



Debriefing Manual



Why do reflection?

God has given us the ability to reflect for a purpose: to teach us more about Himself and how He has made us. Throughout the whole Old Testament, God tells His followers how to reflect. You can see the Israelites reflecting on the Passover generations (Exod. 12:17). In Psalm 77, you can see how meditating on God's works (Ps. 77: 11-12) can lead us into worshiping God (Ps. 77:13-15). Psalm 105:5 charges us to, 'Remember the wonderful works He has done,' as the psalmist spends the entire psalm reflecting on specific ways that God had been faithful to His people.

God can and will teach you life changing things in light of your time in college, and one way we can participate in this change is by reflecting intentionally on these lessons. Without reflection, we too easily go back to the habits and patterns of life we had before, rather than cultivating the lessons that are ripe now.

Another key reason to reflect is that you are or will be "disoriented" in this transition from being in college to being outside of college. Disorientation is losing your bearings, your identity, or your ability to fit who you are now with the life you are living. This disorientation may even surface in your relationship to God – He may not feel as close as He felt during college. Without reflection and seeking Him out, you may be spiritually drained and dry.

Understanding that you are disoriented is the easy part, but how do we become re-oriented? How do we fit who we are now, with our lives moving forward?

Here is an overview of the steps you'll walk through in this journal and through the Re-entry Retreat:

- Remember and evaluate your experience and what you've learned by talking, writing, and sharing
- Remember your Biblical identity
- See specific ways that God has grown you or shown you weaknesses
- **Make a plan to help you move forward in applying what you've learned**

In the following pages, you'll read passages of scripture and questions aimed at getting to your real thoughts and feelings – not just what sounds good or sounds right. You'll walk through difficult topics like sin or relational brokenness from time in college, but **all** in light of God's grace through Jesus and His sovereignty over your life. Take the time needed to dig into the lessons God wants to teach you.

Section 1 – God at Work

In *Experiencing God*, author Henry Blackaby states, “Right now God is working all around you, as well as in your life. One of the greatest tragedies among God’s people is that, although they deeply long to experience God, they are encountering Him day after day but do not recognize Him.”

Throughout this study Blackaby lays out the seven realities of experiencing God. Here are two of these realities:

- God is always at work around you.
- God invites you to become involved with Him in His work.

Read John 5:17.

How was God at work before and then after you started college? (Give Examples)

How did God use you to have an impact on your campus or during summer projects and how will that translate for life?

How will you pray for the staff and friends (specific ones) you will leave when you move and get a job?

In what ways do you view yourself differently and which of those ways are healthy and need to be held on to? Which are unhealthy and need to be let go of?

Section 2 – The Culture

Read Romans 8:28-39.

What fascinates/inspires me about the culture of the campus where I served/attended and how did this culture challenge me to be more Christ-like?

What breaks my heart, angers or disturbs it about college and how do I expect that to change or stay the same out of college?

What did I see in college that people out of college need?

Section 3 – Gifts and Passions

Now you'll think about some of the things God was teaching you about your gifts and passions and how these fit into the body of Christ and the Kingdom moving forward.

Read Romans 12:1-8.

What moved me most deeply during college?

What was I most passionate about in college?

Section 4 – Disappointments

In preparing for college you had expectations on what it would look like, whether you realized it or not. In some cases your expectations and reality probably matched, while at other times reality fell short of your expectations, maybe even dramatically short. In this section look back over your time in college and take time to acknowledge the disappointments that you have.

List your disappointments:

Although it is important to recognize disappointments, you cannot leave them lingering. You must bring them before the Lord in prayer. Before you begin, read the following Scripture to help you align your heart with God.

Psalm 13; 23
Isaiah 55:8-11
Jeremiah 29:11-13

Take some time with God to pray. Allow God to work in your heart and use these disappointments as opportunities to shape you to become more Christ-like. Think of Biblical examples of people who experienced disappointments. Now, by remembering that God's perspective is different than yours, look for how God worked in and through your disappointments. Write down what comes to mind below.

Section 5 – Trials and Sins

Read Hebrews 10:32-33;12:1-13

Read Romans 5:1-5.

In college you experienced the brokenness and darkness of the culture, but you also experienced the brokenness and darkness of your own heart. Another part of your growth will come through seeing how you responded to trials, your weaknesses, or your characteristic sin struggles. This part of reflection is not fun. Rather than focusing on the parts of college we liked, or ways we want to move forward, we need to examine the trials we went through and flaws in our character to see how God wants to grow us and mature us.

