

The Collegiate Letter

February 2007

Dear Collegian,

As many as 50 percent of Christian students say they have lost their faith after four years in college.

Dave Wheaton was one of the top professional tennis players in the world, winning the Grand Slam Cup as well as attaining a world ranking of #12 during his career. He has written a book which outlines essential practical and biblical principles that will equip students for the inevitable spiritual battle they will face on campus. The follow paragraphs are taken from his book, University of Destruction:

All Possessors are Professors, but only *some* Professors are Possessors. Get it? [. . .]

To *profess* simply means to make a claim about something. Anyone can make a claim about anything--including their Christian faith. But whether their profession or claim is actually true is a completely different matter.

[. . .] The point is that anyone can profess to be a Christian, but only those Professors who actually *possess* a genuine Christian faith have the potential to be victorious in college. . . and in life. [. . .]

[. . .] A Possessor is characterized by fellowship with God, living righteously, and persevering under the pressures of life. Yes, Possessors do sin, but habitual sin is not the *recurring pattern* of their lives. They don't *practice* sin like unbelievers. And when they do sin, they confess it to God and turn away from it.

If your life does not fit the profile of a Possessor, but rather is characterized by *recurring* sin, I have some bad news—you are a Professor only.

But I also have some incredibly good news! Jesus came to earth to offer the following bad news/good news message of hope:

“Repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15b).

The bad news comes first—you need to repent because your sin has alienated you from God. “Repent” means you have a change of mind about your sin; it means you realize your sin has offended God and you need His help to turn away from it.

The good news comes next—*gospel* literally means “good news.” The gospel or good news is that Jesus came to die for your sin so that your sin debt to God can be forgiven and you can spend eternity with Him in heaven. There is no better news than that!

So there it is—amazingly simple but incredibly profound. You can become a Possessor by

- agreeing with God that you are a sinner
- repenting of your sin (turning away from it)
- believing in Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin and then following Him as the Lord of your life

If becoming a Possessor—a true believer—is the desire of your heart, why don’t you settle this issue right now and become a possessor of genuine saving faith in Jesus Christ. You can do it by praying something like this:

Heavenly Father, I am deeply sorry that I have sinned against you. I want to turn away from all my sin and need your help to chart a new course. I believe that your Son, Jesus, came to earth to die on the cross for my sin so that I may receive forgiveness and eternal life in heaven. I believe that Jesus is my Savior from sin, and I also commit to follow Him for as long as I live on this earth. I gratefully receive your promise of the indwelling Holy Spirit right now. Father, thank you for loving me and giving me this precious gift of salvation. Amen.

If this is your commitment of faith, congratulations! You have made *the most important* decision anyone can ever make in life—you have become a Possessor! You now possess a genuine saving faith and the indwelling Holy Spirit. You were once born physically; now you have been born spiritually—“born again” (I John 1:1-8). Your own spirit has been made alive—you now have a spiritual birthdate! You may have a very emotional experience, or you may not. More important than any feeling is your faith commitment to Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. The angels in heaven are rejoicing over you right now!

“Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10).

You are on your way toward being an Overcomer!

Contrary to every religion in the world besides genuine biblical Christianity, a saving faith in Jesus Christ does not stem from “being religious”—doing good works in the attempt to please or justify yourself to God.

God is definitely not impressed, and you are certainly not saved by being born into a Christian family, infant baptism, being confirmed, church or youth group attendance, giving to charity or believing you’re a good person. He is not even impressed with a childhood or teenage profession of faith if it didn’t involve genuine repentance and continuing trust in Jesus Christ.

Not only are these supposed “good works” not good and not enough, they’re considered *filthy* to God:

*“But we are all like an unclean thing, and all **our righteousnesses** are like filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6a).*

You see, God is *perfectly holy*, and He can let only perfect people abide with Him in heaven. Trying to do good works—like going to church, praying a lot, being nice to people, giving money to charity—to earn your way to heaven is as futile as attempting to jump across the Grand Canyon—some people may do better and jump farther than others, but every single person will end up in the canyon below.

The *only* way to get to heaven is God’s way—faith alone in Christ alone. God even gives you the grace—the power—to have that saving faith. He offers you a gift; you just receive it by faith.

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **not of works**, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).*

When you repent of your sin and believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior and your Lord, God transfers the perfect, sinless righteousness of Jesus Christ to you. He no longer sees you as a condemned sinner; He sees you as a perfect saint! You, a Possessor, will still sin on occasion, but God now sees you as sinless because all your past, present, and future sin has been fully paid for and covered by Jesus Christ.

Read again this amazing verse proving this important point:

“For [God] made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

So are good deeds bad? Of course not. They should be the natural result of a converted and renewed heart. When they’re done with the right motive after you’re saved, then the deeds can be, in fact, good. Remember, faith justifies, good deeds exemplify.

Your friends at Christian Destiny