

How To Survive University

As a Christian

First things first; I've got to clarify - I didn't get it all right when I went to Uni. Far from it! But I can say I have a stronger relationship with God now I've finished University!

If you're just about to start University you've probably heard so many times that it's the best few years of your life - and it is! But for us Christians the standard experience is slightly different!

Playing 'ring of fire' every night around the kitchen table, downing the dirty pint that consists of every alcoholic drink combined into a mug that hasn't been washed for 3 days (and probably has stuff growing on it) taking a stranger home after a night out are all things you'll see & have to choose whether you're going to take part in or not.

“It was never God's plan to isolate us”



“The people who became my closest friends were people in so much need”

Of course there's nothing worse than seeming like that kill-joy of a flatmate! What's equally as bad is hiding in your room every night as your flatmates party in the kitchen. It was never God's plan to isolate us from the world. Jesus told the disciples to go out into the world and make disciples of every nation.

My pastor recently preached the message “God is the man with a plan”.

He talked about how every small detail of our lives is part of God's plan for us. He put you in halls with those exact people for a reason. You are a source of hope, you are an opportunity for them to make the best decision they will ever make! So don't hide in your room, go into the kitchen and have fun with your flatmates. You might be asking, what if I'm the only sober one? That will be miserable. What if I'm pressured to get drunk? Etc etc etc. Give yourself a goal of leading people to Jesus, and realise that what you do today affects what happens tomorrow. Daniel made a decision he wouldn't defile himself. You have to determine in your heart that there is nothing anyone can say or do to make you defile yourself. When you do this you'll find people actually respect you for your determination.

“God is the man with a plan”

The people I became friends with were in so much need. They were crying out in desperation for a saviour.

If I had distanced myself from them when they were drinking or smoking I never would have had been able to have the conversations I had with them! But the best conversations I had with them were after I'd been to church or spent time with God. When you're passionate about something, and you feed that passion, other people are drawn to it. Some people I became friends with even asked to come to church with me, and some even gave their lives to Jesus. When you're led by the spirit you realise you don't need to worry about being influenced by people who are far away from God, but you have the power to be an influencer.

“When you're led by the spirit you don't need to worry about being influenced by people”

Don't get me wrong, you'll face opposition in this – often when you draw close to God, temptations and circumstances of life can hit us and cause us to be distracted from a goal in Christ.

When God is leading you to his purpose you can be sure you'll feel the pressure of being pulled in the other direction. It would be easy for me to give you a long list of convincing reasons why you should stand your ground, but I know all too well that in the moment, temptation can surpass reason. At times your flesh will be crying out for something you know might hurt you in the long run but as you say no to the devil, you'll find God comes and meets your every need and blesses you abundantly - more than you can ask or imagine.

“God doesn't give up on you when you mess up”

The truth is it takes a divine encounter with God to sustain you and give you the strength to say no. When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, he was so close to God that even though his mind & body were crying out in desperation for food and water, his spirit knew there was something of greater worth.

“There comes a point where he lifts you up above the water”



The amazing thing is though; God doesn't give up on you when you mess up. When Peter took his eyes off Jesus, he looked at the storm rather than God, so he began to sink. Jesus being ever faithful pulled him up and held his hand. There might be times at University where you feel like you're sinking in the pressure to conform to this world, and in your own strength you can't swim above the waves. But you can have every faith that Jesus is never going to let you drown. There comes a point when he lifts you up above the water. Keep your eyes on God - not your struggles.