

Greetings

Hi! I apologize for being so late in this month's newsletter. My aim moving forward is to get them signed out within the first week of every month. Having said that as always, I thank you for your continued support financially, through words of encouragement, and through prayer.

Short Course

Last week's newsletter ended right before the start of school. August 5 began the first weeklong short course (there is one every quarter) on Bible geography. Our teacher, John Moore, was extremely knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and genuinely wanted his students to learn, and learn we did! Not only did we see where places fit on the map, but we studied geology, climate, and other aspects we may not think about which affects the our understanding of the Bible stories. This course provided unexpected insight into many events in the Bible, which entirely changed our perspective and understanding of Bible stories.

Freshmen Welcome Dinner

The Friday evening our short course ended, the school provided a welcome dinner for all freshmen in the fellowship hall which was attended by faculty, upperclassman, and members of the church. The event was catered with Olive Garden, and it was an excellent environment to talk with each other, encourage one another, and share many laughs with this amazing family we get to grow with for two years. Additionally, new students got to introduce themselves as well as provide a brief summery of their goals while here at BV and once we move on. All in all, it was an amazing way to start our school experience, and I certainly walked away with many fond memories.

Student Led Singing

Once the welcome dinner was over, at around 8pm, some of us stayed behind to arrange chairs and tables in the proper places. This lead a group of five of us to the chapel room to return some chairs. I'm not sure who, but someone picked up a songbook and started singing, and the rest of us

joined in. Having just completed our only school course, we were free from homework and had no other place to be, so we stayed and continued to sing. In total, this went on until past 11pm. We even picked up an extra member along the way! Before we all went home, we decided that it was so good and encouraging that we should make this a regular event, So we decided to announce that every other Friday night we would hold a student lead singing night in the chapel. The very next singing night was attended by over 20 people, including some of the young members of the church who are not students! I'm happy to say that we've now had several since then, and it continues to be one of the highlights of our week!

Start of 1st Quarter Classes

Monday of the following week began our first-quarter classes. There are five total, three on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and two on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Our MWF classes include Wisdom Literature 1 (covering the books of Job and Proverbs), The Big Picture of the Bible, and Personal Evangelism. Our TTh classes include the Gospel of Matthew and Genesis. It seems like we started these classes not long ago, yet now we're beginning to study for finals. Overall, I'm really enjoying the classes as well as faculty and fellow students!

Fasting Project

As part of our Matthew class, our instructor, Denny, encourages us to go on a fast. This isn't required, but he asks students to at least try to fast for five days, and encourages them to go further if possible. After going over the reasons to fast, important health information, and much more, I was immediately intrigued and wanted to try it out. Most of our class started the fast and went various amounts of time, however, myself and one of my classmates, Evan, decided to push ourselves to the limits. We are both still fasting and as of the time of writing this, have been going on 24 days! My main goal is simply to experiment to see how my body reacts and how far I can push myself while remaining healthy, but I hope to use this knowledge to attempt a more spiritual fast in the future.

Various Events Outside of School

If it hasn't been clearly said before, I have truly found an amazing family and many great friends in my short time at Bear Valley. My class has amazing chemistry and have learned to encourage, strengthen, and love each other (not to mention laugh to the point of pain on several occasions). As a result of this camaraderie, countless individually organized events have taken place in the short time we've been here. There have been bowling nights, singing nights, game and movie nights, fellowship nights, and so many more! I am truly experiencing what church is supposed to be, and I could not be happier!

Current Support Standings

I cannot thank you enough for the financial support you have given me! As of a couple of weeks ago, I have reached my minimum support goal. One of the things we Bear Valley students are most grateful for and acknowledge to be vital in this journey is the financial support we could not attend without. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you. Having said that, now that I've raised my minimum budget amount, I've added an item that was previously on my support package. I currently do not have a car and have been relying on friends to drive me around. I am happy to do this as it provides so way to spend more time with them, but I've also missed out on some opportunities to attend events, serve, and stay behind to fellowship at times as I am reliant on other people to drive me home. For this reason, I have adjusted for car payments in my budget and am working to raise that amount. Once again, thanks to God and his people, I am doing very well both spiritually and financially!

Closing

Once again, I apologize for being late in sending this newsletter. I truly am happier and spiritually stronger than I have ever been in my life, and I only expect I will continue to grow more and more over the years. Thank you so much for allowing me to be a part of this incredible experience. As always, if I can provide any additional updates or you would just like to talk to me,

feel free to reach out (after 4pm MTZ on weekdays) and I would be more than glad to answer. God bless!

Caleb Pierce