

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Graduate's Commencement

(Jerry Fite)

This weekend has witnessed many graduating ceremonies. Every graduate should feel honored in accomplishing academic goals. The weekend has allowed family and friends to gather and celebrate with the graduates the honor bestowed upon them.

It seems ironic to be thinking of past accomplishments when listening to a commencement speech. But every graduate is beginning a new phase in life. Awarded accomplishments are recognized and are now past. What now? How should I face the future?

A graduate may not know what they will do next, but they can determine to give their all in whatever they do. Solomon with one eye on lost opportunities robbed by the grave exhorts the living with these words: “*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all your might*” (Ecclesiastes 9:10). The Christian who is a graduate has an extra incentive. He or she gives her all in any endeavor as unto Christ. “*Whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto*

the Lord, and not unto men” (Colossians 3:23). When the Lord is your goal, the service you offer your fellowman will be excellent.

One graduating from high school and beginning college will probably spend more time away from the watchful eye of his or her parents. The parent's immediate response to one's actions will be missing. The graduate is beginning a new phase in life where Paul's exhortation to Timothy is appropriate: “*exercise thyself unto godliness*” (I Timothy 4:7). The parent's training should now be in the background, where the young adult senses the need to take up the daily exercise of training oneself unto more piety toward God.

The question in the mind of the maturing teenager is not merely will mom or dad approve or disapprove, but, “*Is what I am about to do pleasing unto God?*” Seeking the approval of the all seeing eye of God will lead to good decisions in this life, with the promise of the life which is to come (I Timothy 4:8).

Facing the unknown is always a little scary. The graduate is certainly entering such a phase in life. What will be my major in college? Will I find a job with my new degree? What is it like out there when I am on my own?

One's faith in God should help dealing with an uncertain future. Understanding God is ruling in heaven even when the foundations are crumbling around us is essential. “*If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? Jehovah is in His holy temple; Jehovah, His throne is in heaven*” (Psalm 11:3-4). Believing “*my times are in the hand of God*” while facing difficulties will always help (cf. Psalm 31:15).

The uncertain future is not so scary when we put our trust in the wise eternal God. “*Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and he will direct your paths*” (Proverbs 3:5-6). Dear graduate, commence in faith, and in godliness prosper in the hand of God.