



Pandemic's influence on **CAREER AND STUDIES**



CREATION

He created the heavens and
earth,
With diverse craving
Estranged the light from
darkness,
Maketh morning and evening.
He generates the plants and the
trees
Earth sprout vegetation
Plants yielding seeds.
And there it comes,
The creatures are created
With accordance to their sort,
Fecund by God.
Out of the soil, a man is formed
Not being lone, He carved his
mate,
For obeying together God's
words,
As God's Beloved forever.



Ms. Preethi, Port Blair
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Quarantine Calls us for Quiet Time

Welcomed in the first month with
war,
Then frightened everyone with
wildfire.
Crown-like spikes virus from China,
Conquered the whole earth in the
name of Coronavirus.
Songs are sung, memes are
made.
Media is mamed, borders are
bamed.
Flight services flunked, programs
postponed.
Schools are shut, colleges closed.
Social-distancing points us to
shun bad companions.
'Hand-washing' hints we stay
hygienic.
Mask-covered-face renders
make-up useless.
Quarantine calls us for Quiet
Time.

Lamminlun Haokip



Pandemic, Man-Made??

“If God were to eradicate all evil from this planet, He would have to eradicate all evil men. Who would be exempt?” Billy Graham

Many of us try to put the blame on God for the present pandemic situation. Some students asked me. “Why can’t a merciful God prevent this evil, Corona? Why did God permit COVID-19?” I replied, “Seeking God’s permission precedes, God permitting; so, it was we the humankind insisted on it and the merciful God permitted it.” None of what God permits are without human desire or demand. When God created, He found everything good and it was we who marred the creation, the result of which are expressed in epidemics and pandemics. God does whatever He could do to protect His creation. Yet we have disobeyed God’s command to protect what He entrusted to us, the creation. On failing to protect the good, the evil has taken its place.

Let us not panic about the increased spread of the virus and death count. God has permitted it due to our mismanagement of the nature. When we commit ourselves to be stewards of God’s creation, at least the future generation would be safe.

I am very glad to introduce some young writers. They have given some useful tips to cope up with the pandemic situation. There are more articles on Pandemic and the Editorial Team decided to publish them in the upcoming issues.

Thank God with us, that this issue of Campus Link (September – October) could be printed and posted. We could not print the previous two issues (May – June and July - August) but are available in soft copies. The print copies of March- April issue, are available in the office. Those who need can send a mail to prabhu.varakumar@uesi.in

The back issues of Campus Link can be downloaded from campuslinklive.org. Please enjoy reading them.

Dear readers, I would urge you now to help us get more ten-year Subscribers and more student subscribers. Create opportunity to introduce CL to your friends and EU & EGF members in the meetings online.



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INSIDE

CAREER IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC 5

- SUKUMARAN

THE GAP YEAR OF WAITING 9

- MONICA

PANDEMIC'S INFLUENCE ON CAREER AND STUDIES 13

-SRUTHI. V. ROY

CAMPUS, CAREERS AND THE CORONAVIRUS 16

- SALATHIEL NALLI

A WASTE OF BREATH? 21

- MR. ABRAHAM JEBAVEERAN

BREAK THE CHAIN..... 24

- DR. STEWARD GRACIAN

STUDY SKILLS IN THE TIME OF COVID 26

- DR. SHARON RUTH

BLOOM IN THE GLOOM 31

- DR. NANDA DULAL



In the Time of Pandemic

Sisyphus is a figure from Greek mythology who, as king of Corinth, became infamous for his general trickery and cheating death twice. He ultimately got his due when Zeus (king of the Greek gods) dealt him the eternal punishment of forever rolling a boulder up a hill. From morning to evening, Sisyphus would roll the boulder up the hill, which was enchanted in such a way that it would roll back down just when Sisyphus reached the top. Imagine being condemned to repeat this chore every day for all eternity! Our daily routine during this Pandemic seems so much like Sisyphus' never-ending and meaningless labour. The internet is full of -

- **Information** on how the Pandemic has affected our lives – socially, economically, health-wise, and indeed every aspect of human life.

- **Advice** on how smart students and professionals can improve their careers during the Pandemic

- **Entertainment** in the form of memes and spoofs on the misery of our lives at this time.

I do not intend to repeat the information that is already out there. Instead, I invite you to view the impact of the Pandemic on our careers through the lens of the Bible. For ease of understanding, I have categorised the people impacted by the Pandemic in the following three

ways and I propose how a believer in each category ought to respond.

First are the ones whose lives and livelihoods have been adversely impacted by the Pandemic. Perhaps you have lost your job or experienced a reduction in salary. Maybe you are a graduating student whose employment prospects have shrunk significantly, leaving you staring at an uncertain future. Perhaps healthcare expenses in your family are sinking your savings. All you know now is that you don't know. You don't know how long this will last. It is difficult to even say if this will ever end. You have tried all you can to crawl your way out of this situation only to end up hopeless and helpless. The scenes of rejection at job interviews and memories of retrenchment play repeatedly on the screen of your mind. The nation of Judah faced a similar catastrophe in the year 586 BC when Nebuchadnezzar bulldozed their beloved capital city Jerusalem and the great Temple in it which was the pivot of their national and religious pride. Page after page in the book of Lamentations is filled with descriptions of the despair the nation of Judah faced as they were carried off into exile by their Babylonian conquerors. It was all over for the people of Judah. The glories of the past were a fading memory. We encounter the first glimmer of hope in Lamentations 3:21 – “But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope.” The verses following

inform us what the “this” is which the author chooses to bring to memory, which gives him hope. The God of the Bible does not casually dismiss our heartaches and miseries with a wave of his hand. Instead, he wants us to recall the things which never change, namely his unchanging character. The Hebrew word “Chesed” or “Hesed” used in Lamentations 3:22 is such a loaded word in Hebrew that it takes two English words – lovingkindness or steadfast love – to convey the full weight of its meaning. Charles Spurgeon, in his sermon entitled “Memory—The Handmaid of Hope”, cites Christian from “The Pilgrim’s Progress.” He says, “when Christian was locked up in the Doubting Castle, Memory formed the crab-tree club with which the famous giant beat his captives terribly. But one night, according to Bunyan, this same Memory which had scourged them, helped to set them free—for she whispered something in Christian’s ear and he cried out as one half amazed, “What a fool am I to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle.” So he put his hand into his bosom and with much joy he plucked out the key and thrust it into the lock.” Romans 8:32 and Hebrews 13:5-8 are but mere drops in God’s ocean of promises and assurances to the believer struggling during these difficult times.

The second category of people consists of those whose health and wealth have remained largely unaffected by the Pandemic. Yes, there may be some minor inconveniences but they continue to earn a steady income. They have a contingency plan in place and have enough cash reserves to see them comfortably through. Perhaps it is because their skills and experience are in demand in the job market. Perhaps they have been wise and diligent with their finances. Perhaps they had more than one source of income. It is a good time for believers in this category to remind themselves of the reproofing words of Deuteronomy 8. How easy it is to forget God with an adequate bank balance. The truth about us in this category is that we, like the Samaritan leper of Luke 17:11-19, have received mercy. It is very easy to become complacent like the rich man from Luke 12:16-21 to whom God says, "you fool!" To Christians who have made an idol of health and wealth, Jesus' sobering words in Luke 12:15 ring true "one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." In an age where God's favour is commonly misinterpreted to be God's favouritism, those of us in this category need to walk in thankfulness and sensitivity – sensitivity to God's voice in the Bible and sensitivity to the great needs of the suffering world at our doorstep.