What was the most challenging/hardest part of the time for you?

When was I full of sadness/anxiety?

When did I feel things were unfair or unjust?

What sin's do I need to confess to God regarding this?

If you have not already confessed your sins to God, now is the time to do it.

Read 1 John 1:9: If you realize that you have been believing a lie, ask God to help you replace it with God's truth. Lies keep us in bondage and continue to hurt us whereas God's truth sets us free.

Again, reflecting on trials and recognizing God's sovereign work in them is key to becoming more like Christ. He is your advocate and is with you in the process of sanctification. Use this as an opportunity to seek Him and rely on Him, rather than resolving to work or try harder.

Section 6 – Processing Relational Issues

In your discipleship training, emphasis was placed on the importance of community, unity, and dealing with inevitable conflict in a biblical way. Without a community of people who are pulling the same direction, the battle to live missionally will be lost. But community does not happen easily. Think of the disciples. They were constantly bickering over who was most important, who was the best, and who would be the biggest deal when all was said and done.

Read I Corinthians 12:12-27.

Let's take a minute and evaluate your CV community experience.

What do I think went well relationally in CV? What was I happy about?

What do I wish I could change or have done differently relationally and is there anything relationally that is still confusing or unresolved to me?

Is there any conflict or tension I'm holding on to and letting it become bitterness rather than forgiveness?

Is there anything I need to say or an apology I need to make to the community of CV or to a particular person to clear up a relationship? Be sure to do it before you leave! Matthew 5:23-24

Section 7 – Relational Sins

Undoubtedly over the course of college God revealed relational sins in your life; you ate together, did ministry together, lived close by, etc. At home or on campus you can sometimes escape relationships that may not be convenient. One of the most important areas God wants to use with college is to sanctify you in the area of relational character. He likely revealed the sins of selfishness, bitterness, anger, impatience, pride, harshness, and/or lack of forbearance. Now that you've seen this part of your sin nature, you can allow God to transform you now or you'll end up dealing with it later (in work, marriage, parenting, etc.) and reaping the consequences.

Read Ephesians 4:1-3.

Is there a relational sin pattern that was revealed throughout your time in college (selfishness, bitterness, etc.)?

What underlying idols might these patterns/issues be pointing to (comfort, fear of man, performance, etc.)?

Remember that Jesus satisfies this need and our identity is in him.

What are some practical ways I will seek to cooperate with the Spirit to grow in my relational character?

Ask God to help you put off the old and put on the new, not working to prove something or improve yourself, but as an outworking of who you are in Christ, a new creation, bearing fruit in light of the righteousness you've been given in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:17, Phil. 1:11)

Section 8 – The Big Picture

So far, you've reflected on the disorientation you've felt, ways God has gifted you, and relational conflict and sins. The final piece of reflection you'll walk through is looking for big, bold messages God had for you in college. God gives these messages to us in different ways, whether through His Word directly, through experiences and situations, or through people.

Read John 14:26 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

What passage or verses like the above has God used in my life during my college experience?

Was there a comment from someone in CV or a circumstance or experience that God used in my life?

Was there a lesson regarding my role in pursuing the advancement of His Kingdom and how can I apply it for life?

If there is one thing that God wants to change in me, it is...

Section 9– Wardrobe Syndrome

"When Peter, Edmund, Lucy, and Susan stepped out of the wardrobe, they were shocked to find out that no one seemed to know anything about the world from which they had just returned. In Narnia, they had experienced the breathtaking beauty of the place and its citizens; they had discovered things about themselves they had not known before; they had conquered evil; they had known love on new and different levels; they had met friends that had challenged all of their normal ways of thinking. They had been important people there. They had completely become a part of that world. So when they walked out of the wardrobe, they were shocked to find their changes were unapparent to everyone around them. When to the children, the changes they saw in themselves were so great that they were now almost completely different people."

– Reentry Letter from *Coming Home*.

Your collegiate time has made you much like the Pevensie siblings; you entered a new world and experienced new things that have changed you. Although the changes seem obvious to you, they will not be for people you are about to encounter outside of college. Since they did not experience it with you, they cannot fully understand the changes that you have gone through. You may not even understand the changes yourself.

