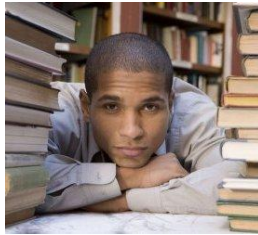# Back to School for the Glory of God

Steve Burchett

When I was in school, summer vacation always went too fast. Somehow three months off felt like only three weeks, and suddenly I found myself standing in the school supplies aisle at Wal-Mart anticipating the beginning of another year.

As I reflect back on my schooling, I have many good memories of friendships, ballgames, and, yes, learning, but it could have been better. I became a follower of Christ when I was a freshman in high school, which did affect the kind of student (and athlete) I was, but if I could go back, I would be more intentional about glorifying God.

Consider three ways high school and college students can honor God in school. If you are homeschooling, pay special attention to the first section:

Don't cheat

Cheating comes in a variety of forms, such as copying another student's work, or not giving proper credit in a paper or project (plagiarism). I had many classes in college that used an "honor system" concerning expected reading. The professor would assign a certain amount of pages, and we were required to turn in a sheet that explained if we did the reading. If we did not, we put the percentage that we did actually cover. This system could easily be abused.

What's wrong with cheating? If you do, and it becomes known, your testimony for the Lord will suffer greatly. It will say to your teacher and fellow students, "The gospel that he preaches doesn't make any difference. He's just like the rest of us."

Even if your cheating is known only to God, you are putting yourself in a dangerous position. In 1 Corinthians 6:9, Paul says, "The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God." Students who are characterized by ungodliness are not Christians (even if they profess to be) and are drifting toward hell (cf. Revelation 21:8).

See each class as an opportunity to talk about the gospel

God has purposes for placing us in our various classes—even the boring ones! One of those reasons is certainly to bring a Christian worldview into the class. If there is opportunity for discussion, share your Scripture-informed thoughts. This doesn't always mean you must quote verses, but speak the truth.

Consider Paul's approach in Acts 17:17-18 as a model:

> So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present. And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him.

Those in the synagogues and the market place had their own ideas about God and life, and Paul was compelled to enter into the discussion for the purpose of proclaiming Christ.

You may ask, "What if I don't say things correctly." You *won't* always speak eloquently or with the theological precision you would prefer, but God is for you, and He may use even a single statement of yours to change somebody's life. Even if the class has little or no discussion, engage people before and after for their eternal good.

Carry a Bible for free time

The psalmist says, "Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11). The Bible is of great value to the Christian. It is a light to his path (v. 105). Students benefit significantly by reading and thinking about it during down time. I have worked as a substitute teacher in six different public high schools, and I am certain about at least this: Students have lots of free time each day! Why not utilize it for good by reading the Bible?

Will people see you reading your Bible? Sure, but what's wrong with that? You see unbelievers enjoying their favorite books or magazines, so why not let them see what you love? Perhaps it will lead to a discussion about the good news. You should ask God for that to happen. Even if it doesn't, time spent with an open Bible is not wasted.