal of time and effort in recruiting faculty and staff who are both outstanding in their fields and absolutely committed to our university mission. This is a hard task, but one that our administration embraces because of the importance of having a learning community that embodies what it means to be rigorously thinking, joyfully serving Christians. Most of Union’s faculty and staff could make a great deal more money at other institutions, but we want to serve at a place like Union, where we can teach students like yours.

Being an educator is a high calling; it bears great responsibility and wonderful opportunity. We take this calling seriously. We demand academic excellence while cultivating personal relationships with our students.

In my department (English), for example, we plan an average of three one-on-one conferences with each of our freshman students during the first semester. This enables us to customize our instruction to every student, allowing each one to strive for his or her best. In the process, we also learn about our students as persons. I know that I often find out about difficulties in a student’s life during these sessions and end up praying with the

Matthew 8:23-27, especially verses 25-26: *The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.*

Remember when your student first started walking? Playing in the back yard without direct supervision? How about the first day of kindergarten? The first solo drive in the car? Now that little one is grown up and headed for college.

I remember fondly my parents' weekly phone calls during my freshman year. I know that they wanted to keep informed about my studies, but I also know my mama well enough to know that she was worried about me and wanted to search my voice for signs of trouble. Twenty years later, I know that she still worries about me. She's even told me before that the best a parent can hope for is to be able to stop worrying when Jesus comes back. Short of that, the worries continue unabated.

A dear friend's daughter recently had a serious health crisis, one that caused my friend to contact me to ask for my family to pray for her family. In our email exchange, I mentioned that I've come to think that "fearfulness" is a synonym for "parenting." She quickly agreed and added, "I also think that parenting drives you to your knees faster than any other activity."

When Jesus was on the Sea of Galilee, he soothed the disciples and calmed the storm. The disciples were completely terrorized by their circumstance, and rightly so. The storm was real and the danger imminent. The words that He shared with the disciples, however, are instructive: "Why are you so afraid?" Another way to translate the phrase is, "Why do you keep being so scared?"

As parents our lives are filled with storms. Some are predictable, like puberty and teen angst, and some are random, like accidents and illnesses. No matter what, though, we should know that just as Jesus was in control of that stormy sea, God


The little letter of Jude has a remarkable story behind it. Jude himself tells us that he started out to write a very different letter (about “our common salvation”), but felt it necessary to write instead urging believers “to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.” We have a good idea what Jude meant by “contend for the faith,” for he goes on to speak of subtle attacks on the faith—as “certain persons have crept in unnoticed... who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ” (vv. 3, 4). Amazing as it seems, from the very beginning, followers of Christ have had to deal with false and dangerous thinking, passing itself off as “Christian.”

The story behind Jude in the first century highlights the importance of your child’s time at Union University in the twenty-first century. His readers would no doubt have found Jude’s original letter interesting, engaging, helpful, encouraging, illuminating, inspiring, challenging, maybe even life-changing. But Jude realized that all would be lost if they could not discern and confront the corrosive, corrupting forces at work on the household of faith—like termites eating away at the foundation until the house falls down around a family sleeping blissfully in their beds. Likewise your child’s years at Union, rich as they will be in so many ways—academically, socially, and spiritually—have something far more urgent to accomplish in his/her life, namely, to help equip and empower your child to contend for God’s truth against a culture of lies. To discern the true and the false. To examine claims and judge them aright. To interpret the world in the light of God’s Word. To connect the dots between worldview and reasoning, between worldview and values, between worldview and lifestyle. To engage the culture in the love of Christ without the sappy sentimentalism that ends up in compromise. In short, Union University exists in no small part to help your student “destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5).

It makes us a little uncomfortable to say it, but Scripture often describes the Christian life as war. “Therefore take up the whole armor of God,” Paul writes in a familiar and troubling passage, “that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm” (Eph. 6:13). Today join with others in the Union family to pray that God will use these days at Union University to help equip your student with the whole armor of God, in order to stand firm in Christ, to “fight the good fight of the faith,” (1 Tim. 6:12), to take every thought captive, to contend for the faith.

Father, by your Spirit and for your glory, use these days at Union not only to enrich my child’s life, but to help equip my child to contend for the faith. Through faithful teaching by the faculty and modeling throughout the Union community, cause the truth of your Word to become vital in every student’s life, and through them cause your truth to be attractive, compelling, and redemptive in this world.

Personal Prayer and Reflections



“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. . . . It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”
(Ephesians 4:7a, 11-13; NIV)

“But that doesn’t mean you should all look and speak and act the same. Out of the generosity of Christ, each of us is given his own gift. . . . He handed out gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher to train Christ’s followers in skilled servant work, working within Christ’s body, the church, until we’re all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God’s Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ.” (Ephesians 4:7a, 11-13; *The Message*)

I love how this passage starts out with God’s generous gift of grace being poured out or given to each one of us. Isn’t that always the way it begins with God? He gives generously to us of His grace, and out of that we are nudged, moved, or catapulted into service for Him to others. The movement begins with this outpouring of His grace to equip us with gifts, which leads us to use those gifts to build up Christ’s body, and culminates with us becoming mature and attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. We are confident that we have what we need: grace as Christ apportioned it, gifts to serve in a certain way, a place to use our gifts (the church), and even the whole measure of the fullness of Christ himself!

As we at Union welcome this newest freshman class, we are indebted to the grace that God has poured out on these students prior to their arrival in Jackson, Tennessee. As a parent, you have experienced God’s abundant grace yourself, and from this overflow, you have poured yourself out in the raising of your son or daughter.

Take a moment in this time of quiet with God to list out or draw below the ways that God’s grace has been poured out in your life in this past year.

Your son or daughter has no doubt been given gifts of grace through your parenting and through the communities that you have strategically placed him/her in. He or she arrives at Union having received God’s grace through countless family members, church members, teachers, pastors, coaches and friends. List or draw below some of the gifts of grace that your child has received as you have raised him or her.

We here at Union have been equipped and prepared to continue the process of helping to prepare and mature your student for the works of service that God has prepared for him/her. Take a moment to list or draw below some of the gifts that you know that God has given to your child.

I am reminded of the Olympic torch bearers passing the torch from athlete to athlete. In some small way, you are passing the torch to us to continue to carry on with the process of helping your child grow fully into the person that God intends for him/her to be. We are privileged to bear this torch, and are very aware of our need for grace to continually be poured out for God's process of preparation for works of service and maturity to continue to happen. Take a moment to list or draw some ways that you hope your student will grow in maturity during his/her time at Union.

As you move from prayerful reflection to reflective prayer, begin by thanking God for His abundant grace poured out and the gifts that He has given to you and to your student, and ask for a continued outpouring of His grace on your student, on you and your family, and on us here at Union.

Pray for your student to become a part of a local body of Christ here in Jackson that can aid with this process of reaching toward the goal of becoming mature and attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Finally, pray that your student would be able to discern what the works of service that God has prepared for him or her are, and that his/her coursework, extracurricular activities, and relationships during his/her time at Union would aid in the process of discerning and maturing.

Personal Prayer and Reflections

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7

The phone rings: it's your student. You can sense the anxiety as he speaks, "I don't know if I am going to make it here. I just feel so overwhelmed by everything." You wish that you were not so far away as you search for answers.

Feelings of being overwhelmed are not uncommon for first year students. Away from family and friends, being in unfamiliar surroundings, and faced with challenging academic coursework, many students can feel that they just can't cope. Numerous resources are available for your student and some very practical steps can be taken that will be very helpful.

Encourage your student to talk about his problems. Try to find out specifics. Is it lack of friends, difficulty with a specific course, inadequate study skills, etc.? Union's website (www.uu.edu) has a wealth of information and lists many resources. A call to Kimberly Thornbury, Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Students (731-661-5090), Bethany Morse, Director of the Hundley Center for Academic Enrichment (tutoring and study skills) (731-661-5951) or Paul Deschenes, Director of Counseling Services (731-661-5322), can be helpful as a first step. We can help your student to connect with appropriate resources: tutoring, a Bible Study group, spiritual guidance, help with study skills, or health services for the sick student.

In many instances a situation is made worse when a student is not taking care of himself. Is your student getting proper sleep, a good diet, and exercise? Without the structure of home these things often are neglected. Many students don't understand the ill effects of sleeping five hours a night with a diet of Coke and junk food. A weekend trip home for some rest and home cooking can often be beneficial. Face-to-face contact with parents can provide the opportunity for some extended conversations and

the offering of support and encouragement. A visit back to one's "home church" can make a student aware of prayer support and spiritual resources.

