

College Students and the Bible

At a certain renowned American university, a professor regularly inquires on the first day of his course, "If you could ask God one question, what would it be?" Previous classes have routinely expressed the wish for money, material possessions, or similarly self-centered concerns. This fall term, the professor again asked his students the question. Instead of the usual reply, however, the first student to respond said that he would ask God, "**What is the purpose of my life?**"

This classroom exchange took place soon after the tragic events of September 11.

The world was changed forever on that date. Have America's college students changed? Called generation Y, they are the children of baby-boomers, the products of unprecedented social liberation, technological innovation, and economic prosperity. Raised in an atmosphere of relative national peace and favored with youth, street smarts, and techno-savvy, they are the segment of the nation's population with the most opportunities, the highest aspirations. And up until that dark day in September, a bright future seemed to stretch endlessly before them.

Now the haunting fears of bioterrorism, war, a possible military draft, massive economic repercussions, and the ultimate fear of their lives being prematurely cut off by a terrorist act, have worked their way into the deepest recesses of this young generation's collective consciousness. University seminars featuring professors lecturing on the attack and its global significance, sign boards pleading for peace and understanding, and discussions about security have proliferated. Still, life on the college campus goes on, as it must. Studies, sports, and the social life of this resilient age group have all resumed. But underneath the appearance of apparent normality lies a deep-seated anxiety about the future. According to general observation, students lately more often answer, "Yes" when asked, "Have you ever wondered what the meaning of human life is?" The student who responded that he would ask God about the purpose of his life is not alone in his perplexity. His question is in the minds of many. Students are searching for answers.

Yet today's college students are being educated in institutions that perpetuate atheism, moral relativism, and a mind-boggling array of world philosophies. In the university environment, the Bible is routinely scorned as being outdated, fictional, and for the superstitious and ignorant. Bible reading is perceived as an intellectual weakness. In such an atmosphere, it is too easy for a student to bury any inclination to read the Bible beneath the latest philosophical trends sweeping across college campuses. However, we believe that many students, having been shaken to their core, will surmount these prejudices and turn to the Bible for answers.

But what will they find when they read the Bible? There is still the basic problem of comprehension. The same college students who can so glibly interpret poetry or literary classics such as *Moby Dick* are confounded when faced with the Bible. What they need now, more than ever, is the key to unlock its mysteries. While Bible versions and study aids abound, we hold the conviction that the proper way to study the Bible is to study the Bible in the way of life (divine life) emphasizing life. The seeking ones need to know the Lord as life. They need to experience Christ as life and they need to study the Bible in the way of life.

We have been keenly aware of and concerned for the spiritual need of this young generation, our nation's future. We believe many students will realize their inward emptiness, and the quest for meaning that was often ignored before will now demand to be answered. According to reports, attendance at Bible studies on campus has already increased. College students urgently need the answers that only God's interpreted Word can give them. Our goal is to get the Word of God to

those students who will not be satisfied with anything less than the truth in the Word of God. We wish to give them the key that will unlock the mysteries of God, the universe, and the meaning of human life. Our savior God desires that we not only be saved but also come to the full knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4).