Finally, there is a third category of those whose lives and livelihoods have actually improved during this

Pandemic. Amazing as it seems, many professionals and entrepreneurs have found themselves in circumstances which have made significant wealth creation possible because of the Pandemic. They might not have planned for it, but it just happened. The Bible has much to say to those in this category. First, is to acknowledge that it is God who made this blessing possible (Ecclesiastes 7:14). We tend to believe that such financial blessings are a reward for good behaviour. During times of financial prosperity, we must remind ourselves that ours is a faith that is based on being in a right relationship with God by faith in the Gospel and not a system of reward and punishment like the doctrine of Karma. We must re-think our understanding of seemingly explicit "blessing passages" like Deuteronomy 28. The following clarifications on this passage should prove helpful in realigning our vision when we become giddy with financial success:

- The verses in this chapter unquestionably speak of earthly (and not just spiritual) prosperity and fertility. We read, for example, that "the Lord will make you abound in prosperity;" (28:11). But they also serve God's goal of bringing blessing to all the nations. As verse 10 puts it: "All the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD (Yahweh), and they shall be afraid of you."

- This blessing is not portrayed as a reward for keeping the law; it

rests on God's promise and is an automatic consequence of being in a relationship with him. (Mary J. Evans)

- It is also important to remember that these blessings are corporate. If Israel is obedient, these blessings do not promise that each individual will be prosperous but rather the nation as a whole.

- We ought to note that the obedience-prosperity nexus that appears evident in Deuteronomy 28 is not always maintained – especially at the individual level – in the Old Testament. Job subverts this pattern.

- Finally, the laws given through Moses restrict the accumulation of

wealth and the prophets frequently rail against its abuse.

The Bible has much to say to believers from all the three categories I have presented. It is also possible that the same individual will pass through all three categories during this Pandemic. Our careers may be going through an unprecedented phase during this Pandemic, but may the Word of God, which abides forever, help us navigate these strange days.



Sukumaran works as a Senior Consultant with Wipro and is married to Sharon, a clinical psychologist. They have a teenage daughter, Charis. Sukumaran and Sharon share a long history with the ministry of UESI.

THEMES FOR CAMPUS LINK - 2020

Nov. - Dec. 2020 - **University Mission in changing scenario**

Jan. - Feb. 2021- **Mental Health**

Mar. - Apr. 2021- **Generation Gap**

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Articles other than these themes are also welcome!

The Gap Year of Waiting



The pandemic has created a major crisis in various sectors and fields across the world. The global economy is at an all-time low, businesses are closing, and people are being laid off. On the one side, the working community have been severely hit, with high unemployment and pay cuts, and on the other side, the student community has been pushed to the corner.

Amidst the multiplicity of bodies, political tensions, and administrative laxity, the students bore a major brunt in this crisis. With schools and colleges across the world being shut, semesters half-way through and exams pending, nobody knew what to do!

The Confusions

The lock down was declared on March 24, post which all the universities were mandatorily shut. Generally, the last week of March and beginning of April mark the completion of 3/4 of

the semester in most colleges and universities. For some universities, it is the last month of the semester, with just the end semester exams remaining. The lockdown led to a prevailing sense of unsurety, more so, for all the students of the graduating batch of 2020.

For many students, studying far away from their homes, they knew they could make no plans; they were just waiting for the university administrations to take a decision for them. The decisions were taken, not one, but many.

By the time one notice was deciphered, another body stepped in to either interject or cancel the previous order. With multiple orders by various governing bodies, keeping a track of the happenings is difficult.

While the IIT's, NIT's and many private institutions could independently take decisions, which favoured the students, the students from

government universities suffered. Nevertheless, let us take a look at the few orders.

On April 27, the University Grants Commission or UGC, the higher education regulator, released an order. The guidelines had details of the new academic calendar for the universities and colleges as well as the dates for the annual examination for the graduating year students; the intermediate semester students were to be graded based on internal assessment of the present and previous semesters while the exams for the terminal semester students would be held in the month of July.

Contradicting the order of the UGC, The Bar Council of India, on May 27, passed a resolution to put a hold to the online examination option as per the UGC order, dated 27/04/20. The law schools were directed to find alternatives for those students who could not attempt the examination online.

Keeping in mind the Pandemic situation in Maharashtra, all non-professional traditional courses, final examinations were made optional. This announcement was a huge sigh of relief for over 7.3 lakh students enrolled in non-professional courses, across the state. Further, the remaining 2.8 lakh students pursuing professional courses, were asked to seek guidelines from their governing councils, like the (AICTE), Bar Council of India (BCI), Council of Architecture, etc.

On June 24, a UGC committee made a recommendation to the government to cancel all the examinations for the final year students in all the universities and colleges across India.

On July 6, the Ministry of Home Affairs made all examinations for final year students compulsory across India. These examinations are to be conducted by September-end on a mode suitable for the students at the particular college or university.

Meanwhile, even Kerala Technical University and Delhi University had their own orders and exams.

Well, this list does not even cover half of the orders and government university decisions for Final year students, taken in the last few months.

And, as I write this, I know a few of my friends are preparing to give their final semester exams, offline, amidst this raging pandemic.

Multiplicity Of Bodies

If one were to look at this legally, in essence, education as a subject is a matter on the Concurrent List of the Constitution of India. This means the powers to take decisions are given to both the central and state governments. But, keeping in mind the Quasi-Federal structure of India, the decision of the centre always supersedes that of the state.

Additionally, there are other bodies like the University Grants Commission, Bar Council of India, All India Council for Technical Education,

Medical Council of India, etc. which act as regulatory bodies for all the Institutions across the Country. UGC is the regulatory body for all universities across the country, irrespective of the courses offered. Whereas the BCI and AICTE are special bodies which facilitate professional courses education, like law and engineering.

Now, each body has its own role and power. Yet, they, along with the state and central governments, have been passing orders, issuing guidelines, and making announcements; leaving students utterly confused and stressed, to say the least!

The Gap Year None Of Us Asked For

With the excessive delay in the decision making, the confusing orders, the conflict between centre and state, the cluelessness of regulatory bodies and the absolute laxity of university administrations, final year students are forced to come to a complete halt.

As a student from the graduating batch of 2020, I know this entire situation is difficult, confusing, and irritating to say the least. It is one which makes me cripple with anxiety about a future, in a world raging with hate, questions and hopelessness. But, amidst that anxiety and this long waiting period, I learnt something.

In God's timing, no time is wasted time!

Generally, no one likes to wait, because we are so used to everything

coming to us instantly, whether it is food or information. If something is not happening, we attempt to make it happen! In our present culture we measure everything on the basis of response time - the success or failure of any action or mission. But, now because of Covid and a whole set of unprepared adults (read: Politicians) it seems like all we can do is wait.

In God's timing, when it looks like everything has come to a standstill, it is the best moment of our lives when we can rediscover ourselves. This is a time to reorient our lives to God and make Him the centre of our lives. Because, in the "Instant Culture" we forgot that Waiting is part of what it means to be human, more importantly, what it means to be a Christian.

