



STUDENT JOURNEYS

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That first step led to a journey beyond what I could have ever imagined!

I didn't know it at the time, but my Student Journey started with a simple search for a study of the Old Testament. I wasn't looking for a Bible college; I just wanted to understand the Bible more. My search led me to Charis Bible College and the online courses, including one on the Old Testament by Wendell Parr. It sounded perfect, so I signed up!

I wasn't sure what to expect from an online course. I thought it would just be the video and me.

But much to my surprise, I found myself enrolled in class with students from around the world.

After just the first lesson, I was already enjoying the Charis community. I would get up early every morning to watch a lesson before going to work. If I had already watched the videos for that week, I would still go online, read what my classmates had posted, and then write back to them.

The next term, I took a couple courses and the following term, a few more.

What started as a desire to learn about the Old Testament turned into an at-home source of fellowship!

And if I was traveling for business, I could still connect using my laptop in the airport or hotel.



It was awesome to have such great fellowship with spiritually hungry classmates and caring facilitators. In one course, I learned that two other students were within a couple hours of where I lived. We met for breakfast and ended up spending hours together and ministering to my classmate's spouse.

My online classes were just the first steps in my Student Journey. At a *Gospel Truth Seminar*, I met the directors of the Gardner, Massachusetts, campus and learned that they needed some administrative help. I offered to volunteer, but they insisted on paying me.

Not only was I able to help the directors in their need, but it also seemed the amount I was making was just the right amount to pay for my next online courses. What divine provision!

This is also where God revealed the next steps on my journey. I was working in the office at Charis and heard a video playing in the classroom.



It was a promo for Charis's new third-year program, the Business School.

Everything inside me leaped! Just a month earlier, the Lord had shown me a plan to open homes for women in transition. I knew the Business School was the training I needed to make this happen.

By taking a combination of Interactive and Self-Paced courses, I was able to go through the first-year Bible Training Institute courses at a faster pace and finish in time to join the Gardner campus as a second-year student in the School of Practical Ministry.

I enjoyed the personal encouragement and prayer you're a part of at a campus. I did have to change some of my habits from my online courses, though; I was so used to discussions after each lesson that I kept asking questions and throwing off the school's schedule!



The highlight of the School of Practical Ministry was truly the missions trip to Nicaragua and the closeness and bonding that comes with sitting together at Jesus' feet. Interestingly, another student on the missions team, David L., had been in one of my online courses. And there we were, ministering together in Nicaragua!

Just four weeks after graduation, my journey brought me to Colorado to begin Charis's third-year Business School. The business program was incredible. The Bible Training Institute provides the foundational truths of God's Word in your life. The School of Practical Ministry builds upon it and prepares you for ministry. The Third-Year Program pushes you to levels that only God knew you were capable of (in His strength).

"If you're going to chop down a tree, it's wise to take the time to first sharpen the ax."

This is a principle I learned from one of my instructors, and that's exactly what Charis has been for me.

As my third year was coming to a close, a job posting on the community board jumped out at me. The position was for someone to get all the Charis campuses up and running on a new computer system that the main campus was using. This position was everything I loved to do! I had worked in the computer field for thirty years, and my favorite part was setting up new systems and training users to use them.

I remember thinking, Lord, either this job was written for me or this is a terrible tease.

He wasn't teasing me, and I love my job! I get to work with the Charis directors, including some who were my facilitators back when I was taking online courses.

And what of the plan to open a home for women in transition? My journey isn't over, and as Andrew says,

"The best is yet to come!"



If you would like to share your Student Journey, email us at
Online@CharisBibleCollege.org

A staff writer will contact you if your story is selected to be featured in the Charis Community.

