

# Top 10 Pro Tips for Christian Incoming Freshmen

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**One Overarching Principle: *Stay connected to Jesus, and you'll bear much fruit.***

*Read each of these Scripture selections. How can you apply this as you start college?*

- [John 15:1-11](#) (abide in Jesus)
- [Galatians 5:16-26](#) (inward fruit)
- [Matthew 28:16-20](#) (outward fruit)

## Top 10 Practical Pro Tips:

1. The first 10 days are CRUCIAL: Whatever you decide to do the first weekend and the first week, will probably be what you do for the rest of semester. What you do your first semester will probably be what you'll do for the next 4 years. And what you do in your college years will probably be how you'll live for the rest of your life. So those first 10 days are SO KEY. Here's a challenge from 2 Timothy 2:22, "So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart." So we see three things: 1. Flee, 2. Pursue, 3. With Those. Let's unpack that: 1. Flee the temptations of college (porn, parties, academic idolatry), 2. pursue JESUS and the life He calls us to as disciples (read the Bible every day, pray, develop your faith by examining doubts and getting answers), and 3. With Those: go to a local church the FIRST Sunday. Commit to a weekly Bible study on campus. Pursue Christian community.
2. Make your faith your own: You're exiting the world of your family, and entering the world of public college. You won't get any social capital from being a Christian, you won't be required to read the Bible, you'll face opposition for your faith. When the environment changes, will you bail on Christ? I've seen it happen again and again, even in my own life as I transitioned from Christian school to public school. Your true heart is revealed when the pressure increases. So I challenge you to make your faith your own! Pray for the Holy Spirit's help. Be a *resilient* disciple of Jesus Christ.
3. Read your Bible daily: If you're not eating the Word of God, you're starving spiritually. If you're not hearing from God, you're listening to the world. If you're not fighting your sin, you're giving in to it. If you're not cultivating your affections for Christ, your love will grow cold. If you're not conforming your life to the Scriptures, then something else is conforming your life. You need to read your Bible! [Check out this short video clip for some practical help.](#)
4. Beware entertainment: Video games, [Netflix](#), Disney+, social media, YouTube, TikTok... there are endless opportunities to entertain yourself. It'll suck you in and rob you of academic life, spiritual life, and community life. It's SO engaging and exciting. It's designed that way. And if you're not careful, you'll be succeeding in the fantasy world and failing in the real world. You'll know the characters in your favorite binge-watch series, but not actually know your roommates. You'll have built an amazing fortress in Minecraft, but have undone projects in your classes. You'll have great XP in your video game, but no lasting knowledge of God. [Don't settle for fake love and fake war.](#) It may even be [the reason why you're bored with the Bible...](#)
5. Resist the commuter mindset: I see this happen with folks who commute, that they are only on campus for their classes and then they get out as fast as they can. They aren't willing to stick around, they don't want to build community. And I get it, you already have friends, and it's tough to make *new* friends! But you'll never build that good community if you don't try. Stick around for a Bible study. Stay for a club meeting. Get to know the other students. I think you'll be glad you did! Oh, and this doesn't only apply to commuters, sometimes even students living on campus can fall prey to the "commuter mindset" by staying stuck in their dorms alone, never venturing out of their comfort zone.
6. Get mentoring: There are two ways to learn something. 1. Make a bunch of mistakes and let the pain of your actions teach you what to do. OR 2. Learn from other people's pain and choose wisely the first time. This is

- the benefit of mentoring: folks who've been through life before you, and can help guide you in what is wise and good. Find this among your professors, upperclassmen, and spiritual mentors like [DiscipleMakers staff](#).
7. Remember that college is "real life": A big mistake students make is thinking that college *isn't* real life, so they can goof off, make bad decisions, not really care about things, because they think it doesn't matter. They say they'll get serious about God when they graduate. But I don't think it'll happen. Because college IS real life, the choices you make in college will affect the rest of your life. The person you are becoming in your four years here is the person you probably will be for the next 40 years.
  8. Find a local church: DiscipleMakers Christian Fellowship is a student club, but not a church. Some students are local and will be living with parents and stay involved in whatever local church they're already in. That's great! But if you move away from home, it's not enough just to come to a weekly on-campus Bible study. It's vitally important to your spiritual health that you are part of a local church. [Check out this guide for help](#).
  9. Live as an ambassador (2 Cor 5:11-21): You have a *fantastic* opportunity to bear fruit for the kingdom by living as an evangelistic ambassador on campus. You have the message of reconciliation! You are being *sent* to campus as a representative of God, to share the gospel. That's a *big* deal, and you can make an eternal impact in the lives of those around you by your words and actions. Share the gospel with your friends, live counter-culturally as a disciple of Jesus, and mobilize others to the nations.
  10. Press into the awkwardness of community: Yes, making new friends is awkward and strange. Attending events where you don't know anyone is hard. Some folks struggle with social anxiety. Leaving your room and talking to strangers is weird. But it will be worth it to build community! There is just no cheap shortcut to deep relationships, they take time and vulnerability. You can't substitute Snapchat friends for IRL friends. Here's the secret: Those other freshmen are just as scared as you are, but if you take the initiative, you can really serve them by helping to build a friendship. Ask questions, listen, and see how God works! Be courageous: on the other side of awkwardness is *true connection*, if you press through it.

**Want more help? Here are some excellent (short) videos and articles!**

- Video: [Practical Advice for College Students](#) by Ben Stuart (3 minutes)
- Article: [Seven Tips for College Students](#) by John Piper
- Video: [The History of Student Missions](#) by CROSS (6 minutes)
- Article: [Hope for the Anxious College Freshman](#) by Jane Story
- Video: [Practical Helps for Bible Reading](#) by Ben Stuart (6-mins)
- Article: [Productivity is for College Students, Too](#) by Peter Krol
- Article: [How do I find a good local church?](#) by Andy Cimbala
- Article Series: [Heading Out on Your Own: 31 Life Skills in 31 Days](#)

**Want even more? Are you a bit of a reader? Here are some recommended books:**

- [The Fuel and the Flame: Ignite your life & your campus for Jesus Christ](#) by Steve Shadrach and Paul Worcester
- [What is the Gospel?](#) by Greg Gilbert
- [Single Dating Engaged Married: Navigating Life and Love in the Modern Age](#) by Ben Stuart
- [Learning for the Love of God: A Student's Guide To Academic Faithfulness](#) by Donald Opitz
- [Just Do Something: A Liberating Approach to Finding God's Will](#) by Kevin DeYoung
- [Do More Better: A Practical Guide to Productivity](#) by Tim Challies
- [It's All Backward: Why the direction in life you've been given is wrong](#) by Claude Hickman
- [Rethink Your Self: The Power of Looking Up Before Looking In](#) by Trevin Wax
- [What Are You Going to Do with Your Life?](#) by J.D. Greear
- [Surviving Religion 101: Letters to a Christian Student on Keeping the Faith in College](#) by Michael Kruger