As Human beings, we all like to think we are in control and we often forget that only God can see into our future. God doesn't give us quick answers or immediate results. In fact, God has purposed us to constantly wait! So that we would be entirely dependent on Him.!

Take the life of Joseph, for example. Joseph was forced to wait on the Lord, but while he waited, he got busy doing what he could. His good attitude and work ethic resulted in promotion along the way! (Gen 39:13-20)

Joseph was in prison for a crime he did not commit. Apart from the fact that prison had its limitations and restrictions, Joseph had no idea when

he would be out. In our understanding prison-time is definitely a wasted time and not a productive time. Yet in this time, God used him, he did not let any of the prison time go waste.

Joseph in his waiting time:

1. Joseph was put in charge of those held in Prison and the warden was confident of him (Gen 39: 21- 23)
2. He interpreted the dream of the Chief Cupbearer and the Chief Baker and later on the Chief Cupbearer became his key out of the prison (Gen 40,41)

This story reminds us that God is not inactive when we are waiting. When you are waiting on God, most often He is working behind the scenes to put all the “missing pieces” in our lives in place before He fulfils our desires or requests.

What it means to wait on the Lord (Like Joseph did)

1. **Look to the Lord:** In our waiting time and frustration; we tend to wait on someone or something. Our expectation is shifted to another person, and that leads to disappointments. Instead, look to the Lord, just like Joseph did.
2. **Be willing to Learn and Listen:** Waiting is a part of our world, now. In the new normal, until things get smoother, we may have to wait, for longer periods. One thing is certain, God’s waiting room is a classroom! In the process of waiting

we are in fact learning to develop a character trait. We learn obedience.

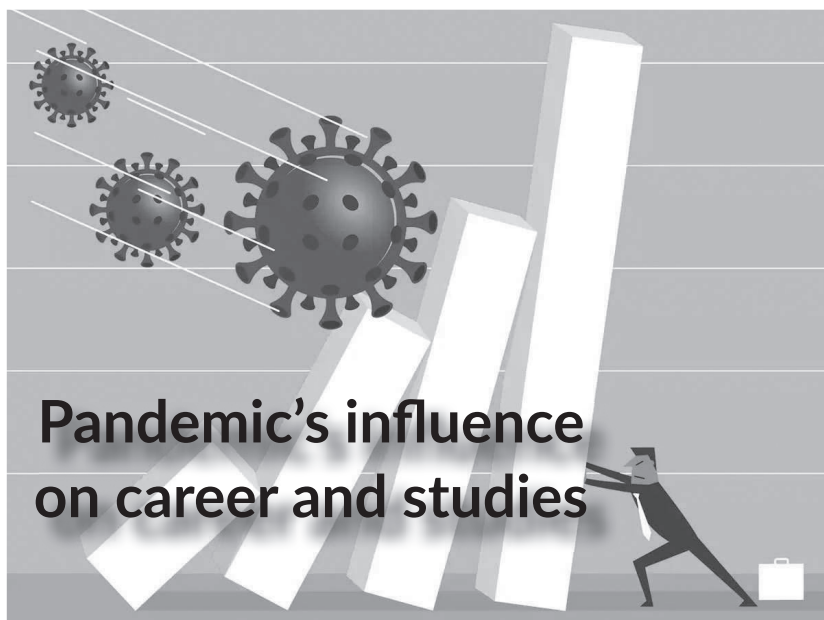
3. **Waiting on the Lord is a matter of obedience:** God’s promises may take a long time to wait. We may have to take decisions, contrary to our own plans. These decisions may not involve the ‘Comfortable’ Yes. It will be a Terrifying Yes, but a Yes which will place us, straight into the Arms of JESUS.

Remember, Joseph had to wait for 13 years before the promise was fulfilled. He had a dream of promotion. God took away Joseph’s crutches and replaced them with the characteristic he would later need to run the greatest empire in the world of that day, Egypt, and this was through what he learned during those years in prison.

As Students, as Fresh Graduates, let us remember, that; **Time is never wasted with God. HE** shapes and moulds **HIS** children and in our lowest and vulnerable moments, He will walk with us, **DESPITE**, the fear, and anxiety we carry with us.



*“**Monica**, is a lawyer by profession, a baker by passion and an occasional writer. She is a progressive thinker, with strong views and opinions on politics and social systems in India and across the world. With a heart for Justice, she is currently, working for an Anti-Human Trafficking NGO, based in Mumbai.”*



Pandemic's influence on career and studies

2020! How amazing a year everyone expected it to be – renewed hope and flourishing opportunities must have been the thought on peoples' minds when this year was born. Busting the image of pleasantness, 2020 marked everything from 'normal' to 'new normal'. From the use of hand sanitizers to the relevance of social distancing, the 'new normal' has become the order of the day across the world.

As I recall one of my professors talking about the coronavirus outbreak at Wuhan city during the class hours in mid-January, I remember how lightly we students took it, thinking it was in no way related to us. That casual outlook was shattered by mid-March as new cases started getting reported in India. The unanticipated

exponential growth in the rate of cases had a huge impact across the country. A virus which is a few nanometers in size managed to ruin the lives of millions of people! From huge business collapses to meeting one's daily necessities, posed challenges which was unforeseen all these years.

The slap COVID 19 gave on the educational sector was giant. Schools and colleges were temporarily shut down by the beginning of March. On residential campuses, students were asked to vacate and leave which imparted a sense of panic in them till they reached home.. As of 4th September 2020, approximately 1.277 billion learners are currently affected due to school closures in

response to the pandemic (source: Wikipedia). These times have called us to rely on online modes of teaching and learning.

The educational crisis that we overlook today has exposed the inadequacies and inequities in the learning arena - from access to the internet facilities and equipment needed, teaching methods and a supportive environment, to focus on learning. While the educational community has made distinctive efforts for the ongoing learning process, students have to rely on the internet and television. Teachers also have had to adapt to new pedantic methods and mode of delivery for which they may not be formally trained. Being a student myself, I know it is hard to focus on the chapters for a couple of weeks taught in the online mode; interrupted internet connection was my worst nightmare. What would be the case of the marginalized students who have no access to digital learning? The effectiveness of online monitoring and evaluation of classes, as well as assignments, is questionable as there is a tendency shown by students to engage in non-academic activities when classes are going on. Many educational institutes have opted for online exams as the conducting of physical exams has become difficult. But some of the State Boards went for offline exams maintaining lockdown protocol which comprehended using hand sanitizers, wearing mask and

social distancing. Both the alternate patterns of exam were rather demanding as student community was not accustomed with the traits of them.

The development of skills and behavioral patterns cultivated through real time classes will still remain as a lacking in student's in the long run. Academic calendars have been reorganized throughout the world trying to incorporate the shock waves covid scenario has thrown which includes classes to be scheduled on weekends to account for the time already bygone.

Another strike the pandemic gave was on higher education as the Universities closed their premises and the country shut the borders due to lockdown measures. The common entrance test's both national and state level for taking admission to various professional courses were shifted to and fro due to concern exerted by massive spread if crowding was to occur. Although steps are taken to alter the emergency, the value offered by a university education including networking and social opportunities for an individual are a considerable threat.

To boost the zero hour, international students face added difficulties in this. The major concerns are continuity of learning, safety and legal status of international students, perception of the students of the value of studying abroad for their studying and international mobility. Students are

missing out on international exposure and input into foreign job markets and networking. Remote studying is a poor substitute for the experience of studying abroad. The income coming from international students fees to the economy is also at stake.

