

DAVID WHEATON

UNIVERSITY *of* DESTRUCTION

YOUR GAME PLAN FOR
SPIRITUAL VICTORY
ON CAMPUS



BETHANYHOUSE
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

David Wheaton, University of Destruction
Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group, © 2005. Used by permission.

University of Destruction

Copyright © 2005

David Wheaton

Cover design by Greg Jackson

Interior design by Eric Walljasper

All italics for Scripture, added for emphasis, are the author's.

Unless otherwise identified, Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version of the Bible.
Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

Published by Bethany House Publishers

11400 Hampshire Avenue South

Bloomington, Minnesota 55438

Bethany House Publishers is a division of

Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-0-7642-0053-3

In keeping with biblical principles of creation stewardship, Baker Publishing Group advocates the responsible use of our natural resources. As a member of the Green Press Initiative, our company uses recycled paper when possible. The text paper of this book is comprised of 30% post-consumer waste.



Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Wheaton, David, 1969—

University of destruction : your game plan for spiritual victory on campus / by David Wheaton
p. cm.

Summary: "With a conversational style, author David Wheaton explores the three pillars of peril—sex, drugs, and rebellion—most often encountered by college students. He then offers students advice on developing a game plan to avoid the spiritual pitfalls"—Provided by publisher.

ISBN 0-7642-0053-4 (pbk.)

1. College students—Religious life. 2. Sex—Religious aspects—Christianity. 3. Drugs—Religious aspects—Christianity. 4. Conflict of generations. I. Title.

BV4531.3.W47 2005

248.8'34—dc22

2005004802

This book is dedicated to
that *one* young man or young woman
who reads this, heeds this,
. . . and overcomes!

*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.
And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our
faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who
believes that Jesus is the Son of God? 1 JOHN 5:4–5*

DAVID WHEATON is the host of *The Christian Worldview*, a Minneapolis-based radio program that offers a biblical perspective on current events, culture, and faith. He is also an inspirational speaker and contributing columnist for the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Formerly, David was one of the top professional tennis players in the world, attaining a world ranking of number 12, winning the Grand Slam Cup, reaching the semifinals of Wimbledon, representing the United States in Davis Cup competition, and scoring victories over such players as Andre Agassi, Jimmy Connors, Ivan Lendl, Jim Courier, and Michael Chang. In 2004, David won the Wimbledon Over-35 Doubles Championship.

Get connected at www.davidwheaton.com!

- Download a chapter-by-chapter study guide
 - E-mail the author, post your feedback, and connect with others who have read *University of Destruction*
- . . . and more!

CONTENTS

Introduction: Success, Surfing, and Stanford	9
1. Ready? Set? <i>Transition!</i>	14
2. Who Shall Overcome?	19
3. Meet the Pillars of Peril	26
4. Professors v. Possessors	31
5. First Pillar of Peril—Sex	43
6. The Dating Game	57
7. Second Pillar of Peril—Drugs and Alcohol	69
8. Under the Influence of . . . Music	77
9. Third Pillar of Peril—“Rock ’n’ Roll”	86
10. The Game Plan	104
11. Down but Not Out	140
12. Choosing a College—Saint or State?	150
Conclusion: Shipwrecked . . . Then Saved!	162
Appendix	173
Acknowledgments	175

INTRODUCTION

SUCCESS, SURFING, AND STANFORD

Stanford? Not a problem.

The week before entering my freshman year at Stanford University, I was riding a major wave . . . in more ways than one. I spent the week surfing Pacific rollers in Malibu, California, while visiting my brother, who was toiling away at Pepperdine Law School.

Sitting on my surfboard waiting for the next set of waves to appear, my thoughts drifted back over the previous months—the best summer of my life. In June I had graduated valedictorian of my high school class, and now in September I had just won the U.S. Open Junior Tennis Championships in New York, confirming my place as the top-ranked junior player in America.

I was number one on the court and in the classroom.

How appropriate that in just a few days I would travel up the coast of California to attend the top-rated academic and tennis university in the land . . . on a full scholarship, no less.

While I was riding a perfect wave that golden summer, do you think I was concerned about the next stage of my life in college? Guess again.

Welcome to Stanford

My duffel bags had barely touched the dorm room floor when two tennis teammates-to-be barged through the door with pitchers of beer in hand. It may have been the middle of the afternoon, but the party had already started. Girls and guys roamed the co-ed dorm, checking out their new surroundings. Classes started the next day, and I kid you not, I had neither pen nor paper.