Your student needs a good support system during times of discouragement. Parents often are the most important part of this system. Call on the phone, write letters, send care packages, and encourage family members and others that are close to your student to do the same. Helping your student to focus on spiritual resources can be the most effective way to deal with feeling overwhelmed. Some students are inconsistent in church attendance and personal time in God's word. This inconsistency decreases the reassurance of God's presence, His promises, and His power to solve problems. Encourage your student to find and meditate on "reassurance" verses. A Bible Promise Book, concordance, or topical Bible can be helpful. Share with your student some verses that have helped you in difficult times. Suggestions for "encouragement" verses might include: Psalm 23, Isaiah 40:29- 31, Joshua 1:6-8, Matthew 6:25-34, and Philippians 4:6-8. A word of prayer over the phone can be effective in lifting your student's spirits.

God, help my student through difficult valleys. Help him to look to You for strength and answers to difficult questions. Give me wisdom in how to best guide and encourage him.

Tip: Encourage your student to learn good organizational and time management skills. It is difficult to catch up if he gets behind. Counseling Services and the Hundley Center can help with these issues.

Personal Prayer and Reflections

The Lord is near to all who call out to Him, to all who call out to Him in truth. Psalm 145:16

Think about the first moment you saw your student as a baby – that face was written instantly on your mind and that name was instantly branded on your lips. That face and name could never be forgotten – the intimacy, wonder, and hope of that first moment was carved into your heart forever. Yet no matter the age of your child, your heart will always see him and speak his name like you did that first time.

Now, instead of calling him in for supper or reminding him to do his homework, you have the choice to call out his name to God in prayer. Your duties as a parent have changed to include mentoring and friendship, but your role before God will never change as a parent interceding for your child. Your arms can be full again with your student as you hold him up to the Father for protection (see Ephesians 6:10-17). Your nights can be spent in the rocking chair again as you cradle him before the Father for wisdom (see Proverbs 9:10-12).

Interceding for your student means lifting up his needs and desires as if they were your own – to present them passionately to God Who has engraved forever your name, and that of your student, on His palm of His hand (see Isaiah 49:16). Intercession means entering into the Presence of God Whose memories never fade (see Psalm 111:5); Whose love for both of you never changes (see Romans 8:38-39); and Who sees you and your student (see 2 Chronicles 16:9).

Prayer is a strong three-stranded cord linking you, your student, and God (see Ecclesiastes 4:12). It is a cord strong enough to hold your student tightly to God's Ways (see Proverbs 22:6). God will strengthen this cord to contain your tears and lengthen this cord to tether your heart and your student's until the day when there will be no more tears and no more separation (see Revelation 7:17). On that day when you and your student

Each one of you should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully, administering God's grace in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10

The Union University Student Life team likes to cite the fact that on average college students spend 91% of their time outside the classroom. Students have a great deal of flexibility as to how they make up that 91% of time (eating, sleeping, studying, etc.) One major time commitment for Union students is involvement in student organizations on campus. 1 Timothy 4:14a explains, “*Do not neglect your gift which was given to you.*” There is an organization on campus where your student’s unique gifts can be used!

Union’s Student Organizations Fair is during New Student Orientation. New students will be able to talk to current student leaders from over 60 different organizations and decide which organizations may be of particular interest. Some students are more reserved and may need encouragement to attend the Student Organizations Fair and see what is offered. Other students will sign up for the mailing lists of all 60 organizations!

Encourage your student to sample a variety of activities, but to prayerfully choose to invest in a few. Caution your student not to mistake breadth of involvement for impact. Model this in your own life. Perhaps now you are an empty nester with slightly more time for other activities. What will you choose? Again, model commitment to one or two organizations or activities and leave the organization better because of your impact and influence. Avoid living a frenzied lifestyle. Rather, live lives that are intentional and purposeful about where God would have you serve and give of your time.

Lord, thank You that my student is at Union University. Thank You for the many opportunities to be involved on campus and in the community. Give my child wisdom in choosing activities, in connecting with groups, and in using God-given gifts in this group. Help my student to be both effective and intentional in his/her involvement and service for Your glory.

Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it. Proverbs 22:6

From womb, to stroller, to bicycle, to car, to college. Your child is excited; you're nervous. He/she is looking forward to the unknown; you're looking backward to the known.

I know. . . my older son left the nest first. Four years later my younger son perched on the edge and flew away to college. I'm still adjusting to the empty nest.

Two weeks after students step on campus, they will hit bottom after sleepless days and nights spent meeting roommates, exploring Jackson, joining campus groups, and perhaps even attending classes!

Because I have witnessed the effect of new found freedom from parental boundaries, I give my students six cures for stress on the first day of class. After first class meetings and receiving course syllabi which cover EVERYTHING that's to be done by the end of the semester, my students need to know "how to eat an elephant . . . one bite at a time." I give them this advice: get the right amount of sleep, eat five times a day (two snacks), do something fun, do something social, spend time alone, and get some exercise. Any of these things, too little or too much, can create stress; moderation is the key.

That first semester of my older son's college career, I looked at my freshmen students much differently. I wanted to be the teacher I wanted him to have, a caring teacher who commented when he looked tired and who encouraged when he looked discouraged.

I am not alone. Your child is surrounded with caring faculty and staff at Union University.

Meanwhile back at home your child's bedroom stays clean, much too clean . . . at least until the first trip home. First, you see piles of laundry. Then you see a young adult where once a child stood. Conversations are "different."

Then your child leaves again to return to college, but this time leaving you with “peace and quiet” that you have learned to appreciate and sometimes items that can’t be lived without such as textbooks or checkbook. You may feel you are buying stock in your choice of mailing systems.

However, enjoy these visits. While some children return to the nest, others may not— finding summer jobs, attending summer school, and eventually pursuing careers.

Most of all, take comfort in knowing your parenting skills are ready to be tested and enjoy watching your child make his/her way.

Lord, lead my child to “still waters” for rest from time to time and give my child energy to keep up with the hectic day-to-day activities of college life—classes, homework, and “fun.” Lead my child to a faculty/staff member who can “stand in the gap” if needed and to a church “home away from home” where he/she will be fed and nurtured.

Tip: Start planning now on where to store “college stuff” when it returns.

Personal Prayer and Reflections

Laura was a senior at Union. But before beginning her last year, she spent the summer in Senegal, West Africa, serving among a large and largely unreached people group called the Su-Su. When Laura talks about them, she lights up. Scattered across parts of Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, and Senegal, the Su-Su are three and half million strong with only a handful of believers—and God has put all of them on Laura’s heart.

How He put them on her heart is a story in itself. Like most Union students, Laura came from somewhere other than Jackson, Tennessee, and like most, she loved her church back home, where she was plugged into ministry and growing in relationships. Like many Union students, Laura did not immediately get connected with a local church (a good many Union students never do!). Then a friend invited Laura to her church, and (long story short) there she found a whole raft of people who loved her, prayed for her, encouraged her, and taught her. And there she found a mission. Through the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, her new church family adopted an Unreached People Group. You guessed it—the Su-Su! The leadership of the church talked constantly about the Su-Su, the church prayed for them regularly, and then they began to send teams to West Africa. An everyday congregation in West Tennessee had glimpsed the vision of God for the uttermost parts of the earth. The church was transformed; and so was Laura. Who knows what God will do next?

Anybody who knows anything about Union University knows that we are serious about Kingdom things—chapel worship with an array of outstanding speakers, numerous opportunities for spiritual growth, and scores of ministry opportunities from here to the ends of the earth. With all that Union has to offer, it is frankly all-too easy for students to let Union become a stand-in for “church.” (Which we pray will not happen with your child.)

As we often say (because we mean it), “Union is not a church.” As focused as we are on the things of God, nothing can replace the Body of Christ in any Christian’s life. In one of Scripture’s most amazing texts, we read that “Christ loved the church and gave

Himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25). Our Lord Jesus Christ died to redeem a people for Himself (Tit. 2:15), and that people is the church, the Bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9), the “household (family) of God” (Gal. 6:10), the “pillar and buttress of the truth” (1 Tim. 4:15), and the new Temple of God, the “dwelling place for God by the Spirit” (Eph. 2:21, 22).

“Christ loved the church”... so we should not wonder that Scripture makes so much of God’s people worshipping and serving and caring together in His church. As the author of Hebrews wrote: “let us consider how to stir one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb. 10: 24, 25). That’s what we pray for your child at Union—and “all the more” in these crucial days of world history and of personal development. May your student find what Laura found in a local body of Christ-followers—a place to love and be loved, to teach and learn, to grow and serve, to give and go. And maybe to find their life’s work. Who knows what God will do through His church?

Father, please give my child a love for your church. Lead him/her to a local body of believers during these days at Union, where he/she can worship in Spirit and truth, grow and help others grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, and share the gospel of Christ with a hurting world.

Personal Prayer and Reflections

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:6

Having just recently graduated from college, one of my favorite things to do has been to read through some of my journals from my four years at Union. It is always faith-building to see the Lord’s sovereignty over the smallest details of life and his faithfulness to provide for those things that at the time seemed so burdensome. From finding roommates to finding a church; from making summer plans to making a good grade on a paper; from figuring out where the A-2 classroom was to figuring out what I was going to do after graduation; the Lord was always faithful to provide.