The swindling economy and downfall of job markets is a major risk to the student communities who are ready to graduate. In par with this, depression and suicide rate among students had also increased rapidly. Withdrawal of job offer letters at the last moment due to economic crisis was a major blow to most youngsters.

Last but not the least, the missing of farewell party's and convocation ceremony which marks the end of graduation, to bid adieu to the people who were thicker than water and turned into family from stranger's

at first glance- these enchanting moments of a lifetime were all gulped down mercilessly by the COVID 19 pandemic. But at the end of tunnel what did we learn during this test of faith and patience – everything which seemed important became trivial and appreciate the blessings the creator bestowed on us. In all these tribulations, the whisper that keeps me going is John 16:33 from the holy Bible, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. **In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.**" Yes! take heart, for Jesus as overcome the world.



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Campus, Careers and the Coronavirus

Raghu (name changed) is studying III year B.Tech in one of the prestigious engineering colleges of Hyderabad. He hails from a village, some 100 KM away from Hyderabad and stays in a government hostel. They have a small piece of cultivable land in their village, which is their major source of income.

Raghu accepted the Lord recently in an evangelistic camp and continues to attend weekly Bible studies. After coronavirus started spreading in the city, the college and the hostel was closed, while Raghu had no choice, but to go back to their village. Situation was no better back home, as his only earning member of his family—his elder brother lost a small job and came back to village.

As the academic year started, the college started online classes. Raghu has an ordinary smart phone, but no computer. He is able to listen to the lectures, but extremely difficult to interact or work on any assignments given. As he lives in a remote village, the internet connection is also very weak, and most of the time the online class disconnects. There is also not enough money to buy necessary data pack to continue listening to the lectures. Often, he needs to join his brother for some manual work, so that their whole family can survive.

His other family members are nominal Christians, and Raghu finds it extremely difficult to pray regularly due to lack of privacy and fellowship. His family is worried whether he can finish the course, or whether he will get

a job after his studies. There is a lot of stress and anxiety Raghu and his family are undergoing.

Like Raghu, most of the students in our country, and across the world, are in a state of uncertainty and panic. Coronavirus started affecting our country during the most crucial period for the education sector- when it's time for academic examinations, entrance examinations, admissions and campus interviews.

As the pandemic continues to spread, colleges had to start their academic sessions due to various internal and external reasons. The teaching staff are hurriedly trained on online teaching methods and have started teaching the subjects, focusing on completing the syllabus. However, as the curriculum is not designed for online education, the connect between teachers and students is missing, and academic learning is taking its toll. In addition to that, the wholistic development of students is also at risk.

The impact of Coronavirus on student community is deep and disproportionate. While there are unlimited opportunities for the students who can afford, the students from poorer backgrounds are facing several challenges. In addition to this, there are added difficulties for girl students in the form of household chores, limitations in communicating with others, lack of safety and privacy.

However, the pandemic also brings some relief to the students in the

form of reducing the syllabus, easy examinations and gracious award of degrees. But will these students qualify to get a job? Will they be able to survive in a highly competitive environment?

What should the students do?

As the days are not very conducive for education and employment, the students ought to use every opportunity (Eph 5:15-17) which comes on their way. Instead of getting disillusioned, one should carefully evaluate their current situation and try to excel in whatever way possible. One should remember that this is not the time for ordinary performance, but this demands extra-ordinary achievements. With God's help, we need to find ways to discipline ourselves and ready to work hard with all our heart (Col 3:23-24).

We need to develop a habit of spending a dedicated time with God, just like Jesus (Luke 5:16). As you spend time with God, you are exposed to God's wisdom and gain divine perspective of life, which is quite essential to tide over crisis such as these. It provides opportunity for you to seek His will for your life, and also get inspiring guidance for your future.

Our bodies are the temples of Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19) and it's important for us to condition it for the glory of God. We are stewards of our bodies, and if we do not care for our health, we are neglecting God's temple. Maintaining healthy body requires

discipline, adaptability and patience. One should make it a routine to have at least 30 minutes of simple daily exercise, drinking more water, eating healthy foods, eating smaller portions 6 times a day and having 8 hours of sleep.

Fear and anxiety about this new Coronavirus, coupled with uncertainty of the future can cause strong emotions in young people. We are undergoing stress, if we observe any changes in our sleeping patterns, eating patterns, difficulty in concentrating, worsening of chronic health problems and increased use of harmful substances. In stressful circumstances, we also feel rejected, and avoid talking to others. Some amount of stress is healthy, but if it is affecting you, you need to seek help from all possible sources, especially sharing with your close confidants without delay.

Knowing adequate information of the virus can help you to be better prepared and contribute to reduction of your stress levels. Frequent communication to your family and friends, taking frequent breaks from routine, spending time in prayer along with other believers, talking to a senior, taking a stroll in the fresh air etc., can help you to get relieved from stress.

We need to prepare a list of friends and well-wishers who can continually motivate us, and keep in constant touch with them. Having a spiritual mentor whom you can trust and freely communicate helps you in the long run. We also can form small groups of

2-3, be accountable and encourage each other. These simple actions will help us to improve in our personal, professional and spiritual lives.

During the academic sessions- whether online or offline- there will be many days of low activity. We have to make it a point to put every available time to good use. We need to form small groups and start spending our leisure time by enrolling and doing various online courses related to our subject or other skills like communication, leadership, working as a team etc., There are several places you can find these courses of every type like- Youtube, Coursera, Edex, Swayam and many others.

Identifying your hobbies and nurturing them will also help in our social life and improve our bonding with other people. As Christians, we are called to glorify God with our hobbies (I Cor 10:31), otherwise they may be a source of escaping from life and from God. Based on our interest, some of the hobbies we can pursue are- music, singing, reading, hiking, cooking, fishing, painting, writing, stamp collecting, dance, photography, pet adoption, Astronomy, games and so on.

What should the fellowship do?

As a church, a fellowship or as a society, we also have a significant responsibility towards helping students in overcoming the struggles due to coronavirus. We need to understand the deep-rooted influence of

coronavirus on student community. Students need lot of care, support, encouragement and spiritual nourishment to tide over this crisis.

We need to proactively reach out to students more than before, with increased frequency, through phone calls and other digital means. Different students require different types of support- some moral, some financial, some emotional and some others may require all types of support. The onus lies on the fellowship to identify the unique needs of each student and try to address them creatively.

The fellowship should specially focus on the students who don't have the luxury of latest technology, infrastructure and conducive learning environment. They need to be systematically identified, and provided with whatever resources possible.

Boosting our Career

One of the most important thoughts for every student in this fast-changing world is about their career. The dream career is the one which is both exciting and rewarding. However, with shrinking markets, coronavirus crushed the aspirations of many. Several small employments vanished, and up to 10 crore people who lost jobs in India, are frantically hunting for their next job.

As Christians, our primary aim is to please God through our career. As we 'delight in the Lord,' God will fulfill the desires of our heart according to His

will (Ps 37:4), even in this pandemic. We also need to have absolute faith on God (Heb 11:6), as faith can move mountains. Instead of worrying for our future, we should be prepared to work hard, and focus on learning new knowledge and skills.

