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1,000 Days

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1,000 Days

by Thomas White

If you look at Scripture, you see a pattern of 1,000 days used for the purpose of personal formation. For instance, in the opening chapter of Daniel, we find King Nebuchadnezzar commanding Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring the best and brightest of the conquered Israelites before him. For three years, these “youths without blemish” were acculturated into a Babylonian worldview. They read Chaldean literature, learned their language, adapted their diets to Nebuchadnezzar’s personal meal plan, and received new names in order to remove any explicit connection to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This intentional training resulted in a useful citizen for the Babylonian king.

Additionally, as you read the Gospels, you find Jesus devoting Himself to His disciples for three years. From the time He called them out of their relatively obscure lives, every moment was fraught with intentionality, whether it be in the guise of a parable, a meal shared with sinners, or with a washcloth and a basin full of water. Every moment with Jesus had deliberate meaning, all toward the end of preparing them for His commission to go into all the earth and make disciples.

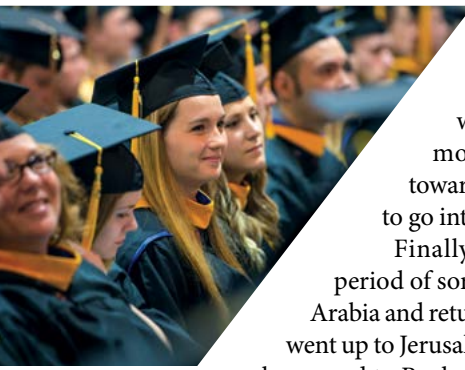
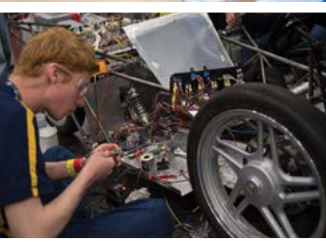
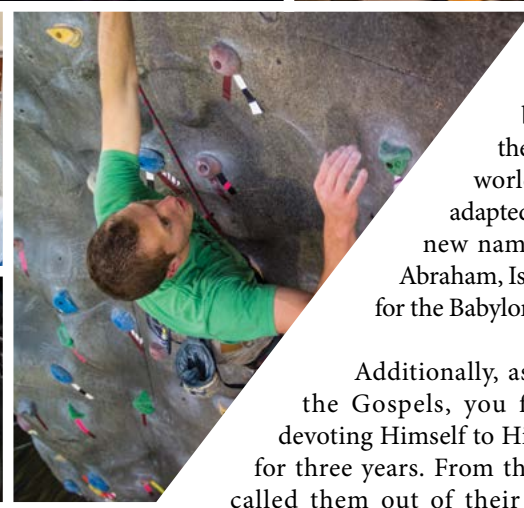
Finally, the Apostle Paul had a three-year waiting period of sorts, writing in Galatians that he “went away into Arabia and returned again to Damascus,” and “after three years I went up to Jerusalem” (Gal. 1:17–18). While we do not know what happened to Paul or exactly how long his “wilderness experience” was, it is possible that God had a deliberate purpose in mind that prepared Paul for his unashamed ministry of the Gospel.

Whether it be living in the midst of Babylon, walking in Galilee with the Messiah, or dwelling in the desert, 1,000 days is a significant amount of

time, and one that God can and has used to shape a person for His kingdom purposes. As Providence would have it, Cedarville University also has its undergraduate students for about four years, amounting to just more than 1,000 days once breaks and holidays are considered.

With the Apostle Paul, we want to intentionally develop our students for God’s mission in their lives, to teach them to look carefully how they walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time (Eph. 5:15–16). At Cedarville, we have deliberately shaped the 1,000 days students have on this campus toward this formative endeavor. From the classroom to the residence hall room, each facet of the Cedarville experience is framed to set students on a Gospel trajectory and help them “understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17).

At the heart of their 1,000 days at Cedarville is chapel. Students, faculty, and staff set aside 10 a.m. each weekday to gather with the Word of God at





the center of their attention. We bring in some of the best preachers from all over the world, such as David Jeremiah, David Platt, J.D. Greear, Al Mohler, Russell Moore, and many others. These world-class Bible teachers train our students and challenge them to grow in their walk with Christ.