Another theme I have more recently noticed however, was my parent’s faithfulness to pray and trust the Lord on my behalf through each of these decisions. There were many moments during my time at Union that I would call them in a panic over whatever was weighing so heavily on my mind, that day. My parents listened well and offered their support, but always reminded me of what was most important: trusting the One who holds all things in His hands.

This kind of trust isn’t easy. I’m sure there were many moments when my parents wanted to step in and take control and protect me from whatever trial I was facing. But they knew that even though they loved me so much, my Heavenly Father—the all-wise, all-powerful and all-loving God—loved me infinitely more. They had to trust Him to do His work.

We can model Paul’s example of this kind of trust. We know that Paul’s affection for his churches was similar to a parent’s affection for his children. In 2 Corinthians 12:14-15, Paul describes his relationship to them by saying, “For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls.” Paul loved his churches with a deep and abiding love, much like a parent for their child.

It is helpful for us to remember that background as we read these words from Philippians 1:6 “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” Paul trusted the Lord to purify his church even in the midst of times that looked bleak. If your child is also a child of the Father, this is a promise that they will be cared for and protected in a way that you could never offer. No matter what happens, nothing will be able to separate them from the love of Christ. The Lord has promised to lovingly shape and mold his children into the image of His Son; working all things together to finish this good work. And one day, they will stand complete in Christ with no spot or blemish of sin.

When you may be tempted to be anxious about what may happen to your child, remember the One who has promised to guard his soul until the end. How great is our God.

Personal Prayer and Reflections

“Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.” 3 John 1:2

I remember a time early in college when I found myself really struggling to adapt. I was far from home, in a new environment, and honestly feeling very lonely. It was not that I hadn't met a lot of awesome new friends, or even that I was not enjoying the whole college experience, but still I felt that there was something missing. The toughest part about it was that I really didn't feel comfortable telling anyone else about my struggle. Instead I wanted to hide it all away and act as if everything was fine. This went on for approximately two months, and I remember praying so many times that I actually just wished that someone else somewhere was praying for me! No matter how I attempted to disguise my anxiety and slight depression, it soon became obvious to others that something was a little off.

It was at that time that one of the guys living next to me stepped in and started to disciple me. He opened the word of God to me in a very new way, and began to challenge me to live for God with a new passion unlike any that I had ever experienced! He took me under his wing, and truly displayed “Christ-like” love for me. I was encouraged so much through the process, and now, looking back I can see that this was what I really was missing all along, encouragement. God places people around us so that we might love and encourage them through various means and methods. Unfortunately, many of us fail to practice this all too often. We instead get so wrapped up in our own lives that we fail to play the part of Christ in the lives of others. I'm so glad that this brother was obedient to God's call “to love one another.”

Sometime later when I was back at home visiting with my parents, I shared with them my former struggle, and confessed how depressed I seemed to feel during that time. I then told them of the mercies of God and how just at the right time He provided a brother for me to lean on! The next scene I still

remember so vividly. My parents told me that they had sensed the struggles that I had. Many nights they had gone to bed praying that all would go well with me, and that God would give me strength in my time of need. Oh, the greatness of God!

Parents, as you are away from your students at this time, please remember to pray unceasingly for them! There are so many pressures that come with this phase of life, and at times they can feel as if the world is on their shoulders. Surround them in prayer, and ask God to send mature believers into their lives to mentor and disciple them through the rough waters. Remember just how faithful He has been to your family in the past, and praise Him for the blessings of the future!

Personal Prayer and Reflections

Day Twelve

The Union Bubble: Preparation for Mission *Andy Pettigrew*

In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35

Students at Union regularly can be found discussing the Union Bubble. More often than not, it is talked about in the negative. Students frequently label their occasional feeling of being too sheltered referring to the Union Bubble. This "bubble" is the unseen wall insulating Union's campus from the outside world...or at least that's how it is perceived. Having served previously in campus ministry at the University of Washington, I am quick to respond to this comment by reminding those students how grateful they should be to have a "bubble."

I believe the Union Bubble does exist, but with good intention. It's like a football huddle. In American football, players huddle together before every play in order to collect their thoughts and strategize before executing their game plan. Union University, in a sense, is like a huddle. In seeking "to provide Christ-centered higher education...in service to Church and society," a huddle is necessary. An environment is created on campus which helps students prepare for life on mission with God. All followers of Christ have been called to be about His mission, making disciples of all nations unto the glory of God. As students pursue learning in Economics, Biology, Spanish Literature, or Philosophy of Religion in light of their faith, they are preparing for mission. Students need a place to come together in community to discuss how to live out their faith in "the real world."

While in college students, on the other hand, should step out of the Union Bubble to see what's on the outside, for it can become a temptation to find permanent residence in "the comfort zone." During the university years, the Union Bubble, can become a place that students treasure while serving God in the world. Through a GO Trip, their church, or local ministry involvement, students can taste the outside world while

taking advantage of the Union community which allows for conversations preparing them for life beyond college. Although it may be unhealthy in college to grow too comfortable in the Union Bubble, I can honestly say that I am thankful for how Union seeks to intentionally provide a setting to think Christianly about all of life in preparation for His mission.

God, help my student to become thankful for the Union Bubble as it prepares them in a positive way to serve You. Please help them to not become too comfortable in the Union Bubble, but to trust that You will direct their paths as they seek to prepare for the plans that You have for them.

Tip: If your student mentions an eagerness to get outside of the Union Bubble, encourage him or her to drop by the Office of Campus Ministries, and they will gladly connect your student with meaningful opportunities for service locally and throughout the world.

Personal Prayer and Reflections

Early in the Apostle Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, he wrote that he cared so much for the converts of Thessalonica that he shared with them not only the good news of Christ, but his very life as well. At the time, Paul was facing false accusations that self-seeking pride and profiteering were driving factors behind his life as a missionary, and he wanted to be quick and forceful in pointing out that his cause was exactly the opposite. As Colin Nichol, Research Professor from Cambridge University, points out, "Paul and his fellow missionaries were without guile, loving and selfless in their devotion to the converts [of Thessalonica]."

If you are a Union parent reading this, most likely the same characteristics apply to you that Nichol uses to describe Paul. While it may have taken a certain degree of cunning to navigate your college student through her or his adolescent years, you too were probably "without guile." Instead you persevered and hoped in an external power, or in other words, you prayed. You also more than likely have been "loving and selfless in your devotion" to your college student. And for living out these characteristics of Paul we want to be both quick and forceful in saying thank you for laying a foundation that will allow your student to thrive and grow here at Union in both Godly wisdom and knowledge.

In Residence Life we realize that we have been given a phenomenal gift of walking with and caring for your college student. At Union we believe that every individual student is worthy of being known personally. Our greatest joy is watching a homesick freshman grow into a confident, competent senior capable of expressing their heart and articulating their mind. These next few months apart for you and your student will not always be easy, and we, like Paul, desire to partner with you and your student's professors, campus and local church ministers, and University administrators in sharing our very lives as a "living out" of the Gospel for which Christ died and Paul preached.

The ways in which you can minister to your college student the next few years are plentiful and one of the biggest ways is through prayer. I can still remember from my time as an undergrad at Union my best friend's dad praying over me and my roommates stating,

“God, thank you for Nathan’s friends whom I prayed for before they ever met.” I am eternally grateful that Nate’s dad prayed for his friends, and your son’s or daughter’s friends will be too.

Think about the type of friend your son or daughter could be that best mirrors Christ, and the types of friends who will best encourage your daughter or son. Pray that these types of friends would be numerous in your student’s journey here at Union. Pray that your student would become a Christ-like friend with his or her roommates, reflecting a character filled with patience, understanding, courage, and purity.

Be encouraged when your student shares stories from his or her time away at Union. Be slow to react those first months as your student adjusts to life away from home. Encourage them to remain on campus and get involved as much as possible. Listen for names in their stories. Ask about these friends later, and when you visit, take these friends out for lunch. Both your student and their friends will be extraordinarily grateful.

Finally, celebrate your student’s journey. Allow them, even encourage them, to step away from their comfort zone and branch out to all types of students. One of the greatest gifts my parents gave me was allowing my roommates and me to road trip all across the U.S. during our college career. While your student may not want to sleep nights in a 93’ Ford Aerostar like we did criss-crossing the country, pray that they will take new risks. Always be willing to listen whenever a dream is proposed. After all, the goal of education is to expand the mind. As Christians it is our duty to do so in order to be transformed and renewed.

We pray that your lives and minds will be enriched by your student’s journey here at Union. Please pray that our Residence Life staff will make good decisions and seize opportunities to lead and walk beside your student. We look forward to partnering with you. Thank you for selflessly giving yourself to your student all these years. May the journey of the next four years be one of peace and joy for you and your student.