Employers are increasingly depending on comprehensive market search for employees instead of simply depending on shortlisting job applications. So, it is very important to market yourself through all possible means. You need to proactively keep communicating with all your professional and personal contacts about your skills and abilities. This professional networking is easy, if it starts from student days.

You also need to communicate about your vision, what you want to do in life, to other people. It is important to share your thoughts without hesitation, as there is no other way people will come to know about you. It also helps you to know the skills required in the market, and the type of jobs which suit you.

We need high levels of flexibility and adaptability in this fast changing world. The pandemic has pushed us 20 years ahead in some areas. We should be able to work remotely, and also maintain the same team spirit and empathy with our stakeholders. Otherwise we will be left behind.

In the end, we also need to look at what type of jobs will be useful for the post pandemic world. We need to

understand that all types of jobs will still exist. For a person who is skilled at a particular job, even a potter, there is no dearth of work opportunity. But the problem comes only for the people who are having below average skills.

In general, during the pandemic, we were able to see that some sectors like banking, IT & ITES, e-commerce and Telecom are not affected by the pandemic. Even in the future also, similar sectors like pharma, medical, IT and digital marketing industries are likely to flourish. Though it's important to look at long term prospects of a sector, we need to remember that we should choose our career which fits with our strengths and excel in it (Pro 22:29).

Conclusion:

Our society is faced with a great collective responsibility to overcome the crisis created by coronavirus. As Christians, without losing hope, we are expected to spread the hope to others. As God is in control of everything, we need to be strong and courageous (Joshua 1:9) and also trust Him. He has great plans for each one of us (Jer 29:11), and He will bring it to completion.



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A Waste of Breath?



Typically by the 13th day since the onset of symptoms, a vast majority of those infected with the C-19 Virus, would have recovered. I, however, found myself staring at the walls of the Emergency Room, waiting for a bed in the ICU, experiencing moderate breathlessness and erratic oxygen saturation levels.

In the ICU, every one of us were on oxygen support. Pristine oxygen was being used to save our lives, keeping those SPO2 numbers on the monitors around 90%. It was staring at those incessantly beeping monitors that I realized, what a waste we make of the most important thing needed for us to survive. Man can live a lifetime without shelter or covering, weeks without food and days without water. Yet, not many survive minutes without breath. Yet, our pursuit has always been to look better, live

grander, eat richer; but it is never after making the most of every breath we are bestowed with.

It is not just the existence of life that our breath holds, but the quality of it too. Lying on my bed, remembering my wife, who was also quarantined at home, I could only manage a few tears in the Almighty's presence. Weeping needed breath. When someone sent a fun video to lift my spirits, all I could manage was a smile and some awkward coughs. I needed breath for a hearty laugh too. When it was time to talk to my mother, who knew nothing about the situation I was in because of her own health, all I could muster were some breathless mumbles. To string words emphatically, I needed breath. What is life without a sob or a laugh or a conversation shared? Yet, we set aside things that really matter and

bury ourselves into devices, wasting precious breaths.

The fascinating thing about breath, in the context of Christianity is that, it is the only thing that passed from the innermost being of God to the innermost being of man. God's creativity touched man in his design, God's foresight in the system he was designed in. But God's breath gave man his life. *"Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."* (Genesis 2.7, NASB). These words explain this grand connection between God and Adam. A connection of breath.

Breathlessness. It was perhaps Job who felt the shackles of breathlessness the most. He makes a note of his breath at least seven times in his portion of replies to his friends and many of those are painful. One of these verses appears in Job 9.18, NASB. *"He will not allow me to get my breath, but saturates me with bitterness"*. This is a complaint addressed straight toward God, set in a scene of judgment. Perhaps Job's breathlessness was more to do with the shackles of words rather than literal gasps for air. But the point is driven.

Job's pain was unfathomable. From a sense of divine prosperity and supernatural security, Job landed a destitute in a matter of hours. The way it happened pointed to God's involvement. Job did not have a

glimpse of the divine drama that had earlier unfolded, but the swiftness indicated the supernatural. God had turned against him. That much was clear to him. And yes, calamity after calamity struck him in succession. Breathlessness and suffocation. His wife was not helping matters and his pompous, self-righteous friends were doing more harm than the good counsel they thought they were giving. The noose was tightening around Job and as he was trying to make sense of the situation, he found his very theological substance shaking at the foundations.

Job was looking through his colored glasses. Focusing on his breaths. Which is why his arguments were peppered with his righteousness, his efforts, his works. And he tried to gauge God's response in proportion to his effort.

As we turn to Psalms, David, the other tragic hero of the Old Testament, had a similar experience as Saul pursued him with an intent to destroy. In the beautifully written Psalm 18, David says this: *".. the chords of death encompassed me..."* (Psalm 18.4, NASB). This very expression is suggestive of being breathless. Like in the case of Job, David's suffocation was not literal but it was with a lack of options to turn to; to run toward as his enemies surrounded him. He felt the chords tightening around him and as we see in the Psalm, he cried out to the Lord in distress.

David's Psalm is a victorious Psalm. Written after the victory. Job's words were being experienced at that moment. So, there is no comparison between both stalwarts of faith that I am drawing. Yet, in victory look at how David shifts his view from his own breathlessness to that holy, pure, life giving, powerful breath of God. He reminisces, "...then the channels of water appeared and the foundations of the earth were laid bare at Your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils. " (Psalms 18.15, NASB). From his own suffocating breathlessness David looks toward the Lord's breath. It transports him to an event so powerful that it no longer was just David in his loneliness, but the earth and the creation that responds to God as He responds to David. For to answer one man's prayer, the Lord quaked the earth.

The Grammy winning song 10,000 reasons is close to my heart. All through my sickness, I was singing it, so much so that whether I could hit the notes properly or not became a test to how breathless I was. The title for the song is picked from the line that goes, "for all your goodness I will keep on singing, 10,000 reasons for my heart to find". On one of these sick days it occurred to me that during our times of distress, we often fail to find those 10,000 reasons but hold on to that one reason that had caused us distress. Those ten thousand reasons help us to focus on God; this one reason for distress makes us focus on ourselves.

"Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; for why should he be esteemed?", the Lord asks in Isaiah 2.22, NASB. That means we need to stop regarding ourselves too. Stop focusing on our pain and our breath that had become corrupt and weak, but focus on God's breath, which is as powerful as always. Isaiah describes God's breath as an overflowing torrent and a torrent of brimstone. David sings that His breath creates. Isaiah also adds that His breath slays. That is something to focus on.

As the days progressed and Oxygen support seemed to become endless, my prayer evolved. My breath, my struggle was no longer the focus, except perhaps, in a moment of weakness. The Lord's breath became my focus.

Job after constantly complaining about the injustice he seems to have faced, had an encounter with the Lord. God asked him some poignant questions. Those questions did not ask Job to look at his accomplishments, beliefs or values; rather, they prompted Job to look around and notice the eternity in the present; the order in chaos; to notice the power in simplicity; to notice God in the seemingly small and grand things. Once the tremendous revelation from God ended, Job could do nothing but repent for having spoken things that he did not fathom. The magnitude of Job's problems disappeared in the dazzling light of God's revelations.