With this in mind, jot down some thoughts on the following question.

What are your expectations of being out of college and continuing in your spiritual growth and what are the expectations you have placed on the interactions with people not in college? (i.e. parents, siblings, close friends, college ministry/church family)

Now that you have written your expectations down, it is important to process them. Some of your expectations may be spot on, but others are likely to leave you hurt when your friends and family don't meet your expectations. Go back through your expectations and pray that God would help you to establish a healthy set of expectations. Pray that God would help you to hold your expectations with an open hand.

Section 10 – Post College Stress

“Post College stress” is classified as the struggle of adjusting to non-college life. This can be something as simple as forgetting that the average person doesn't stay up all night to study, to harboring feelings of anger, or even hatred, towards the American church or your friends and family. You must be vigilant and have God examine your heart to ensure that you do not become embittered towards people with a different mindset.

“Post College Stress is often signaled by feelings of:

- **Loneliness** – You feel isolated from family friends, all alone in a crowd. Or missing the fellowship of your friends.
- **Being “out of place”** – You don't seem to “fit” anymore.
- **Detachment** – You are watching what is going on, but you're more a spectator than participant.
- **Confusion** – Even common situations can create unusual feelings or responses in you.
- **Frustration** – No one understands or even cares how much you want to make a difference.
- **Anger** – Materialism and indifference to things that matter make you angry.
- **Discontentment** – The place you just left seemed more like home than the surroundings you have entered into. You want to “escape”.

Before you left for college you were happy, comfortable and totally involved in some of the same activities or perspectives that may now frustrate you or “rub you the wrong way”. These unexpected and unsettling feelings may be subtle and may grow more or less intense as time goes on.

Serve your way to success and you will begin to understand that God's ways are not our ways. He has wonderful plans for us that are sometimes beyond our wildest dreams. They usually stay hidden until we begin our quest for truth by acknowledging and taking action to embrace the reentry process.”

- *Coming Home* by Howard & Bonnie Lisech

Section 11 – Missional Living & Distractions

Read Luke 10:1 and 17-20.

Living missionally is more than living in a like-hearted community. Living missionally is participating with the King in how His kingdom is advancing wherever you are. It's about searching for where God is at work and joining Him there. It is a way of life not a job or a destination. Living on mission means that there is no differentiation between "secular" and "sacred." There are no legitimate careers that exclude the opportunity to live missionally.

There are often barriers to living missionally however. Some of those barriers are full blown during the college years when you're preparing for a career or vocation. The habits that are formed during these years carry over into your entire life.

There are eleven barriers that often stand in the way of a person living missionally.

- Busyness** - In order to live missionally, a student/graduate must have limitations on what he or she attempts to do. Those limits will free people to live missionally. Learning to say "no" to perfectly good things is a habit that needs to be practiced in order to have the time for missional relationships.

- Self-Focus** - Living missionally, a person has the awareness that "it is not all about me." Being in the non-college life and the comfortable culture that they were accustomed to, people forget and go back to a self-focus that is fed by their needs for acceptance, recreation, achievement, and advancement. None of those things is inherently bad, but each of those things can blind a person to the needs of others and the purposes of God.

- Lack of Spiritual Formation** - Without the inflow of God into a life, missional living cannot and will not occur. Intake of the Word, prayer, the encouragement of others, and worship cannot be neglected.

- Lack of Skills** - It is one thing to be a leader on campus or seen as some kind of "superstars". It is an entirely different thing to live a normal life in your home town/future city missionally. The skills are different. Different skills are needed in a non-college setting.

- Fear of Differences** - In non-college life the circle of friendship of most Americans is a people just like themselves - homogenous. Friendships are pursued with people who have common interests and similar worldviews. This is truer among the sub-group of evangelical Christians. There is often a fear of relating deeply to people who are different.

- Long-term Investment** - During college, a relationship can be built with others, and trust can be built, then the Gospel can be presented, and one can even see someone who was far away come to faith in Christ. Stories like that are rare in life after college. The conversion from one worldview to faith in Christ takes much more time. That is really hard for American Christians because America is an instant and "now" culture. This is especially true in the workplace. Everything takes longer after college. Everything is moving and changing quickly, but relationships build slowly. When it comes to changing one's faith, values, and worldview, things do not move that fast. Expecting instant results is a huge barrier to missional living.