The first assignment in Great Works of Western Culture, a required freshman class, was to read the books of Genesis and Job. “Easy enough,” I

thought, since I came from a Christian background and was familiar with the Bible. Imagine my disbelief when the professor and other students ridiculed the Bible and mocked God for the “stupid” way He dealt with mankind. I had never heard “God” and “stupid” in the same sentence before! I was so stunned, I didn’t know what to say.

The night life was just as shocking. It was as if all moral restraint had been lifted from the campus. Drunkenness and sexual activity were seemingly everywhere. The overall scene brought to mind images of wanton sailors coming ashore at a foreign port of call. Surely this wasn’t Stanford—it was Sodom!

Why was I so surprised by my introduction to college? After all, I had heard what college was like. I had already seen and experienced a taste of campus life on college recruiting visits. I was no potted plant—I had been out of my own backyard plenty of times.

But this was different . . . way different. I was now living full-time in the midst of a world diametrically opposed to the one I had grown up in—there would be no returning home to Mommy and Daddy every night. I would soon find out that an excellent upbringing coupled with academic and athletic success was no match for the maelstrom called college. The waters were baited, the sharks were circling . . . spiritual shipwreck loomed.



There is one word that perfectly describes my upbringing: *idyllic*. In my memory it was as near to perfect as it could be.

Just west of Minneapolis, Minnesota, my parents’ home was perched overlooking Lake Minnetonka in a quaint neighborhood called Cottage-wood. Whatever the season, life on the lake encompassed our existence. Swimming and sailing in the summer were followed by ice-skating and cross-country skiing in the winter. Living on the lake was so special to us that my mother would let me stay home from elementary school in early December to skate on the newly frozen black sheet of ice.

Life *off* the lake was storybook too. There was the annual Independence Day parade when all the kids would march around the neighborhood in their patriotic attire. There were the two public tennis courts just down the street from our house where I, at age four, was tossed my

first tennis balls by my mother. And there was the outdoor hockey rink across the bay at the local town hall, where my mother would send my brothers and me, saying, “Don’t come back till dark.”

More than just a lake and a neighborhood, though, what made my childhood especially idyllic was the closeness of our family.

Before I came along, the Wheaton family of five was seemingly complete with my sister, Marnie, followed by my two brothers, Mark and John. But then there were six! My arrival almost nine years after my brother could have generated sibling resentment or apathy toward me. Instead, nonstop affection and attention flowed my way. (Being the youngest can have its advantages, you know.)

My parents set the tone for our family. My father is an even-keeled and kind-hearted man who diligently provided for our middle-class family by working as a mechanical engineer for an air pollution control company near Minneapolis. My mother, dynamic and driven with a keen sense of discernment about people and life, would have been well-suited for a business career but chose to be a homemaker instead. They grew up in the same area, married young, and worked hard to raise a family. This was traditional American stuff.

Most important, my parents based their lives, marriage, and child-rearing on the Christian values found in the Bible, which were not only taught to us, but lived out by them. They were the same people in the home as out of it. We attended church on Sundays and read the Bible together after dinner.

Problems? Arguments? Conflicts? I recall very few.

So it was tennis in the summer and hockey in the winter, with a secure home life wrapped all around me. I entered my teens happy, outgoing, well-adjusted, and successful—academically and athletically. I even played a little piano. My parents (and my brothers and sister, for that matter) had done everything to raise me the right way. By all accounts, I was a good Christian boy.

And then life happened. *Idyllic* rammed into *reality*.

Entering junior high, I encountered a different road being traveled by my teenaged peers than the path my parents were bringing me along back home. Issues like dating, sex, alcohol, drugs, and general rebellion against parents and teachers were at the forefront of their conversation and conduct. It was a conflicting message to me, for sure, but at the

same time, this different way also held its allure.

Some would pass it off as growing up, reaching puberty, or meeting the real world, but whatever it was, an almost indiscernible change of course began in my life as I gradually partook in some of the things mentioned. This deviation in junior high proved to be the source, and then high school the staging ground, for my future trouble in college. But I digress. . . .

The Move

Shortly after I won the Minnesota state high school tennis title as a ninth grader at Minnetonka High School, my parents and I moved to Bradenton, Florida, so that I could train at the famed Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy.

With my dad now working from home as a consulting engineer and my older siblings embarking on their own careers, my parents had the flexibility to uproot themselves from Minnesota and move to Florida.