Break the Chain



When we constantly keep doing something in life, it becomes a part of our system. We must all remember the nuclear chain reactions about which we studied in our high school physics. It is startling how a single reaction can trigger a self-propagating series of chain reactions which can then set off a deadly and destructive nuclear explosion. Our life in a way has been very much like this nuclear chain reaction all these years. We started our lives as a believer intending to go somewhere in a straight line linear reaction. But unfortunately, for many of us, a series of self-propagating chain reactions then happened completely taking us off the course. These chain reactions need not necessarily be bad things that came into our lives. They can be regular life events. We probably opted for an over-demanding job

that keeps us awake and on our toes all our prime years or else we are bound in a marriage that squeezes all our energy out with no time left for student ministry. Or, may be we are students needing an additional hand to balance our crazy lives as we try to establish our unique identities in our respective societies.

Wherever we were all these years, we have run non-stop with no one to stop us in a chain reaction like life. But somewhere deep inside, we knew that if things went like this in a vicious cycle, we may end up causing more harm than good to those in our circles of influence. But, just when our life seemed impossible to amend, COVID hit us. It has been already six months since the pandemic started raging in India and it is still threatening our lives every day. The new normal is

funny and serious at the same time. But out

of all of the mess caused by this invisible virus, if there was one good thing that emerged, it is the opportunity that we all have now to break the chain in our lives. I mean, to break the chain of self-propagating series of life events that have threatened to destroy our spiritual life and ministry altogether. Today, the pandemic has given us all enough time to introspect our lives especially to introspect our relationship with Jesus and also to introspect our roles in the great commission.

Today, as most of us work from the comforts of our homes, or attend virtual classrooms from the corners of our houses, it is high time we start investing ourselves more into the ministry of Jesus and start carrying His gospel to our peers living in these extremely confusing times. If we are still giving the excuse of not having enough time on our hands, then we have to seriously examine and restructure the priorities of our life. We are saving more time today than at any other time. Of course, we still have commitments to our over-demanding jobs, our over exerting marriages, and our over exhausting studies. But, the new normal has given us enough flexibility to streamline these areas of our lives and live a purposeful life. It is up to us now to break the chain of destructive sequences that disrupt our spiritual

lives. If we are willing to yield, God can break us, mould us, and use us for His Glory

To conclude the same nuclear chain reaction that sets off a destructive nuclear weapon and devastates the land can also be controlled in a nuclear power plant to become a source of electricity to thousands of impoverished villages. Similarly, the new normal can become another new series of events to cause destructive spirituality unless we hand over the controls to Jesus. He can use someone as weak as you and me to become a source of blessing to many in times of this unprecedented pandemic, if we willingly submit our schedules into His hands.

Here is an interesting Bible verse that we can relate to,

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose- Romans 8:28



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Study Skills in the Time of Covid

There is a lot that has changed due to the pandemic and some of us have grown bitter towards life but there is a lot more that we are to be thankful for. Academically too, several changes have been thrust upon us.

Yes, face-to-face interactions have decreased substantially. Outdoor activities have been curtailed and learning has become virtual. However, let us pause to think about the good that this season could bring.

As most of the classes are being held online, it is essential for us to learn how to study more efficiently so that you can remember them better. This is also a time to organise oneself, so that you work at peak times when your mind is clearer, and you blend studying with completing assignments. It's a time to catch up on what one has

missed so far. This is also a time to sharpen subject skills. We all agree there is a lot more time available and make the best use of it.

The focus of this article is on study skills. The skills I have chosen below are, time management techniques, note taking, ways to study and few techniques to improve memory. These are not an exhaustive list of study skills.

Time Management

1. Make a weekly or daily to-do list- Using a calendar or planner to chart out what you will study that day is important. It is important to come up with an achievable yet challenging plan.
2. Get up early to get stuff done- I know many say that they prefer to stay up late night and study. The rule

is that 'Early bird catches the prey'. As a rule, it is important to wake up early.

3. Schedule your "me" time (so it doesn't eat up study time)-pursuing a hobby alongside academics is very important. A hobby helps to pick up a skill and also improves overall concentration.

4. Reward yourself when tasks are complete-Reward yourself with breaks. Breaks are good but they need to be short and crisp and not digress oneself from studies.

5. Set aside time for study each day-Keep to a specific time to study. Choose a place where distractions are less. The place one chooses to study should be one that reminds you of happiness, achievement, and challenge.

Note taking

Lecturers will often place great emphasis on the information they provide in class when they design tests. The result is that your class notes are a vital resource when studying for a test. Therefore, it is important that your notes are complete and accurate.

The best way to be certain that your class notes are complete and accurate is to review them later that day while the information is still fresh in your mind. As you rewrite them, you should correct any errors, fill in any gaps and add any additional or supporting information as required. A 'side' benefit from rewriting your class notes is that it reinforces the informa-

tion helping you to remember and recall it more effectively.

1. Paraphrase what is being taught
2. Take up as much space as needed
3. Review your notes every night
4. Create your own abbreviations as it may not be possible to write down everything
5. Jot down any ideas that are repeated.
6. Notice verbal cues – "Now this is important"
7. Highlight your book/class materials
8. Write down all examples
9. Rewrite your notes after class

Why is note taking important?

Note taking helps with concentration. It helps to focus. A serious student will always have his or her personal notes and these notes come in extremely handy while studying. These notes are useful for summarising and revising before exams when stress levels are high.

Two ways of studying

The method has shown to improve a reader understanding, and his/her ability to recall information. In other words, the reader is more likely to learn, and to learn more, of the material he/she is reading. In this method you follow five steps – **P**review, **Q**uestion, **R**ead, **S**elf-recite and **T**est (PQRST).

1. PREVIEW an assignment by scanning it. Read the outline at the beginning of the chapter. Pay attention to the headings of the sections and subsections. Read the summary. The point is to get an idea of the main topics and sections of the chapter.

2. QUESTION As you read through each section, start by asking yourself “what am I supposed to learn in this section”. This helps to get your brain in to sync with the topic being discussed.

3. READ. Next, read that section. Do it carefully, think about the meaning and relate this to other things you know about this and similar topics. Do some underlining or highlighting of key words. Don't overdo it! If you want to take notes, read the whole section first, and then summarize it later.

4. SELF-RECITATION requires that you try to remember the main points of each section and that you say them out loud (if possible) to yourself. Check back against the text, and note the things you missed out. Ensure that you didn't miss them because you haven't learnt them. Only then go on to the next section and Question again.

5. TEST yourself after you have finished the entire chapter. How many of the main ideas from the chapter can you remember? Think about the relevance of what you learnt and how it all fits together. Reread any chapter summaries. Even though you have

only just read the chapter, now is the best time to test yourself.

What is the SQ3R Method?

The SQ3R Method, SQ3R study method or SQ3R reading method is a similar way to study, understand and remember written information more quickly

1. Survey - First, you take a few minutes to scan the entire text. Pay attention to layout, chapters, sections, graphs, pictures, words in bold and italics. In general, these provide important information about the contents of the text. By quickly scanning through the text first, you create an overview and structure. This serves as the foundation for the active reading and understanding of the text.

2. Question - Ask yourself questions about the text that you scanned during the previous step. You can for instance turn the chapter titles into questions. Write down the questions. Ask yourself what you already know about the topic and what your goal is for reading the text. Try to understand what it is that the author wants to convey. You can use the left margin to write down your questions about the text in a structured way. At a later stage, you can note down the answers in the right margin.

3. Read - Read the text while keeping the structure from step 1, “S” and the questions from step 2, “Q” in the back of your mind. Pay attention to chapters, sentences printed in bold, explanations under graphs and images.

Read 'actively', write down (additional) questions while you are reading and try to find answers to previously asked questions. Write down answers and explanations in the right margin of the text. Take your time for the more complicated parts of the text and read it again if you need to. Give less attention to unimportant information. Reread per part and repeat these parts to yourself in your own words.

4. Recite - Repeat (aloud) in your own words what you have read. Ask yourself questions about the text. Explain what you have read to someone else or you can also do this in your imagination. Making a summary in your own words provides extra support.

5. Review - Read all the relevant parts of the text again, look at your notes. Possibly improve on your notes, paying extra attention to the parts you found difficult. Read your own questions on the left side of the text (cover the answers on the right) and try to answer them. This step is the most effective if you do it a day after step 1 through 4. After following these five steps, you will have actively read a text and you will be better able to remember and explain what it is about.

Memory Enhancing Methods

Mnemonic Devices

A mnemonic (you don't say the first "m") or mnemonic device is a tool that helps you remember things. With mnemonics, you associate information that you want to remember with

something you already know very well, like a picture, place, person, or word. This helps new information stick in the brain, and it also makes it easier for you to recall that information later.

Acronym

An acronym is a word formed by the first letters of a phrase.

Acronyms can be used to remember a list of words. When you were little, you were probably taught that "Roy G. Biv" stands for the colours of the rainbow. This way, you could remember the specific order in which each colour appeared: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet.

Or, to help you remember English parts of speech, your teacher may have taught you to PAVPANIC (pronouns, adjectives, verbs, prepositions, adverbs, nouns, interjections and conjunctions).

Acrostics

To make an acrostic, you use the first letters of the items on your list to make a whole phrase or sentence. For example, to remember the planets of our solar system: "My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas." The first letter of each word stands for Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto.

The method of Loci

The oldest known mnemonic strategy is called the method of loci ("loci" is the plural of locus, which means

location, or place). It's based on the assumption that you can best remember places that you are familiar with, so if you can link something you need to remember with a place that you know very well, the location will serve as a clue that will help you to remember.

You can use this method to remember lists of items, important points in a speech, names of people at an event or meeting, things you need to do, even a thought you want to keep in mind. This method works well because it changes the way you remember, so that you use familiar locations to cue yourself about things. Because the locations are organized in an order that you know well, one memory flows into the next very easily.

To conclude, being a student is a wonderful phase and in a sense we

need to be 'students' through life. Excellence in studies is a calling from God. This is the best way to walk the talk and it speaks volumes. Cultivating healthy study skills is one of ways to excel. In my personal experience as a student I have learnt that God has called us to be faithful in what He has entrusted us with. God's definition of success is different from what the world says. Enjoying a relationship with God daily, hard work, determination, and discipline will reap rich rewards.



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Bloom In The Gloom



Daylight wears out to eventide. Still a good number of students are hanging around corridors of the college. It is the season of great significance for students. Corporates are visiting the campus to choose students for their interns during the coming summer. Two days of the week are already over. Jaya is still waiting for call for the next round of selection. Since morning she had been participating in the process. After clearing written test, group discussion, group task and one round of interview, she still has to appear for the last round. In her formal dress and shoes it is already more than eight hours she is on her toes. Being weary, she decides to rest on the chair in the waiting hall. It appears hollowed out around her. It is difficult to be in uninterrupted cessation. Will the long wait result

in moment of favourable outcome? With conjecture and impetuosity she inspected the entrance of the hall and back to her watch several times. It is about 10 o'clock in the night now. After a while one executive of the visiting firm walked towards the group with a paper in hand and read out the names for the final round for the day. Jaya did not make it to the concluding round. In the midst of sparks of light around her, everything appeared dim. The day long exercise turned futile. It belied her aspirations.

Exhausted and frustrated Jaya somehow composed herself and silently advanced towards the hostel. All the while her shoulders drooped and eyes looked to the ground. She could not look ahead. She was traversing with her friends on the same path. All along uneasy silence carried her forward. After reaching

her room she became more restless. Leaning on the edge of the bed she tried to introspect. Many questions puzzled her mind. She did all her best but she ended unsuccessful again. "What are they looking for? Is it performance or appearance in the final round?" She qualified written test, dominated in group exercises and answered all questions in the interview to her satisfaction. Where did it all go wrong? She did not know how to improve for the next day. Her mind was filled with anxiety. Nightfall deepened her perplexity. She knelt on her bed and recollected a verse from the Scripture- "The Lord says, I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. " She silently claimed the promise and cast all her weariness and burdens upon Him. She experienced calmness over the struggles within her. The next day she got up early and poured her heart to the Lord. She surrendered her desires to the will of God. After devoting a few hours of preparation she hurried to attend presentation of a company visiting the campus for the first time. Presentation followed by multiple rounds of selection. At the end of the day she was relaxing in a corner of the common room. Placement-in-Charge walked to her and broke the news of her selection for the new company with a good stipend. That evening she exuberantly shared about her great Friend and Shepherd with her hostel mates.

The semester ended. Assignments, group exercises, case studies and seminars occupied Jaya in her busy schedules. An end term exam was round the corner. Along with day-to-day academic activities everyone was seriously bracing up for terminal tests. All of a sudden plague broke out in the town. Many were admitted to the hospital with an unknown disease. Soon Covid-19 virus spread far and wide. Casualties were also reported. The college postponed the exams twice. Panic gripped the students. However students thought they would be able to complete the academic year before proceeding for the internship stint. Final assessment was about to commence. Abruptly test was postponed and students were notified to vacate the hostel as early as possible. Epidemic left the students in the lurch. Uncertainty hung around them. Epidemic assumed the proportion of pandemic. While Jaya was in the bewilderment, placement committee informed her about withdrawal of her internship offer by the company. Reason was shortage of their fund for the project. She was totally shattered. It was a bolt from the blue. Her ambition dashed into pieces. How will she be able to complete her studies without undergoing internship and submitting the project report? She was left high and dry. She was feeling denigrated before her friends. It is very difficult to make alternative arrangements in a short time. Many sympathized with her while she

groped into an unsecure future. She did not have a wink of sleep that night. She contacted faculties, seniors and all whom she knew to help her out of the deplorable condition. She decided to call up her mother and inform her predicament and asking the parents to seek help from some corner to bail her out of the situation. She started sobbing as she spoke on the mobile. Her mother encouraged and consoled her with the words: "God who has begun a good work in you will complete it till the end." Whatever God has allowed, it is for her good. She need not be worried. A better assignment is on the way. Jaya believed God would make the way where there seemed to be no way. She trusted in Him and prayed for a miraculous opening as slowly faith welled up in her. She was persuaded that she would not be put to shame. After two days a series of online interviews followed and an offer of internship was extended to her afresh from another firm. It was just in the nick of the moment. At least she had an offer in hand before untimely session closing. Soon Jaya was forced to vacate the hostel. It was a hurdle again to shell out an exorbitant fare and undergo untold hassles to reach home. On her way home her heart was filled with gratitude as she worshipped "You are here working in this place. . . I worship you. . . Way-maker, Miracle worker and Promise-keeper, light in the darkness. . . When I do not see it you are working, even when I do not feel it working, you

never stop working" God is always on time.

