

Our Inheritance: Left at the Door of the University?

Last month we looked at the history of the church as a part of our inheritance and how we must value and study that history. In the next two months we will look at some ways in which we might despise or give up our inheritance and in turn despise the giver of our inheritance. This month we look at some areas in which we are tempted to despise our inheritance, especially within the context of the college or university campus. Although I may not state it explicitly, many if not all of these areas of temptation apply to young people entering the workforce directly after high school as well.

You finally graduated from high school! Now what? Many of you are in college or may be planning to go to college. A great danger is to get lost in the college life. Will you give up your Reformed convictions? Will you leave your Reformed faith at the door of the university? You walk through the doors of the university on the first day of school and are pressed from all sides. Some pressures are very recognizable, others are very subtle. Some of these pressures are present at both Christian and secular universities but in different ways. Some of these pressures are present only at secular universities.

For starters, at a secular university you don't need to look or listen very far to see or hear wickedness. Many professors and students alike at secular universities do not care about God. They do not care about your faith. They despise living the Christian life. I very clearly remember my first day of college (Grand Rapids Community College, a secular institution). That was the first time I had ever heard the "f-word" used in a classroom. Talk about a shocking experience for someone who had been in Christian classrooms his whole life. That word and many others just as crude seem to be "pet words" of many on the college campus (and on the jobsite, for that matter). Many professors and students are just downright profane. Listen to that day after day, and it wears on you. You get so used to hearing it that you are tempted to slip up and say some of those things yourself. One benefit of a Christian college is that you won't hear profanity day after day in the classroom. Though their theology might be wrong, the professors for the most part, I hear, conduct themselves in a godly manner.

In the same classroom I heard that foul word spoken, I overheard the conversation of a student talking about the girl he was living with. Enough said. Not only is profanity acceptable and normal, but sexual promiscuity is rampant as well. It is a way of life. It is *the* way of life for many. This is where a Christian young person can get into a lot of trouble very quickly. If you are going to befriend this kind of person, you have already let your guard down and are opening yourself to participating in all sorts of wickedness. Who are your friends while you attend college? Are they the sort of person described above, or do they live a godly life and keep you accountable in your antithetical walk in college? Giving up your godly friends in the church is one of the ways you despise your inheritance.

The ungodly person you might befriend in college isn't going to keep you accountable in your Sabbath observance. This is especially relevant for those living on campus or away from home. Are you still going to be faithful in going to church twice a Sunday?

In the midst of an ungodly campus, there is great opportunity to witness of the inheritance you hold so dear. As you live godly in the face of temptation all around, other students see how you live. They see and hear from you that you don't want any part of the wickedness they delight in. You don't attend the drunken parties, you don't delight in fornication, and you don't take God's name in vain. You are a light shining in the darkness. You will see other lights shining in the darkness too. For all the wickedness you will find at a secular university, you still will find upstanding, godly people, professors and students alike who value the same inheritance you do. When you find these people, stay close to them. They are probably struggling to live the same antithetical life you are. God has placed them there for mutual encouragement and accountability.

When you attend a university, you will be rained upon with the world view of evolutionism. At secular universities there is outright denial of God's having any part in creating or sustaining the world. If you attend a Christian college, the lie will be a little more subtle. You professor might say, "Of course I believe in the infallible and inspired scriptures as the authoritative word of God." Query that professor further and you may find out he actually disregards Genesis 1-11 as just a story God used to communicate to his scientifically immature church that he is in control. Dig deeper and you might realize the professor has a wrong view of infallibility or authority as well. You have a choice to make as you learn biology, geology, and chemistry. Will you through pure intellect try to interpret the knowledge you receive? Or will you by faith understand that all the information you receive points to God, the creator and sustainer of the universe and all it contain?

One of the biggest pressures in college is to "think for yourself." The reigning thought is, "you be you". You are your own person. Figure out what is best for you. You are in your own pursuit to find truth. Don't let anyone else or anything else get in the way as you pursue your dream. Don't let anyone or anything (scripture) tell you how to live. In this respect individualism and post-modernism go hand in hand. It is man-centeredness and the pursuit of knowledge at the expense of absolute truth, *the* truth: the word of God.

When the focus is on self, the sin of pride unavoidable. We are so caught up with ourselves and the life we want to live that we forget our identity. We are identified with Christ. In him is all our boasting. This is who we are. We are redeemed and therefore live a life of gratitude, not a life of pursuing our own desires. We are disciples of Christ. We follow Christ and learn from him how to live.

The life we are called to live is clearly laid out for us in scripture. We see how Christ lived. We see how Christ interacted with those around him.

As we begin another year after a break for the holidays, some of us will go back to work and some of us will start a new semester of school. How will we live? Will we be influenced by unbelieving students and professors? Or will we witness to who we are in Christ? Will we identify ourselves with Christ? We start this new year armed with the word of God, full of examples of godly people living in an ungodly world. Scripture, a part of our inheritance, is the clear revelation of how we must live. Let us value this inheritance by living a godly, antithetical life.