God, giver of all that is good, help our student to be a good roommate, one whose faith will encourage others within their residence. Grant my student’s roommates the gift of friendship; may they live together in peace and begin an exciting story together that will glorify You.

The tornado warning activated the medical staff to its emergency response protocol. The nurse woke me in the middle of the night with instructions to go to the “safe,” interior room in the hospital. I grabbed my pillow and walked quickly along with all the other new mothers on that day in May 1987. The nurse brought Rebecca, my first born daughter, to cradle in my arms as we all sat along the wall on the floor.

Three years later, my young daughter and I found ourselves once again sheltering ourselves from a tornado coming our way. As we made our way home from a friend’s house on another stormy night, the tornado warnings came. I swerved into a fire station lot as the radio indicated the tornado was directly on the road in front of us. The firefighters welcomed us into their “safe” place in the basement of the fire house. I found comfort with my daughter in the nurturing embrace of the dark space below ground and out of harm’s way.

Tornado watches and warnings have been regular themes in the weather systems where we have lived. Our family has often found shelter in our closet and interior bathroom space, hoping and praying that the storm would pass without damage. February 5, 2008 was just another one of those nights. Rebecca, now 21 years old, was in her dorm with roommates. My younger daughter and husband were at home with me. The tornado watches and warnings had been foreshadowing the severity of the storm all day. I called Rebecca to assure myself that she was in a “safe” place as the radio and television blared the warnings of imminent danger. I could not cradle her in my arms this time or usher her into the closet. The tornado made a direct strike this time, destroying almost all of the dorms on campus. My daughter, like many other Union students, experienced the walls around her caving in and debris filling the air.

God does not guarantee safety to us or our children. We do not know when tragedy might strike. The approach of tornadoes or a countless list of other awful realities of the natural world threatens our well-being daily. Sickness and death come. Crime and violence strike. Economic and political turmoil dismay us.

Just like the medical staff in the hospital and the firefighters at the firehouse, the Union University community has an emergency response plan. But even more importantly, the Union community offers the assurance of faith in a compassionate God. Your student will not be alone. Strong arms of support will be offered by the official administrators, but more significantly by the “family” of roommates, friends, and faculty. The Union community is prepared, by God’s grace, to bring the comforting presence of God’s Spirit and the power of God’s love and peace to your student in hard times. “Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)

Lord God, I pray that you will spare my child tragedy during these college years. But even if tragedy comes, I pray that my student will experience the depth of the riches of your care and strength through the Union community. I pray that my student will also be a part of this community that provides care to others when tragedy comes. Thank you that even though we are not all together as a family, my child will not be alone in tough times.

Tip: Expect that after a while Union friends, faculty, and staff will come to be like “family” to your child. Encourage them to participate fully in these natural helping networks of support.

Personal Prayer and Reflections

Paul and Timothy prayed for the saints at Phillippi what is indeed a relevant prayer as your student embarks upon her college education. It is also a relevant prayer for faculty, staff and administrators regarding our students:

“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.” Philippians 1:9-11

That’s it. That is what you ultimately want for your student and is what we want for every Union University student: to have insight; to be able to discern what is best; to make good decisions.

Consider the decisions and development milestones your student will be facing in the next decade of her life: Finding giftedness. Choosing a career. Studying harder than they have ever studied. Identifying with a community of friends. Seeking a life mate. Managing finances. Managing time. Investing in a body of believers. Balancing and developing hobbies. The next decade in your student’s life is about choosing to know...choosing to know who she is, to know what to do with herself, to know how to love and be loved. And hopefully choosing to really know God and to seek His best in all of the above.

Union University is a place that seeks to take everything captive for Christ. When we study across the disciplines of science, literature, history, mathematics and on and on we ask the question, “What does the Truth of Jesus Christ bring to bear in this area of knowing?” Asking that question holds the secret to good decision making. What does the Truth of Jesus Christ bring to bear on the decision I am facing?

Your student is in a place where the path to good decision making is not kept secret. People all across this campus have found their life’s calling in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with college students whether in the classroom or on the ball field or over coffee at Barefoots Joe. But we need your help. And here’s

“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” Psalm 46:10

As I prepared to depart for a two-year term of service in Germany with the International Mission Board, my parents blessed me tremendously by not only allowing me to go but also encouraging me to obediently pursue that to which I felt God had called me. I share with you my parents’ public affirmation from my commissioning service before my departure: “As John said, ‘I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.’ (3 John 1:4) God knows that our greatest possession – if we can call them that – is our children. And so we say to Him, ‘We have given Julie to You over and over throughout her life, and with the greatest joy and the greatest gratefulness, our hands are open.’ It’s not our call on her life, not our choice for her to go, but it’s our choice to say, ‘We love You, Lord. Take her where You will, do with her what You will.’ To deny this call would be against all we have taught her, all we say we believe, and all that Scripture says.”

I didn’t just wake up one day thinking, “I think I’ll go be a missionary in Germany.” Honestly, it is still a little amusing to me that I even went! But, there is no question that God used significant people and events in my life throughout my time as a college student at Union to open my mind, my eyes and my heart to *His* heart, which is for all the nations.

My first international mission trip was a GO Trip to Israel my junior year at Union. I was a little nervous about telling my parents I was interested in going. I had never been out of the country and didn’t know how supportive they would be about this seemingly great opportunity. Thankfully, even though they were cautious, they were very supportive of my interest in going – and my eventual decision to go.

I look back now and see how significant the support of my parents was and am incredibly grateful that winning them over was not a battle I had to fight. I can’t count the number of conversations I’ve had with friends or students over the past few

years who found themselves in quite different situations with their parents. Even when the cost for my parents was high, they sought to prod me along in obedience to God regardless of what He was calling me to do – or where He was calling me to go.

Each year hundreds of Union students literally travel the world on short-term, Campus Ministries-sponsored mission trips. During GO Week each fall, opportunities for joining God in what He is doing locally, domestically, and globally are made known to students through chapel services, Global Gatherings, on-campus guests from the local community, from around the country, and from all over the world. Our prayer is that God uses this week to ignite in Union students a consuming passion for what is seen all throughout Scripture – God’s desire for all nations to know and worship Him as the One, True, Living God.

With GO Week just around the corner, pray for students to be obedient to God’s call to GO. Should your student want to go, pray for wisdom and discernment. In addition, pray for those at Union who lead students in these efforts.

Father, move mightily in the lives of students at Union as you continue to advance Your Kingdom. May You guide my child as he/she seeks to know Your will and may my child follow You with complete abandon.

Personal Prayer and Reflections

Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6

When my son, Steve, finished the fourth grade, he brought home all of his papers and supplies from the entire year. It was quite a compilation of things; however, the single item of which he was most proud was a letter from his teacher. She had taken the time to write a personal letter to Steve (and I am sure one was written to every student in that class) that described his strengths, his unique qualities, and his unquestionable potential for a stellar future. How proud Steve was of that letter!

As Steve grew into adulthood and had moments of doubt in discovering our Lord's intentions for him, we began the habit of reading that letter on occasion. With each new developmental stage, the letter seemed to offer clarity to Steve as it described the person he had been. With this reminder of how he had used his God-given talents in the past, he was able to think about how these characteristics could look in his life in the future.

Understanding ourselves, our strengths and our limitations, is a life-long process. Philippians 1:6 reminds us that "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." In other words, all of the lessons that we have taught our children and all of the principles that we have tried to instill in them are there. And our Lord promises that He will support our children as they learn to use them, regardless of the amount of time that it takes.

Having children at home for eighteen years gives parents enormous influence over them. So, the question becomes, how can parents continue to support their children even though the support is now from afar?

First, parents need to remember that every lesson important to know and understand has already been taught, by mouth and deed, probably several times.

Second, parents can send cards, cartoons from the newspaper, quotes from reading material, etc. in the context of, "I thought of you because I remember when....." These items

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

Proverbs 15:22

When my sons began “eyeing” the opposite sex when they began dating, I advised them to “be what you are looking for” as they speculated, anticipated, and navigated “dating.”

Meanwhile, I find myself walking a tightrope. Ask too much—I’m too nosy. Ask too little—I appear to not care, plus I don’t know anything.

What can you do as your child navigates the seas of relationships while at Union University?

1. *Pray.* Many of you began praying for your child’s future mate the day your child was born. Continue! If you haven’t been praying, it’s never too late to start.
2. *Model.* In your own relationships, not only with your spouse if you are married, but with your parents, siblings, colleagues, and friends, demonstrate by example love, respect, compassion, honesty, trust, etc.-- the very qualities you hope your child and future “in-law” to have.
3. *Listen.* With open eyes and closed mouth, listen to your child. Many times I’ve dominated and terminated conversations by “talking too much” and “listening too little.”
4. *Ask.* This advice may seem contradictory to #3, but there are times when a thoughtful question or two may encourage your child to open up about the frustrations of dating or even to consider an aspect of a relationship not worthy of pursuing.
5. *Encourage.* Perhaps sharing your own dating experiences may encourage your child to see that dating is a normal, and yes frustrating, adventure in the pursuit of a co-traveler on life’s journey.
6. *Stop.* If a relationship ends for your child, don’t say, “Well, I never really thought, liked, believed, etc.” Remember #3. If the relationship ever resumes, your unsaid words can never haunt you.

