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## Mind Games Survival Course Manual



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# Campus Christianity

How should we live?

Ray Bohlin

## IV. Pursue Excellence

**A. *Nothing attracts the attention of those in the academic world like a job well done.***

1. Do all in the name of Jesus (Col. 3:17).
  - a. He deserves nothing less than our best.
2. How comfortable would we be if we stamped the words *Performed by a disciple of Jesus Christ* on all our work?
2. Doing your best does not always mean getting an "A."

Sometimes our best is a "B" or a "C" or just getting the assignment done on time--being able to tell yourself that, with the time, energy, and resources available to you, you did your best. It is tough going, but our Lord deserves it.

3. God works through people.

Ted Engstrom, in his book *The Pursuit of Excellence*, tells the story of a pastor who spent months rebuilding a dilapidated small farm in a rural community. When he was nearly finished, a neighbor remarked, "Well, preacher, it looks like you and God really did some work here." The pastor replied, "It's interesting you should say that, Mr. Brown. But I've got to tell you-you should have seen this place when God had it all to Himself."

- a. It is certainly true that God is the source of all our strength. And that all glory and honor for what we accomplish is His.
  2. Yet, God has always chosen to work through people, even though we are frail, mistake-prone, and imperfect.
4. It is indeed a great mystery.

Our God is a totally sovereign God. Yet we are not only responsible but we are commanded to take action.

5. If you are known in the classroom as a person who pursues excellence your words will be given great respect, even though your listeners don't agree with everything you say.

And as for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams .... And as for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm (Daniel 1:17,20)

6. The sweet fragrance of the Savior should permeate your words and your work so people will begin to ask you questions.

**2. As you pursue excellence, don't be deterred by mistakes.**

1. Thomas Edison viewed mistakes as his education.
2. Winston Churchill's address to his former school: "Young men, never give up! Never give up! Never give up! Never! Never! Never!"
3. We all admire people who make mistakes but work hard not to repeat them.

**5. God has not called us to success, but to faithfulness.**

**A. *Don't focus on results.***

A commitment to excellence may lead us to focus on the results of our efforts. We can become trapped by the idea that, unless we are successful, we are doing something wrong in God's sight.

**2. *Depression can easily occur when the results we anticipated don't materialize.***

**3. *Mother Theresa was an example of a person motivated by faithfulness.***

Soon after Mother Theresa received the Nobel Peace Prize for her work in Calcutta, she was asked by a reporter how she could dedicate herself to her

work when it was obvious she was not going to eliminate hunger, disease, and poverty from that densely populated city in India. Her reply was simple yet profound: she said, "God has not called us to success, but to faithfulness."

1. In this country as in nowhere else in the world, we are obsessed with success.

Nothing is worth doing unless there is a reasonable hope of success. And if success is not achieved, then we have failed.

2. Our task in evangelism is to share the gospel and to leave the results to God.

Mother Theresa's point was that this philosophy applies to everything we do.

#### **4. God puts us where He wants us and not necessarily where we want to be.**

1. God puts us where we will glorify Him.

Notice God's unutterable waste of saints, according to the judgment of the world. God plants His saints in the most useless places. We say--God intends me to be here because I am so useful. Jesus never estimated His life along the line of the greatest use. God puts his saints where they will glorify Him, and we are no judges at all of where that is (Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*).

2. There is always a purpose to where we are. The Lord will never waste your time.
3. The Probe scientist mentioned earlier spent five-and-a-half years in a doctoral project that failed. He conducted endless experiments that never achieved what he had hoped, which meant no scientific publications. He felt success was necessary for credibility in his ministry, but the Lord had planned it otherwise. He had to live out Mother Theresa's words more completely than he had ever dreamed. Yet he learned a -great deal about living the Christian life in the midst of difficult circumstances.

## **6. Conclusion**

### ***A. Orient all your studies according to a Christian world view.***

Stand firm and do not neglect your personal relationship with the risen Christ. He alone is our "exceedingly great reward" (Gen. 15:1).

2. *Develop a teachable spirit and cultivate the art of asking questions.*
3. *Pursue excellence in everything you do as a basic form of Christian witness.*
4. *Avoid the temptation of "success at all costs," and live your life in faithfulness to the One who has called you.*
5. *Consider these verses:*

James 1:2-4 - Consider the trials pure joy.

Philippians 4:4 and 2:2-4 - Like Paul, rejoice in all circumstances and regard even hostile professors as more important than yourselves.

I Thessalonians 2:17-20 - You, the student are our hope, our joy, - our crown of exultation.

### **For Further Reading**

Kachur, Robert M., ed. *The Complete Campus Companion*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1988.

Such questions as How do I find enough time for job, studies and fun? What should I major in? What do I do when my prof attacks the Bible? Should I go Greek? How do I find Christians on campus? and many others are answered in this very practical book. Each chapter is short and to the point. It truly is a "campus companion."

Lamb, Jonathan. *How to Survive as a Student*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1985.



By interweaving pertinent passages of Scripture, the author provides wise counsel as to how to live as a student and a Christian.

Sire, James W. *Chris Chrisman Goes to College*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993.

In a very engaging style, Sire provides the reader with insights into the major world views on our campuses and at the same time tells the story of the questions, doubts, discoveries, and joys of several college friends. This book is highly recommended.

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