

WHY GENEVA?
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Why, exactly, am I doing college at Geneva? I mulled the question around in my brain. What brought me here? Why am I doing this? Does everyone think I'm crazy? *Am I crazy?*

Honestly, if you had asked me this question nine months ago when I set my heart on Geneva, I would have given you a totally different answer than the one that you are about to hear. I would have told you about the soccer program and how the coaches and players seemed so nice. I would have told you about Geneva's ranking as a wonderful engineering school. I would have told you about all the good scholarships I was getting. I would have mentioned my mother's concern that I attend a Christian college, a place where I can be safe from the parties and rough scenes that happen at other colleges. Maybe I would have mentioned something about the Honors Program or the appeal of a smaller campus. And while all of these things are legitimate reasons for attending a college, they are no longer my reasons for remaining at Geneva. I mean, they all still apply to me, but I have come to see that college is so much more than learning a career and playing an upper level sport. College is about community. It is about growing in knowledge – knowledge of God and knowledge of the world. How are we to interact with the world that God has placed us in? We are here to draw other people to God. Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. So, shouldn't our main goal in life, let alone college, be to glorify God and to draw others to Him? In order to do this, we must have community. We must become members of one body, and we must inquire of each other and persuade each other to grow in our relationship with God.

When we entered high school, the first thing our teachers and parents told us was that we needed to start thinking of a major and a college where we could pursue that major. Remember all the college fairs they took us to? They kept pushing us to make a life-altering decision at such a young age. But then they would take us back to school and treat us like children again. We never received respect or credit for our attempts at life. Choosing a college was a huge decision, one that would affect us for the rest of our lives.

One of the reasons that people struggle with choosing a college is because of price. Some of us are required to pay our own way through college, so choosing an expensive school is looked down upon, and we are scolded for not being realistic about our finances. Society shuts down students who try to act like adults. Teens who want to pursue happiness at a certain college are underestimated and judged, all the while being distracted from the thought that life is not as it

should be.¹ Students are taught in high school to only put in the smallest amount of effort possible. Just memorize what will be on the test so you can ace it and get a good score.² High school is all about the scores on your tests. This idea has slowly seeped into colleges. But Geneva is different. They do not scoff at those who desire a deeper understanding of the world. Instead they cultivate that desire. They help it grow. They push you and force you to think deeply.

One way that we are forced to think more deeply about life is through relationships with other people. Having one-on-one conversation with people is a good way to go deep into a topic and learn about the views of other people. It helps if these conversations take place somewhere off campus or away from the common college life. Geneva teaches you to build relationships with other people, and it offers many places to go where you can sit down and engage an atmosphere of relaxation. Community is a huge topic at Geneva. We are made to be with other people. We are built with a desire to love others and to want to build relationships with them. Solitude is a necessity sometimes, yes, but God made us to need communion with others. We need other people to help us grow closer to Him. Sometimes people struggle to grow deeper in their faith. Having these deep conversations with another person can help engage your faith and your walk with God.³

We are told that college is here to teach us how to make money. We learn a trade, we enter the world, we make money, but we completely miss out on God. Does college prepare us for life? Are we, as Christians, prepared to face a sinful world, and thrive in it? We are taught to think in college, but it has been noticed that people are no longer incorporating God into academics as heavily, or not at all. We must not allow ourselves to get caught up in the daily life at college. We forget what we are here for, and we just live each day, not noticing that time is flying by. We learn, do the necessary homework, but are we learning more about Christ? Are we strengthening our walk with Him? We do not focus on Him. He is not a part of our lives. We must incorporate Him into schooling and learning and work. He is a part of everything and deserves to be shown and taught as such.⁴

College without Christ is a mess. People are going to college so that they can get a job and earn money. It is no longer about serving others, but about serving ourselves. College used to be a place where people went so that they could learn and then apply that knowledge to problems in their community. They wanted to serve the general public and help people. They were following God's command that we love our neighbor and serve others. Over the decades, Christian teaching has faded out of colleges, and we can see the mess that that has made in the

¹Tim Clydesdale, *The First Year Out: Understanding American Teens after High School* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 41.

²Ken Bain, *What the Best College Students Do* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 38.

³Bethany Warren, "Making the Most Out of College: Finding Your Coffee Community," *Comment* (Fall 2007).

⁴Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 7.

world. People now go to college for the money. It's all about the money. Sometimes people can hide the fact that they are out to serve only themselves because their goals happen to coincide with the goals of the general public. Community has lost all appeal. College grads are in it for themselves. Geneva teaches that community is a necessity, and that we must do everything with the thought of others forefront in our minds. We must love other people. We must begin to incorporate Christ more fully into all college education so that we can reinstate the community of decades past.⁵

So why do I love Geneva? I love it here because of the community. I love the thought-provoking conversations about God. I love how much deeper I have grown in my faith. Geneva does not just skim the surface of learning. Here, we go deep. We read controversial material and discuss our opinions. Everything we learn is tied back to God. Christians have the most (potential) desire to learn about the world because we worship the God who made it. The Honors Program has provided me with a wonderful community of friends and mentors who have pushed me and taught me so much more about life. I choose Geneva because I know that God is glorified here, and I can grow in knowledge of Him.

⁵Wendell Berry, *Home Economics* (New York: North Point Press, 1987), 51, 52.