He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm. Proverbs 13:20.

My first memory at Union was standing in line on move-in day to get the key to my dorm room, Blythe 5-C. I immediately heard a loud, bubbly voice behind me say “I’m in Blythe 5-A, we’re roommates!” and I was attacked with a big hug. Little did I know that this ‘out of the ordinary’ greeting by a girl who I would call my roommate would become a significant instrument used by God in my life.

I have so many memories during my time at Union, but nothing stands out to me more than the relationships I built during my four years. Through late night conversations, road trips, study sessions, and frequent Sonic runs, we made it through college together. I can confidently say that my friends left a deep impression on me. Those friends became the people that I ran to when I was hurt, excited, or sad. Through their love, encouragement, advice and counsel, they pointed me to Christ. I am blessed to have those girls as a part of my life. Through these friendships I know that, “two are better than one...if one falls down, his friend can help him up...” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)

Your student may be leaving behind many high school friends or they may be excited to make new friendships. Wherever they are, pray that your student would be ‘cautious in friendship’ (Proverbs 12:26). Pray diligently that God would provide them with constant and consistent friends who will encourage them in the Lord and walk with them through college.

God, thank you for the gift of friendship. Give my student wisdom in choosing friends. Provide godly friends of solid character, love, and encouragement, who will walk alongside my student. Help my student be this kind of friend to others.

Tip: Have your student’s friends over to your house for a visit. Spend time with them and get to know them.

Day Twenty

Time Management: Living Carefully in Light of Eternity

Kate Cline

“Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.”

(Ephesians 5:15, NIV).

Union University offers many ways for your college student to get involved. It is too easy to get caught up in the rush of college life and say “yes” to virtually everything. There were many times my freshman year where I prioritized talking with friends over private worship—mistakes I regret now. As a student, I am supposed to be a good steward of the time, money, and energy that parents, faculty, and church have and are investing in me. Like me, your students will find it very easy to squander this great opportunity by careless living. Don’t get me wrong. Building friendships and taking time to relax are good and necessary things. But, it’s easy to rush through classes, work through homework, hang out with friends, surf the internet, and then realize the day has gone. By that time, your student has not eaten, exercised, slept, prayed, or read the Bible. Without accountability, this could easily become a very bad pattern. When you call your student, ask them if they’ve been reading the Bible. Ask them if they’ve been in prayer. Ask them if they’ve devoted themselves to their studies.

A day spent badly is not just that. Days wasted turn into weeks, and weeks, into years. Then one day your student will wake up and wonder how he spent the last year. Maybe he spent the week doing great things: being involved with Student Government, playing Intramurals, doing homework, going to International Justice Mission meetings, and talking with professors. But if he hasn’t been intentional about spending time before the Lord, then he has wasted an opportunity to grow. Ephesians 5 says to take advantage of every opportunity to pray and to congregate with other believers. It speaks against laziness and exhorts us to hard work. It tells us to avoid all foolishness and do good deeds. College provides tons of opportunities to

participate in foolish fun, excused because “we’re just college students.” We are not simply college students. We are Christians. Ask your student how she’s spending her time and tell her to look at Ephesians 5 as a guidebook. Time management is not just about your student succeeding at Union, but about living carefully in light of eternity. It’s about obedience to the commands of scripture. It’s about not wasting her life.

My parents reminded me to balance social with academic activities, reminding me that I was at college to soak up knowledge and to learn. I learned the key to time management is not making a good schedule, but making good choices in the split-second decisions that hit every few minutes of college. Schedules help, but having priorities straight on a daily basis is invaluable. If your student’s priorities are not God-glorifying and God-centered, then they’re going to waste time.

Ask your student what their goals are and encourage them to set priorities that will help them achieve these goals. Make them think about it. Sometimes, we college students need someone outside the college life to make us stop, think, and analyze our motives. As a parent, you have an awesome opportunity to help your student “be very careful” about how he lives.

Ask questions like: “What is the purpose of your education? Does this fit into that?” and “Does this make good use of your talents?” “Are you involved with the local church?” or “How many hours a week are you spending on this activity as opposed to schoolwork?” “Do you have accountability for your internet viewing and movie consumption?” “What are your goals for personal discipleship?”

Finally, pray. Pray for your student to make wise choices. Pray for your student to consider what it means to “make the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.”

Dear Lord: Please help my student to seek your guidance as he plans his days. Help him to number his days correctly that he may walk in righteousness and in the good deeds that you have called him to do. Help me to know how to encourage, support, and guide him for the glory of your name. Amen.

“For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your books were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.” Psalm 139:13-16 ESV

In these verses, the psalmist reminds himself of who God is and of his relationship to him. Even before he was conceived, God existed, and God already knew everything about him. God knew how many days he would live on this earth and everything that would happen in each of them. God took great care to make the psalmist, fearfully and wonderfully into a being made in His image. Because of this, the psalmist praised the Lord. He rested in the promises of God which are written all throughout the Scriptures, such as the promise that God takes care of his people, and that He is for his people and therefore no one can be against them.

I just had my first child, a little girl. As an expectant mother, I thought about these verses quite a bit. I thought about how my child was growing every day, and how God is the One who was shaping and molding her. For that I praise God! I thought about how God saw her unformed substance, and has all of her days written in His book.

I’ve also thought about these verses lately, as one who has also been formed by God. I praise God, reflecting back on the difficult times, the joyous times, and the many times of change. I praise God because He already knew about all of those times in my life, and the ones still to come. He knew them even when I was yet an unformed substance. Nothing takes Him by surprise, and nothing can thwart His plans. Therefore, how can I not rest in the promises of my Maker?

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort.” 2 Corinthians 1:3

Can you remember back to a time (not so long ago) when your student was sick of home? When they sought any way to get out of the house to hang out with friends? Can you remember the times they walked around home exclaiming that they were so “bored” and wished that home was more exciting? You have probably, on some level, experienced this scenario with your student. Some students are ready to tackle the world; they have had the opportunity to travel in high school or stay at summer camp. Others will probably have a harder time adjusting.

I can remember back to several times in college when I literally cried myself to sleep. I had not received a failing grade on a test, experienced a bad break up or had a fight with a roommate - I was just homesick. The strange thing was that my parents only lived fifteen minutes away. Many times I felt lonely, worried, or just plain tired. I needed the comforts of home, a home cooked meal, and my mother’s arms around me telling me that everything would be okay. There were just times that I felt the weight of the world on my shoulders, and I was not prepared to handle it.

The homesickness that I felt was for the things that had been normal and secure in my life. I longed for my “comfort zone” and the warm feeling of knowing that my family was close. The feelings that I felt are very much normal for many college students. College can be a difficult transition, and for some students this is their first time being away from home for an extended period of time. Your student may get discouraged and sad about being away from home, but there is definitely encouragement that you can offer your son or daughter.

- Encourage your student to become involved in campus life, make new friends, and find a family away from home.
- Be sure to keep good contact with your student, scheduling regular phone calls.

- Send care packages or order a “Finals Week Goodie bag” (through SIFE).
- Encourage them to get involved in a local church. Many churches have Watch Care families that “adopt” your child while they are here at Union.
- Don’t burden your students with concerns you have about them being at school. For example, don’t constantly tell them that you just don’t know how you are going to pay for their education or how much you wish they were at home.
- And most importantly – don’t remodel their room! Give them a comfortable place to come home to on breaks.

More than likely, your student will experience at least some homesickness while at college. They will need you once again in ways that you probably did not imagine. They will need your wisdom, your care, and most of all your love. (A box of homemade brownies is often helpful, too!) Do not be discouraged and think that your job is now over because your child has left for college. In many ways, it is just beginning. (My own mother would probably agree.) You have spent many years preparing them to be independent, but you can smile and know that even if they seem ready to let go, they will probably be back for a visit soon. Be prepared with open arms, good advice, and some warm chocolate chips cookies.

Lord, please prepare me so that I will be able to offer comfort to my child. I pray that you will strengthen me so that I can be prepared to give good advice and a loving embrace. Help my student find a sense of belonging at Union so that he or she will find a family away from home. Let the advice and love I give be honoring and glorifying to you. Thank you for the comfort that only you can give.

Personal Prayer and Reflections

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind.” Luke 10:27a

“Everything.” That’s what it means to follow Jesus, to live the Christian life; it means that everything we have and everything we are belongs to God and is devoted to him.

