

CC HS Graduation

May 2026

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Introduction:. You've finally arrived! Your biggest academic milestone to date: High School graduate! You're all 'chomping at the bit' – ready to begin your young adult lives – ready to explore freedoms – ready to get out into the world and make your mark.

I have (3) recommendations- advice – that I will share with you today. Consider these recommendations as 'life hacks'”

1) Develop strong Perseverance / Resilience

- Chase your dreams - your passions - as God directs. But remember that anything that provides fulfillment (meaning?) in life requires dedication, sacrifice, and perseverance.
- Dreams aren't plopped into your lap - that's merely fantasy. Dreams are achieved through dedicated effort, sacrifices, and overcoming adversity.
- You will face difficulties- setbacks - hardships. You will face unfairness – and there will be times where you will fail. But perseverance / resilience is a key component in achieving your dreams.
- What is Perseverance?
 - **Perseverance** is the steadfast, continued effort to achieve a goal despite difficulties, delays, or setbacks.
 - **Resilience is not about avoiding hardship; it is the capacity to endure, adapt, and grow stronger when faced with adversity**
- The book of James 1: 2-4 *“² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,^[a] whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”*
- When you persevere and overcome adversity, you will feel more fulfilled in your accomplishment as well have increased your capacity for future challenges.
- **Perseverance is not optional: Developing perseverance is an essential component to your success and fulfillment in life.**
- **So I encourage you to develop perseverance in your character.**

2) Cultivate enduring (life affirming) relationships:

- Never has humanity had so many options to fill their lives: from comfortable living to advanced transportation to life-saving medicine to technological devices to expand our knowledge to numerous entertainment avenues and the list goes on.
- But too frequently, the things that make our life comfortable and entertaining results in us loving things – wanting more and more – rarely being satisfied with the things we have.
- And this this love of things can result in us using people to get the things we desire.
- Rather, I encourage you to use things – but love people.
- God gave us the earth and all that it is in it to use for our benefit – but God also gave us each other to love and cherish.
- And it is in these love relationships where we live out the imago dei – the image of God imprinted into each one of us.
- For we know God is love – 1 John 4:16 says *“God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.”*
 - Why do humans need love to thrive? After all, love is not required for any of the biological mechanisms necessary for keeping us alive and propagating the species: love isn’t required for food, water, air, or technically even reproduction.
 - So why do we need love? Because we aren’t mere physical beings – we are also spiritual beings:
 - God created us in His image. God is love. Therefore the imprint of God’s image on us is in one sense is the need to be loved – and the capacity to give love.
- *“We are not human beings living a spiritual experience; rather, we are spiritual beings living a human experience” -Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*
- An easy to use reference for identifying a good relationship is the acrostic FRIEND:
 - F= faithful R = respectful I = insightful E = Encouraging N = nurturing D = defends
- Your life will be marked with successes – and some failures. With joy – and some sadness. With hope – and some disappointments.
- But at the end of your life the measure of your life’s meaning – the measure of a life well-lived – will ultimately not be measured by your academic credentials nor your professional successes nor the possessions you accumulated – but rather ultimately the measure of whether you lived a meaningful life will be the depth and abiding (enduring) nature of the love relationships you have cultivated throughout your life.
- It is a common observation of those in the last days of their lives as they transition into eternity: no one *says ‘I wished I accomplished more in my career’ or ‘I wish I had been able to buy more things’ – rather, the regret is often ‘I wish I had spent more time with the people I love.’*
- So I encourage you to cultivate enduring, life affirming – which is to say Godly – relationships as a essential part of your life

3) Embrace Jesus Christ:

- The third but most important recommendation I can give to you is to embrace Jesus Christ.
- Most of you have been in church for a big portion if not your entire lives. Most of you – hopefully all of you – believe in Christ Jesus and have placed your faith in Him for your eternal future.
- But I purposely chose the word embrace because embrace is more than belief. Embrace is more than basic faith. Embrace is something we do with a close personal relationship that is important to you.
- The definition of Embrace: To “embrace means to hold someone closely in one's arms as a sign of affection; embrace also means to adopt and entwine (like a thread in garment) a belief into one's life”
- Your relationship with Jesus Christ should be a close, personal, important relationship in your life - not merely a belief that you give surface agreement-to.
 - God doesn't want a mere transactional relationship with us:
 - that is, we obey Him to avoid punishment (we view God as tyrant)
 - or we only interact with Him when we want Him to give us something (blessing, protection, etc. – we view God as vending machine).
 - No – God wants a love relationship with us! A relationship where He pours out His love on us and we respond by loving Him back for who He is and what He's done! A relationship where we view God as who He really is – a loving Father!
 - Jesus said in John 15:4 *“Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in Me.”*
 - What does God want for you? It is two-fold: He wants to Redeem you AND He wants to transform you. That is – God wants to rescue you and join you to Him – and God wants to transform you to be more like Christ.
 - Again the quote from Pierre Chardin: *“We are not human beings living a spiritual experience; rather, we are spiritual beings living a human experience”*
 - Embracing Christ Jesus will likely result in you giving up some things you want in order to engage the things (‘do the good works’) that God has planned for you.
 - But a guiding perspective from missionary Jim Elliott *““He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”*
- The third but most important recommendation I can give to you is to embrace Jesus Christ – engage in a love relationship with Him as the very core of your life!
- Now: Go out and live a life of meaning and purpose! And the guiding words of Yoda (Star Wars): *“Do – or Do not. There is no ‘try’”!*