From chapel, students go into the classroom, where each of their degree programs is built on our Bible minor. As one might expect, the focus of the Bible minor is just what the name advertises — the Bible. Through courses focused on the spiritual discipline of Bible-reading tethered to prayer, studies on the Old and New Testaments, as well as a survey of theology structured around our doctrinal commitments, the Cedarville student leaves equipped with a passion for God and His Word, and a drive to be a producer and not merely another consumer within the local church.

With this biblical foundation, our students work through the classes of their chosen degree fields, whether it be engineering, pharmacy, history, sports management, or any of our other excellent programs. Regardless of the degree program, each class is taught from a biblical worldview, as our professors shepherd our students in understanding how biblical principles impact their own vocational callings.

Moreover, along with this biblical worldview comes our liberal arts emphasis. At Cedarville, we believe the liberal arts are essential in equipping students to think and write in a clear and compelling manner. Such an approach leaves the budding history teacher and the aspiring engineer not only competent in their given field, but prepared to lead wherever the Lord might send them. The nature of this academic task is precisely why highly trained professors, rather than teaching assistants, fill our classrooms. Indeed, Cedarville is blessed to have men and women who consider the classroom not only a high privilege, but also their God-given mission to train students in a deliberate fashion for academic excellence with a Gospel purpose.

Intentionality is also brought to our student-athletes. Our Yellow Jackets are not just concerned about winning, although I don't mind saying we have been quite successful in that category. What is far more important is infusing our athletic teams with God-honoring sportsmanship. For instance, our volleyball team plays by the time-honored tradition of the "honor call." The honor call happens when the opposing team attacks the ball, it goes out of bounds, but — unseen to the official — grazes the finger of a Yellow Jacket player. In this example, the official would call the point for the Jackets. Instead of taking the point and proceeding with the game (which has become the practice of nearly all other volleyball programs), Yellow Jacket players have been coached to approach the official, let him know of the touch, and the score is reversed to the other team.

Some of our teams write notes to their opponents letting them know they are praying for them. Our teams often travel together on missions trips and study together in Bible study groups. Throughout our entire Athletics Division, our coaches seek to put teams on the court, field, course, or diamond that play first and foremost with a Christlike attitude and know how to win and lose well as they practice and play hard in Christ's name.

Undergirding our students' entire experience at Cedarville is the Student Life and Christian Ministry Division. At the center of our Student Life stand our four core values that we intentionally try to instill in every student: 1) Love for God, 2) Love for Others, 3) Integrity in Conduct, and 4) Excellence in Effort. A life lived with these values will never be a life full of regret. With core values built on the Great Commandment and the Great Commission arise such programs as CU LEAD, which aims to equip leaders around the principles of stewardship, influence, and service, or our discipleship small groups where students can lead and participate in book discussions centered on God's Word. Through our Global Outreach (GO) office, we actively encourage all students to go on a missions trip before they graduate, with the hope that they might put their arms around the world and wed their vocational calling to God's heart for the nations. Whether it be from programs such as these to the life-on-life discipleship opportunities our Resident Directors and residence hall life affords, every facet of student life is deliberately shaped to maintain our students on a Gospel trajectory.

Inside the pages of this magazine, you will read more about this intentionality. You will hear Jason Lee, the Dean of our School of Biblical and Theological Studies, explain the purpose and makeup of our Bible minor. You will read of the legacy of Don Callan, our former Athletic Director, who taught his athletes to use their athletic gifts as an avenue to take the Gospel to the nations. You will also hear from some of our former students, who recount how even years after graduating from Cedarville, they are still benefiting from their deliberately shaped education.

In every way, we want to be intentional. Every meeting with a professor, every meal in the dining hall, every hallway conversation, every chapel, every event, every class, and in every degree, we intentionally design our efforts to develop students for what God has called them to do. We then pray that our graduates will use their God-given talents to get involved in God's great plan and to be on mission for Jesus wherever God places them.

You see, we have to be intentional and clear with these efforts because we only get 1,000 days. So we desire to use every one of those days wisely and intentionally to develop our students for God's purposes. In 1,000 days, we want to equip our students to stand for the remainder of their lives for the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ. 🙏

Thomas White became Cedarville's 10th President in 2013. He received his B.A. from Anderson University (South Carolina) and both his M.Div. and Ph.D. from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author and editor of numerous publications and is a contributor to Baptist Foundations: Church Government for an Anti-Institutional Age, released June 15, 2015.

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