For all Christians everywhere, Jesus reaffirms Moses’ command that followers of God love the Lord our God holistically, with all that we are, every aspect of our being (Deut. 6:5). This is no easy task, no light duty, but this is the mission of each and every individual who answers to the name, “Christian.”

At Union University, we have taken to heart Jesus’ command and we have made it our mission to help our students resist the temptation to compartmentalize their faith. In our Western context, the prevailing inclination is to isolate Christian beliefs to “spiritual” activities - to attend a church service for the glory of God but do everything else with other motives and glories in mind.

Here at Union, we combat this notion by being an academic institution that trains students through the integration of faith and learning. Students learn to think about every subject in a distinctively Christian way. They learn how their gospel-centered faith informs and connects to history, philosophy, science, languages, music, technology, and every other subject they will study.

The call to live a life of holistic devotion to God can be overwhelming, especially in the college context. It can take a lot of time and effort. It is my hope that the four years your student will spend here at Union University will bear fruit for the rest of your student’s life. As your student wrestles with integrating what they believe about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ with every nook, cranny, and corner of their life, they are going to need your help and especially your prayer.

Lord, I thank you that you are worthy of my everything, that you are worthy of my student’s everything. I pray that over the years that

Day Twenty-Four

Praying for Your Student's Spiritual Growth

George H. Guthrie

“May our sons flourish in their youth like well-nurtured plants.”

Psalm 144:12a

I love the seasonal nature of university life. The slow turn of each year—with the distinct feel, colors, sounds, and smells of each season—lends a wonderful, throbbing rhythm to our community's days. Of the seasons, fall and spring are my favorites. Fall, because the heat and humidity of August give way to the cool crisp air and vibrant colors of October. Spring, because as an avid gardener I love to get my hands in the dirt and see things grow. I come by this naturally. You should see my mom's rose garden! My granddad was the happiest man in town when he had a nice, big load of cow manure to put on his garden beds! I have seen pictures of my great-grandma's sprawling perennial garden, with blooms galore. In other words, my love of gardening is in the genes.

This year we harvested gallons and gallons of blueberries (easy to grow, and there is nothing like just-picked blueberries on cereal in the morning), figs for eating and drying, raspberries, apples, tomatoes, squash, peppers, eggplant, beans, peas, lettuce, and asparagus. As I planted the blueberries and asparagus a number of years ago, I took time to prepare the soil. I tilled it extensively. I added lime to raise the PH for the asparagus, organic fertilizer (we are trying to get away from chemicals), and organic matter, and the asparagus will get mulch, because weeds and grass grow much too easily. Left to themselves, weeds will choke the life out of the good plants. With the blueberries, I used an acidic fertilizer, since blueberries love an acid soil. Yet, given room to grow, small doses of fertilizer, a steady flow of water, and plenty of sunlight, these wonderful expressions of God's creativity produce impressively and tickle the taste buds.

One of my favorite parenting passages is Ps. 144:12a, which reads, “May our sons flourish in their youth like well-nurtured plants” (NLT). At Union, we are committed to providing an atmosphere in which your student can thrive spiritually. The

transition from childhood to adulthood is tough. As you may have experienced yourself, there are plenty of weeds to choke out spiritual sensitivity and stunt spiritual growth. Specifically, Jesus mentioned worries, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desire for things (Mark 4:19). Also, hard or shallow hearts—analogueous in Jesus’ parable to soil that is not well prepared—are not conducive to a dynamic walk with God (Mark 4:15-17). Yet, Union will provide many opportunities for weeding, watering, feeding, and fruitfulness.

Lord please help my student to flourish like a well-nurtured plant this semester. I pray that he/she will take advantage of opportunities to be fed spiritually and to be confronted when “weeds” sprout up. May his/her heart be soft toward You, like well-prepared soil, and may You grow him/her up to be wonderfully productive in the advancement of Your kingdom.

Tip: Even though you may want him/her to come home often, encourage your son/daughter to find a church home in the Jackson area, as soon as possible. Regular meeting with and ministering in the church is vital to one’s spiritual life, and that important community of faith will be vital for his/her growth.

Personal Prayer and Reflections

A man finds joy in giving an apt reply—and how good is a timely word!
Proverbs 15:23

I'm thankful to say that all three of our children graduated from Union more than a few years ago. One would think that being on the same campus each day would lead to seeing each other quite often. One would think, but that didn't happen! In fact, their visits to my office were few and far between—and that was a good thing since it indicated that they were involved in the whole college experience!

Having easy access to a parental ear occasionally did lead to their dropping by my office to talk briefly before or after class. I vividly remember each time one of our daughters would enter my office with a look of excitement mixed with wariness. She would start talking about a new venture that she had thought about pursuing upon graduating. Several of her ideas were very good, sound ones. Then, there were a few that, well, were not good ideas as far as I could tell. I was very careful to put on my “interested in what you are saying” face without showing any disagreement or shock. However, inside I found myself screaming! It was only by God's grace that the screams didn't burst out. When she would leave my office, I immediately asked God to show her the path that He had for her, regardless of how reasonable or crazy it seemed to me. Several years after she graduated, she told me how helpful my reactions—or lack of reactions—were, as they allowed her to think and pray through each one and figure it out on her own.

Proverbs 15:23 says, “A man finds joy in giving an apt reply—and how good is a timely word!”

Sometimes with our college-aged children that “apt reply” is talking to our Lord about a situation instead of giving our children our advice. College years are a time for students to explore new ideas, to think about old ideas more deeply, and to find where their lives fit in the world. It is a time for our children to figure out how to prepare for the next chapter in their lives, whatever and

When I attended a Christian college (one much like Union), I could always schedule one thing on my calendar *in pen*: Chapel. Two times a week, virtually every student on campus made his way to the large auditorium for music, lectures, or sermons. Now while I would like to be able to say in hindsight that my every thought was riveted on each services' proceedings, I confess to my fair share of daydreaming. But on one occasion, when the Academic Dean spoke from the Great Commandment passage, something he said fired my imagination. He began by reading the text:

"Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?' Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul and with all of your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.'" (Matt. 22:34-27)

Dean Heie argued that three essential ways to worship God flowed from this Scriptural teaching. First, there is worship A, the adoration of God as demonstrated in expressions of praise. Next is worship B, which is giving glory to God through acts of service to our neighbor. But finally, he asserted that there is worship C – loving God with our minds. In worship C, we worship the Lord by contemplating God's being and character *intellectually*. This kind of love for God drives the Christian to pore over the Bible to see what implications divine revelation has for thinking about science, politics, ethics, and law. Loving God through disciplined thinking, I learned, was a commandment for every believer.

A few days later, my roommate found me studying on a Saturday night. With some incredulity, he asked me what I was doing with my nose in a book during a perfectly good weekend. "*Worship, C, my dear Watson,*" I replied, "*Worship C!*" Ever since that time, I have, in so many words, repeatedly asked of both myself and the students I teach: "How is your worship C?"

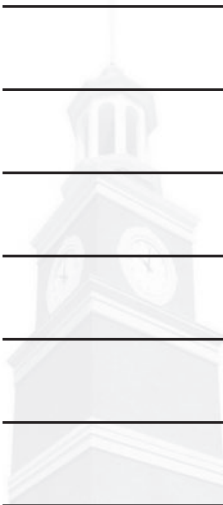
As a parent, you know whether your child loves God. If he or she does, you have no doubt seen the expression of that devotion

in youth meetings, praise services, and mission programs. But now that he or she is a part of a Christian *academic* community, you can take the opportunity to challenge your student to display their Christian character by loving God with their mind in the classroom, laboratory, and library. When papers, projects, and exams are due at “crunch” times during the semester, we need to remind them that their best work in these matters is a vital act of spiritual worship too. After all, Jesus considered it an indispensable hallmark of genuine Christianity.

Heavenly Father, help my student to love You with his mind, and, in so doing, fulfill the Great Commandment. Help me to encourage my student to see that worship is expressed in academic excellence and faithfulness in study. Amen.

Tip: One way to help our students see the importance of loving God with our mind is to be an example ourselves. If, for instance, you are reading something by C. S. Lewis, share the fruits of your own intellectual pursuits with your child in a phone call, email or letter.

Personal Prayer and Reflections



Be sure to fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. 1 Samuel 12:24

If I close my eyes, I can vividly remember back to the morning of February 6, 2008. Standing on Walker Road looking toward what remained of Union University's student housing, many wondered how anyone had survived or how we would ever move beyond the massive destruction that stood before us. If I imagine long enough, I can still hear the eerie silence of the morning, and feel the weight of the thousands of questions that remained unanswered for the future of Union University.