- Absence of a Like-Hearted Community** - The like-hearted community is a foundational part of how the Campus Ventures ministry is built, not just individuals. A spiritual community that keeps the missional fire burning, provides encouragement and accountability, and increases effectiveness, in that everyone is working together to see one another's friends take the next step toward God. Individualistic America is a tough place to maintain a community value.

•**Security** - As Americans, we spell the word security “m-o-n-e-y.” Few would argue that less money is better for our character than too much money. Money in itself is amoral - neither good nor bad. It is the attachment that one develops to money and what it can do that really matters. Jesus and the disciples had money and used money to live on and to give to others, but money was not their security. To live missionally Jesus knew that his disciples would need to deal with the security issue.

•**Status** - Every American wants to be *somebody*. Status is determined by a lot of things including job, job performance, clothes and appearance, cars, housing, neighborhood, clubs, and a myriad of other things. Being missional is not the cultural norm for Americans. One does not earn “status points” by living to give, or by seeking to know and love those who are not exactly like you. The pressure of status and success is present in the collegiate world, as well as the non-college world. Jesus is radical in calling his disciples to a different way of life.

•**Family** - Family is important to God and to those who follow Jesus in missional living. Jesus viewed family through two lenses. One was his natural family—mother, brothers, and sisters. He was in relationship with them and on the cross, provided for John to take care of his mother. The other lens was the family of God. To Jesus the family of God was real. It is wonderful when the natural family and the family of God are the same. But many have family members who do not follow Jesus and who view missional living as foolishness at best. The lack of being on the same page creates tension and misunderstanding.

•**Peace Time Mental Frame of Reference** - In *Let The Nations Be Glad*, John Piper asks the question, “Is life different in wartime than in peacetime?” His answer is that there are vast differences. Sacrifices are made in wartime. Lifestyle changes are made. There is a totally different mentality. In peacetime, pleasures and entertainment become highly valued. Then he makes the point that according to the Bible, we are in a war, which requires us to have a wartime mentality.

Don’t get overwhelmed by focusing on avoiding these distractions. This is here to help you be aware of them. The Holy Spirit will guide you through these distractions (and others) that will arise. Just be sure that you are looking for God’s Guiding Hand.

Section 12 – Opportunities

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-7

One important thing for you to consider is your impact on those who have not had the CV ministry experience of living on mission. The goal is not to get as many people to join the CV bandwagon as possible. It is not about an organization or a new Bible study. You may leave college feeling like you’re an expert now, you’ve learned a ton about spiritual disciplines and missional living and you need to teach others what living on mission really is. But frankly, you’ve only scratched the surface of that world. The point is not to impart some knowledge to others, but to stir them and yourself to the desire to run hard after Christ.

•**Be an Example** Your example of living now for something bigger than yourself will speak volumes to those who know you. If your only passion is for college ministry, then there needs to be a reality check. Live on mission and strategically where you are, whether it is at work, in line at the grocery store or at home. Get in sync with what God is doing around you.

•**Talk about it** People may not know how to ask questions about your CV experience or your passion to live on mission. Feel the freedom to bring it up in conversations regularly. Share your

stories. Talk about the hard things you experienced and the difficulties. This will perk people's curiosity. Tell your story over and over to different people.

•**Pray for it** Pray that God would use your story to encourage others. It's not up to you to teach them or correct them, but to run hard alongside others, spurring each other on. As you attend meetings and small groups, be alert to pray for God to prepare the lives for His mission. Pray for your people group, city, or country. Pray for your ministry or church to train people to live on mission.

•**Encourage it Everywhere you See It** When you catch people doing something right in terms of living on mission, praise them. Encourage those who say they are thinking about pursuing God and discipleship. Give money to help people in ministry. Be the biggest encourager of living on mission in your church or ministry.

Write down a few goals for when you leave college. How would you like God to use your time in CV for life after college?

What things can I do in the next year to live missionally?

Who should I pray for to invest in after college?

Hopefully by now, your CV experience is more than just a "fun time". Hopefully you can see at least some of God's purposes for your time in college and your life more clearly. You were purchased by God to be a new creation – to be His child participating in His work to draw people from all cultures, backgrounds, and walks of life to know the real life in Christ. That is God's heart for you and His heart for all people.

Prayer/Requests: