

You Are What You Pack: Packing Spiritually for College

You are what you eat. You've heard it. Maybe you have even experienced it. And most parents, dieticians, and others concerned about you heading to college or back to college – especially those folks with sugar plum dreams of the freshmen fifteen dancing in their heads – maybe they will even remind you of it a time or two thousand. And I guess after 14 years in college, I would argue it is true – you are what you eat.

Equally true and more profound spiritually – if I do say so myself – is the notion: You are what you pack. No that doesn't mean simply since you are gonna pack it, that's what you are: clothes, smart phone, iPod, laptop, computer, Xbox, or matching comforter and window treatments (guys - don't worry about this until another lifetime), etc. No, you are not really what you pack materially, but spiritually I am here to tell you, you are indeed what you pack.

Since you are what you pack spiritually: then make sure you pack your faith **and** your Bible.¹

Don't leave home without them: your faith and your Bible. College is not for the faint of heart, and it will be an experience unparalleled in your life. It will bring you the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. (Yeah - losing to your school's arch rival really does suck.) And what better resource to bring to bear on your college experience than your faith and your Bible – they have gotten you this far after all. It will help keep you grounded and help you make meaning of the crazy college world that will soon envelop and surround you.

“Okay,” you say, “So I am what I pack, and I'll pack my faith and my Bible. But what does that mean?” How astute of you to ask! Packing your faith and Bible means bringing it with you **and** putting it to work. Use your Bible or prayer book or devotional daily or weekly, spend time in prayer or meditation – if that's your thing. Quite simply put your Bible and your spiritual disciplines to good use. After all, that's why you packed them.

And at the risk of using one too many clichés – if you don't use it, you'll lose it. Packing your faith also means exercising it. So practice your faith. Get involved with a campus ministry group, student religious organization, or local church. Bring your faith out with you: to games, to play, to class – as a lens through which you view the world and think about how you might be called to make this world a better place.

And no, you don't have to go to church every Sunday, but the point is you've packed your faith and your Bible, so use them for God's sake! Cause if you don't, you will certainly lose them. And I am hear to tell you packing your faith and putting it to good use at college will only enrich and enliven your experience. Plus it makes it so much easier to say, “Yeah, Mom, I am going to church.”

Or maybe a more fitting an answer, “Yeah, Mom, don't worry I am exercising my faith. Growing and learning in it, too. And you'd be proud, Mom!” So as summer rolls around to August, remember you are what you pack. And make sure your faith and Bible are on the list. Don't forget them – God knows you'll need them! And could use them! Godspeed on your college journey!

¹ Thanks to Duke Chaplain Emeritus William H. Willimon's great book [Good-bye High School. Hello College](#) (Nashville: Dimensions for Living, 1992) for helping me think about this notion of what to pack for college. Get the book and check out the devotion: “What to Take with You.” It's all good devotional reading for the big jump you are about to make.