In the days following the tornado of February 5th 2008, several of us were fortunate enough to be able to work out of the "command center" that was temporarily set up on Union's Creek Row. It was there that I saw small miracles begin to unfold as Union University was thrust into the spotlight of the nation and the world. In the command center, we began receiving hundreds and hundreds of volunteers who had come to sacrifice their time to help a university that was crippled. I realized at the time that so many came because they saw a great need and had a tremendous desire to help our campus. However, I know that more importantly they came to show the love of God. There were many times that we would look up to have ten, twenty, thirty or more people at a time standing before us coming to serve in any way they could. Some had gloves and carried shovels. Others had donations of cell phones and cleaning supplies. Even others met us each day with freshly cooked meals that were prepared in our parking lots, handed out by people with huge smiles, who were there to meet our basic needs. It seemed that every time we turned around there was someone there to provide encouragement and show their love. There is no doubt that God sent so many people to help us in our darkest hours. I am thankful for their willingness to answer the call to have a servant's heart.

During the many weeks following the tornado, Union University continued to receive a tremendous outpouring of love. Anyone who was a part of the recovery efforts after the tornado can testify to the fact that God sent so many willing people to help us in the difficult task of getting Union back on its feet. Seeing volunteerism on a scale so massive made me so proud of the Christian community of which Union is a part. We saw God's love shown so purely to us through the simple act of someone meeting our needs.

Each year since 2002, the faculty, staff, and students of Union University have participated in "Campus & Community: A Day of Remembrance and Service" by volunteering and serving in various capacities throughout the community. This special day is set aside to reflect on God's providential protection of our campus during past years and to give thanks to a community that has wrapped its arms around Union in times of crisis. The beginning of November holds a special significance as hundreds of students and university employees will leave the campus to go out in the community to volunteer at schools, churches, and private and civic organizations.

Union University seeks to teach each student that by helping others and embodying the heart of a servant, we can show God's love to people throughout our community. As your student gets involved in the many activities available around campus, please encourage them to spend at least a portion of their time serving others outside the walls of Union University.

Dear Lord, I pray that you will open my child's eyes to the world around them. I ask that you give them opportunities to use their talents and abilities in a way that will help others in the community. Most importantly, I pray that you will give my student a servant's heart so that others can see your love through them.

Personal Prayer and Reflections

Day Twenty-Eight

Finances: Encouraging Student Stewardship

(Even When They Don't Have Any Money!) Kimberly Thornbury

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? Luke 16:10-11

I always loved those surprise letters from my mother during college. You know, the letters with the surprise \$10 or \$20 tucked inside. The money promised a meal outside the Brewer Dining Hall and a movie (that didn't even need to be a matinee!) It's a universal truth that college students always seem to need money.

Now that the student is 18, students can apply for (and readily obtain) a credit card with no parental signature or cosigner. (While Union prohibits credit card companies from soliciting students on campus, often students receive dozens of credit card offers via the mail their first year.)

According to Nellie Mae, the nation's largest student loan lender, the average college student carries an average of \$2,200 in credit card debt. The Vice President of Visa also explains that less than half (46%) of college students pay their balance in full each month.

Students have trouble understanding that if they have a \$1,000 balance and pay the minimum balance each month on a credit card with 18% interest, it will take 12 years to pay off. (Plus, they will have paid a whopping \$1,115 in interest charges!) Many college students naively think that they can accrue credit card debt and pay it off in a few years when they land a "real job" once they graduate.

Many parents help pay for a student's tuition, room, and board but ask that the student himself earn any extra spending money. Students may begin college with a nice checking account balance from work over the summer but soon the balance dwindles as the semester progresses. Financing clothes, fun, and food on a credit card can seem initially attractive and can be a quick fix to avoid the realities of money management.

Financial planning is an important area in which students learn independence and decision making skills. Creating a realistic budget, limiting spending, and paying off credit card balances on time, every time are valuable lessons that can be learned while your son or daughter is in college. Students also can learn the spiritual discipline of being content, even when they don't get what they want. Hebrews 13:5 exhorts, "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'"

Lord, I pray that You would grant my student wisdom in the area of money management. I pray that he or she would be faithful with these scarce resources, and that You would provide contentment in all circumstances. We are thankful that You provide for our every need.

Tip: Many credit card companies will limit the amount of credit on a credit card when asked. See if you son or daughter can be faithful with a small credit limit (e.g. \$300) before expanding that credit limit. Union also offers a wonderful personal finance class that many seniors have found helpful before leaving Union.

Personal Prayer and Reflections

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. . . . Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6:1 & 4

My brother developed a taste for Mexican food while he was in college and loved to eat it after midnight. In our city the Taco Bell drive-through stayed open until 5 a.m. or so, so it was not uncommon for him to make a run in the wee hours of the morning.

One time, during his first summer home from school, he was coming in the door at the same time as our dad was walking into the kitchen to grab a cup of coffee to start his day. Steve walked in with his crumpled bag, wearing his pajama bottoms (“It was the drive-through,” he reasoned), with his bed sheet draped around his shoulders.

Needless to say, Dad was pretty steamed. A stern parental discussion ensued, you know the kind: drunks on the road, responsibilities, and curfews. Things were fairly tense between them for a while.

It’s a difficult time when parents realize that an adult is living under their roof. It’s especially tricky for the first few years after that magic 18th birthday. The independence of college life makes it even more intense. It only gets trickier as the 21st birthday looms on the horizon.

In Ephesians 6, Paul writes about family relationships. First he reminds children to “obey” (v. 1) and “honor” (v. 2) their parents, a reminder of Exodus 20:12 (the fifth commandment). I think it’s important, though, that Paul quickly moves to fathers: “Do not provoke your children to anger” (v. 4). In the households of many of my friends, neither the fathers nor the sons were living up to their scriptural admonitions.

So how can we work through these kinds of tensions?

First, we need to think through areas of potential conflict; these issues may include curfews, work, travel, or friends who stay overnight. Perhaps you could make up a list of these areas

and how you would like for your student to handle them. College students are notorious for failing to use common sense, so parents have to walk a balance between responsibility and allowing the young person to learn a few lessons the hard way. The more prepared you are as parents, the more likely you'll be to talk your way through these conflicts without arguing.

Secondly, choose the best time to talk about these issues. 5 a.m. is not the best time. The heat of the moment is not the best time. We must look for times of calm and peacefulness to allow such discussions to bear their best fruit. Also remember never to start negotiations with an ultimatum; leave room for compromise.

The college years set the pattern for how parents and their adult children will relate for years to come. A little forethought and some attention to treating one another with respect will go a long way toward setting a strong foundation for the future.

God, help me as my student makes this transition into full-fledged adulthood. Give me the insight needed to see my child as an adult and help me to be reasonable as I help my child grow into adulthood.

Tip: Plan ahead to find ways to discuss the issues that may become problematic when he / she returns home for visits.

Personal Prayer and Reflections

I could tell from my twenty-two-year-old daughter's voice that things weren't going so well. Even though Ellen didn't voice any one concern, I knew that something wasn't quite right. As her mother, I tried to ask the right questions and respond appropriately to her less-than-clarifying answers. I even quoted a few applicable Scriptures verses.

Then I remembered a popular T.V. commercial. This particular commercial, promoting a long distance service, showed a concerned father talking to his obviously distraught daughter. All he said was, "I understand," over and over. He offered no counsel, not even reassuring words of wisdom. He just repeated over and over the phrase, "I understand," and allowed his daughter to talk. So, I tried it. Instead of gathering all of the important details and giving a plethora of options for Ellen to help her "fix things," I stopped talking so much and just listened.

As I listened, I heard Ellen express fear and doubt concerning her chosen major. She had entered college as an undecided major with few qualms. We had discussed how her exposure to a variety of disciplines and professors would be clarifying. We would let the Lord speak to her through her experiences. In her culminating senior field experience, however, these unsure feelings were a different story. She was so afraid that she had not processed her experiences in the way her Lord intended and that she had missed His divine plan for her life.

Psalm 46:1-3 reminds us that *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."* My Ellen's mountains were shaking; her seas were roaring. What she needed from me, though, was confidence that God was in control and that, with His help, she could figure this out. She did not need my advice nor my wisdom. Oh, how difficult it was to be quiet and patient and let God be her Counsel!


So how can we know when to offer counsel and when to be patient with the process?

First, we need to remind ourselves that God is truly in control. If I really believe this Biblical truth, then I can use self discipline, listening and allowing my student to figure out this process called life. What better place than a Christian university for young people to find a community that supports them in all areas of their lives?

Second, I constantly need to tell my student that I am proud of her. As she takes more control over her life and learns how to accept more responsibility, she may make mistakes. She needs to hear from me that I don't expect her to be perfect, only to learn from her mistakes.

Lord, help me to listen to my student. I know that You are in control and that You love him/her even more than I do. Help me to be patient and to let my student learn all of the lessons that need to be learned. Thank You for Union University where I know my student can learn these lessons in a safe and wholesome environment.

Personal Prayer and Reflections



Day Thirty-One

Choosing a Major: Listening to God's Calling

Gene Fant, Jr.

Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" 1 Samuel 3:8b-9a

A few years ago I received a call from the parents of a student who had changed his major from pre-med to English. They were livid and wanted to speak with me. Before we met, I asked the student if he minded; he thought it was a great idea.