It was not a smooth journey for Jaya as the time for internship drew near. A sudden lockdown was declared throughout the country, some companies cancelled final placement offer for her seniors in the college. Hundreds of hopeful youths faced an unpredictable future. Jaya received bad news from her friends. Summer internships were refused for many of her friends as the units are closed and no work was available in the market due to complete lockdown. Jaya was discouraged and apprehended as to what was in store for her. Her work site was located hundreds of miles away. Confusion and uncertainty rocked her again. She was in deep troubles. She was helpless and undone in this unstable situation. During the hopeless circumstances she cried out to God again casting all her cares upon Him for He cares for her. It was a bit long shot. Due to abnormal surge of nCovid-19 cases, the company permitted Jaya to work from home during the internship period. She was to visit worksite as soon as normalcy was restored. Jaya started her internship, worked on the assigned project and completed the same. But she lost the opportunity of gaining on the ground experience. By God's grace she could submit the report to the college in time. In the meanwhile lockdown curbs were lifted. Un-lockdown ensued in phases. Socio-economic activities

opened up. But colleges remained shut. While it is time for students for the next academic session, a great controversy arose with the holding of final exams which was withheld a few months back. Due to stress and strains, some of the students could not pick up their books while vacating the hostel. Students requested college authorities to evaluate end term exams on the basis of class tests and assignments. But the decision of conducting exams prevailed. Jaya and their classmates joined together and helped each other for accessing textbooks and note books. Finally end term exams were conducted online under overall digital vigilance.

The academic year completed with twists and turns. But the shock of the pandemic still continues. It is the new normal now for scholars. Jaya is adapting to confinement at home and the long haul of online classes alone with strained eyes. She is still missing life on the college campus and learning environment.

The invisible enemy has devoured her days and months. Her future appears to have been eclipsed by the plague. During economic recession, her final placement is an insurmountable challenge. The pandemic has snatched away careers, job prospects, the present and the future. Gloominess veiled her all around. She went out to gasp for fresh air. Dark clouds were hovering over the sky. Storm swept through the horizon. As winds and rain subsided she looked up. A beautiful rainbow has painted the opposite sky. She is convinced God will turn her battles into blessings. After every storm, there is a rainbow.

Scripture Ref: *Psa. 32:8, I Peter 5: 7, Phil 1:6* ;Song Ref: *Album" Way Maker"* (Sinach)



Dr. Nanda Dulal works as Group Director in a Government organisation and lives with his wife Geetanjali in Bangalore.

READERS' RESPONSE

Dear CL readers, we would like to get your feedback about CL. Kindly send your constructive feedback to campus.link@uesi.in

Hon. Editor

A Waste of Breath?

Contd. from Pg. 21

Both Job and David are examples that teach us to focus on God. To focus on the 10,000 reasons that are there to praise Him. To focus on His powerful, life-altering breaths rather than our own corrupt and short breaths.

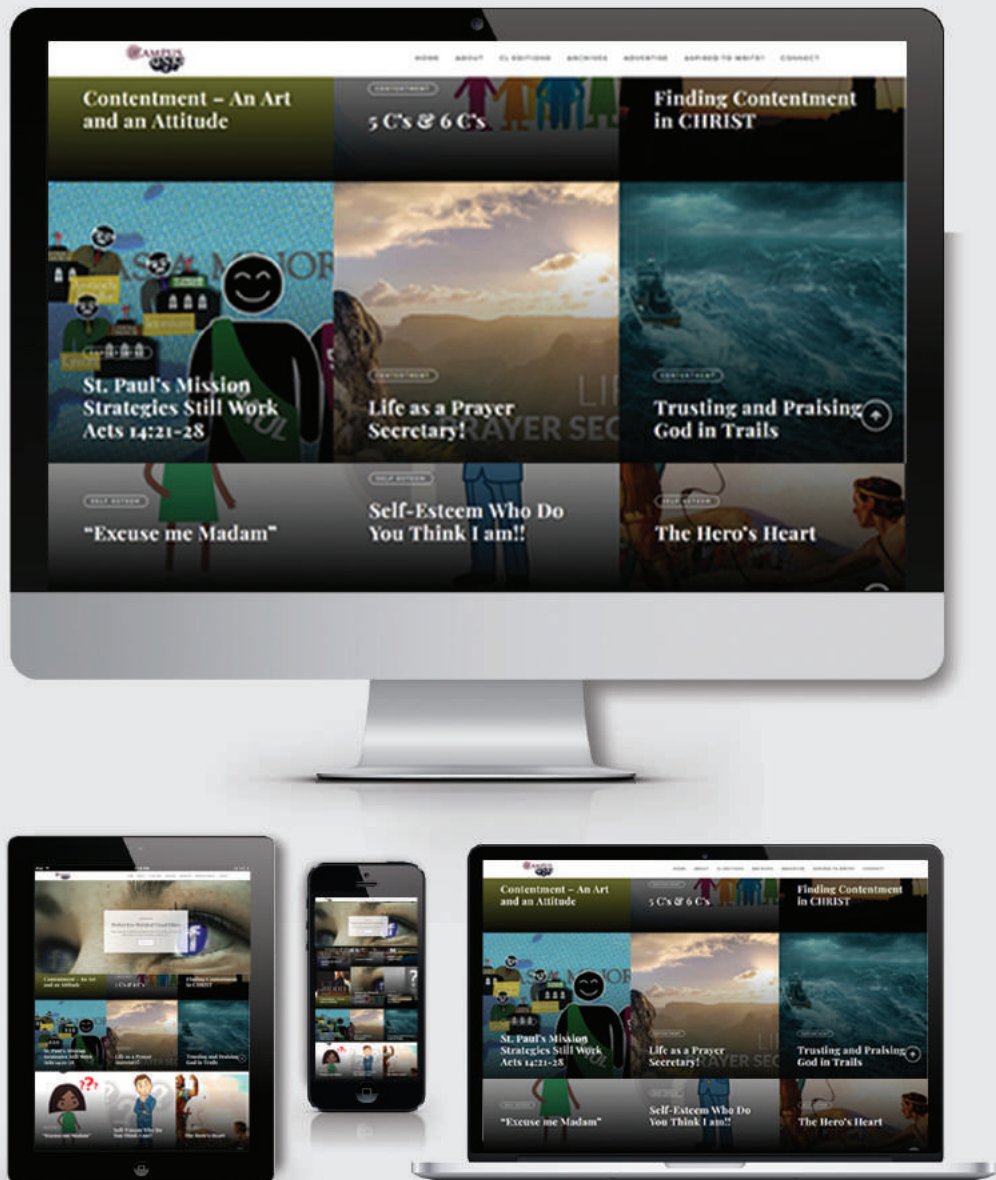
It took me over a week to write this on my phone. Most of the time lying in my bed using one hand. But today, as I write the last paragraph, I sit in a chair, waiting to be discharged. My breath will stop some day. But God's breath will continue me into eternity. That is a solid hope to have.

You may be sick, ambushed by words like Job or surrounded by difficulties like David. Find those 10,000 reasons. Do not waste breath on the one reason that is weighing you down, but find God's breath. Find God's Word. In the light of God, the burden you carry will surprisingly become lighter. You will be filled with His breath. The noose loosens. You will breathe again. May you breathe again with the breath of the Almighty in your nostrils!

Pradeep lives in Chennai with his family, and is involved in building God's Kingdom for some time now



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