On that Saturday, the parents poured out their hearts about how they had always dreamed of having a doctor in the family. They'd encouraged their son in his studies and were devastated that he was "only" an English major. They lamented, "What can an English major even do?" (Virtually anything! I've had English majors who completed medical school!).

I paused before asking, "Do you know what your son's G.P.A. is?"

The mother squirmed. "I think it's a 1.5. That's not very good, but he can work harder."

I continued: "And what did he get in organic chemistry?"

Another squirm. "He dropped it the first time and got a D the second time."

I smiled: "Folks, I hate to tell you, but your son really hasn't been a pre-med major in a while. He hates science, hates lab work, and doesn't want to be a doctor. He loves to read and write, however, and shows signs of being a pretty good teacher. He's happier since he changed his major, too. He's prayed about it, he's talked to mentors about it, and I think that he's made a pretty mature decision."

After our meeting, they felt better. It's been several years since then; I can report that the student finished his degree, went on to complete a master's degree in English literature with a perfect 4.0 G.P.A., and became a successful teacher and coach who mentors many young people every year.

Parents walk a fine line between exhorting excellence and being overbearing in their students' lives. When students arrive at university, they encounter new ideas, new people, and often they realize new dreams for their lives. For some students, the choice of major is a long-planned-for ideal. For others, it's a practical choice. For others, it's a strong sense of God's leading in their lives.

While a student's choice of major is not always equivalent to vocational calling, it certainly is a major part of it. "Vocation" means, literally, "calling"; for Christians it should remind us of Samuel's experience of hearing God's call in the middle of the night. Samuel's mother had given her son to God, and Samuel's mentor was Eli. As Samuel heard God's call, Eli urged the young man to listen to and seek after God's will.

It must have been hard for Hannah to have trusted God and Eli with her son, just as it is hard for many parents to trust their students to the faculty and staff of the university. God, however, has great and wonderful plans for his children (including our own children), and, like Hannah, we should learn to rely on God's wisdom, even as our students are learning to listen to God's voice.

God, help my student to listen for Your calling on his / her life. Send mentors who will help in this process. Give me the peace I need to trust in Your wisdom.

Personal Prayer and Reflections



Contributors

Julie Bradfield serves as the Director of Student Mobilization through the Office of Campus Ministries. A 2001 Union graduate, Julie provides direction for the Global Opportunities program at Union. She has enjoyed leading GO Trip teams to Miami, Florida, as well as six teams to Germany, where she served previously as a Journeyman with the International Mission Board.

Kate Cline is a 2011 Union graduate from Washington D.C., with a degree in History and Creative Writing. Her career goals are to have the mind of William Carey, the prayer life of Charles Spurgeon, and the godliness of Elizabeth Elliot. Along the way, she wants to teach history, work with humanitarian aid organizations, and write historical fiction.

Paul Deschenes is Union's Director of Counseling Services. He has been a psychologist in Jackson for 29 years. He enjoys fishing, canoeing, woodworking, and gardening. He has been married to Diane for 25 years. They have two children at Union; Daniel is 21, and Anna Marie is 20.

Gene Fant is the Vice President for Academic Administration and Dean of Union's College of Arts & Sciences. He and his wife Lisa are the co-authors of *Expectant Moments: Devotions for Expectant Parents* (Zondervan 2002); they have twins, Ethan & Emily (13). His most recent book is *God as Author: A Biblical Approach to Narrative* (B&H Academic 2010).

George Guthrie serves as Union's Benjamin W. Perry Professor of Bible in the Department of Christian Studies. He is the author of numerous articles and 5 books, including *The Holman Guide to Interpreting the Bible* (co-authored with Dr. David Dockery), the NIV Application Commentary: Hebrews, and the Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary on Hebrews. He, his wife Pat, and their children, Joshua & Anna, live on a "small-holding" near Jackson, with blueberry bushes, cherry trees, a dog, three cats, eight ducks, and a number of very large catfish.

Tamarin Huelin has 17 years of counseling experience in both inpatient as well as outpatient settings. She has an undergraduate degree in Recreation Therapy from the University of North Carolina, a Masters in Counseling from Georgia State University and a diploma in Christian Counseling from the Psychological Studies Institute (now Richmond University). Her counseling employers have included Minirth Meier New Life (now Meier Clinics) in Atlanta and Chicago and Lutheran Social Services in Indiana. She and her husband, Scott, also worked in Residence Life at the University of Chicago. Tamarin and Scott have two sons, Jeremy (11) and Cameron (10). She enjoys being a wife and mother, running, reading, art, picking produce at local farms, and canning. She also serves as a counselor in Union's counseling services.

Beth Madison is a wife, mother of two sons, and faculty member in the Continuing Studies department at Union.

Dottie Myatt is the Assistant Dean for Teacher Education and Accreditation and Professor of Elementary Education. Her husband, Sam, is also a faculty member at Union, and all three of their children (Bill Myatt, Lili Tankersley, and Janie Williams) graduated from Union. Dr. Myatt serves on the Teacher Education Board of Examiners of the TN Department of Education and has held several leadership roles in state and national teacher education organizations. She was selected as the 2007 Faculty of the Year at Union.

Andy Pettigrew and his wife, Laura, are currently serving as Union's missionaries-in-residence while they are on furlough from serving in Gaborone, Botswana where Andy serves as the Student Strategist for all of Sub Saharan Africa looking to connect students in the states with Africa as well as seeking ways to reach the youth population throughout the sub continent. Andy and Laura both graduated from Union University. Andy also holds an MDiv from Southern Seminary. They have 3 children: Lili, Elliot, and Wesley.

Mary Anne Poe is Professor of Social Work and Director of the BSW Program. She served as Social Work Department Chair for 11 years and was the Union University 2009 Faculty of the Year. She and her husband, Dr. Harry L. Poe, the Charles Colson Professor of Faith and Culture at Union, have two daughters. Rebecca is a 2009 Union alumnus and Mary Ellen is a sophomore.

Stacy Preston is a 2005 (B.A.) and 2009 (M.A.I.S) graduate of Union. She served in the Campus Ministries Office for 3 ½ years and is currently a stay-at-home- mom, daily investing in her son, Elijah.

Carla Sanderson serves as the university's Provost and Executive Vice President, giving leadership to Union's Learning Community. She serves as a commissioner for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and board member for Christian higher education associations. Dr. Sanderson and her husband, Larry, have three sons, Clayton, Cody, and Cullen.

Ann Singleton currently serves as Associate Dean of the School of Education. Her 26-year tenure at the university, coupled with her role as a mother of two children who had very different college experiences, gives her a well rounded perspective of university life. She has coauthored a textbook, Teaching Mathematics to All Children and was recognized as Union University 2003 Faculty of the Year.

Pamela Sutton is a professor in the English Department at Union University. She is known for her stash of chocolate in her office, but also for her love of baseball (son Drew plays for the Boston Red Sox) and cycling (son Tyler is a competitive road and mountain cyclist). An experienced empty nester and single mom, she has written parenting articles for The Jackson Sun and The Florida Baptist Witness.

Karen Taylor serves as the Associate Director of Student Leadership and Engagement. She is a 2001 graduate of Union University with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. She is also a graduate of Dallas Baptist University where she received the M.Ed. in Higher Education Administration. Karen works with a variety of student organizations on campus, and especially enjoys working with freshman students.

Gregory Thornbury currently serves as the Vice President for Spiritual Life and as founding Dean of the School of Theology and Missions. A senior writer & editor for Kairos Journal, he is a graduate of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky (M.Div., Ph.D.). He is the husband of Kimberly and the father of Kate (10) & Carolyn (8).

Kimberly Thornbury serves as Union's Vice President for Student Services & Dean of Students and has two daughters, Kate (10) and Carolyn (8). She is a recent contributor to *College Faith 2: 150 Christian Leaders and Educators Share Faith Stories from Their Student Days*, and is a contributor to *Christian Leadership Essentials: A Handbook for managing Christian Organizations*, edited by David S. Dockery.

Rachel Ware is a 2009 graduate of Union and serves as Director of Discipleship, overseeing Klemata, Union's Women's Ministry.

Richard Wells is Vice President for Church Relations at Union University. Before coming to Union, he served as Senior Pastor of South Canyon Baptist Church (Rapid City, South Dakota). Previously he had served on the faculty of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, and as President of Criswell College in Dallas. He and his wife Carol have three grown children and five grandchildren.

Lee Wilson serves as the Director of Spiritual Formation and Discipleship at Union University. Prior to joining the Campus Ministries staff in January of 2008, Lee earned a BA in English Literature at Texas A&M and a Masters of Divinity at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Lee oversees programs that minister to students at Union. Lee is married to his lovely wife, Beth, and together they have a toddling little girl, Abigail, and a baby boy, Liam.



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