My tennis improved dramatically during my junior and senior years of high school in Florida as I trained every day after school with future tennis greats like Andre Agassi and Jim Courier. Before long I rocketed to the top of the junior tennis world—elite universities were recruiting, sports agents were visiting, the professional tennis tour was beckoning. Life was as good as it gets for a seventeen-year-old.

The day of my high school graduation brought no valedictory address from me, though, for I was off in Europe with the U.S. National Team playing the Junior French Open and Wimbledon. Returning to America in July, I won a prestigious national junior tournament and then narrowly missed defeating the number one professional player in the world at the time, Ivan Lendl, at a tournament in Washington, D.C. The U.S. Open junior title in New York came a few weeks later, providing a climactic end to an extraordinary summer.

Which brings us back to Malibu. Do you better understand why I wasn't too concerned about the next stage of my life in college at Stanford? As a matter of fact, I didn't even give it a second thought. An idyllic upbringing coupled with remarkable success had bred a bullet-proof confidence within me.

Yet the small cracks that appeared in junior high had continued to expand in high school. It would have been very difficult for even my

discerning parents to know that I was susceptible to veering down the wrong path in college. Besides, I was mostly compliant toward them, and in comparison to my peers, I was a pretty good kid.

Being a “good kid” wasn’t going to be nearly enough to survive college though. Within a week I had seen enough of college that I called my parents on several occasions telling them I wanted to come home. In an odd moment of clarity, something inside me warned that campus life was going to have a very negative effect on me. My parents listened but wanted me to stay. So I did.

Just two months later the roles reversed. After a campus visit by my parents, they started to see college for what it was and asked me if I would consider dropping out in order to join the professional tennis tour. I listened, but now I wanted to stay. So I did.

Why my change of heart?

In two months’ time I began to like college. I made new friends. I went to football games. I enjoyed the tennis team. I read about my athletic exploits in the Stanford newspaper. I bought a motor scooter. I made my own decisions. I had fun at parties. And, oh yeah, I met a cute blond girl.

In short, I adapted to college life. My (paltry) desire to adhere to the Christian values with which I had been raised was overwhelmed by the temptations and pleasures of college life. Drinking at parties didn’t seem like such a big deal. The anti-Christian philosophies of my professors didn’t bother me as much. And late nights with my girlfriend certainly didn’t make me want to leave college now.

Details of my decline in college could be inserted here, but they would only serve to give you a point of reference for your own life (“I would *never* do that!” or “That’s *all* he did?”). I am definitely not the standard.

It is enough to say I was an eighteen-year-old off at university . . . the *University of Destruction*.



1. READY? SET? *TRANSITION!*

So will it be tremendous or traumatic . . . your transition to college, that is?

My story notwithstanding, your transition from high school to college has the potential to be positively *tremendous*. If you're prepared, you should be eagerly anticipating it. What an opportunity to gain an education, grow into adulthood, and get ready for your future.

And let's not forget the fun! If you make the right choices, you will have the time of your life in college. What an opportunity to make lifelong friends, create fond memories, and experience a new world.

Going to college—what a potentially tremendous transition for you . . . if you're prepared, and if you make the right choices.

But, *whoops!* The transition can turn *traumatic* in a hurry. You just read my story; you probably have heard many others like it.

Sure, the particulars of any given version are different, but the scenario is exactly the same: Christian boy or girl goes to college and falls away from his or her faith. *Potentially tremendous* turns into *devastatingly traumatic*.

The actual statistic is staggering: *As many as 50 percent of Christian students say they have lost their faith after four years in college.* (See appendix.)

Did you get that? Fifty percent! One out of two! Fifty out of a

hundred! Five hundred out of a thousand! That's a lot.

I'm actually not surprised. From what I continually see and hear as a Christian speaker and radio talk show host, I certainly wasn't the only one to suffer spiritual shipwreck in college. It seems like the majority of faith stories from a twenty- or thirty-something details a story of decline in college . . . *even at religious colleges.*

The question is, why? Why is college such a minefield for Christian students?

The answer is actually quite simple: *The majority of Christian teens are spiritually unprepared for the most challenging transition they will ever make in life.*

Transition Defined

The verb *transition* means “to change from one place or state of existence to another.” For most of you, that is exactly what will happen when you go to college—you will transition from life at home to life on campus. More than just a change of place, though, your *stage of life* is also in the process of changing from boy to man or girl to woman.

It is the transitional periods in life that are often the most difficult and perilous. *Familiar* is replaced by *new*—new surroundings, new friendships, new temptations . . . new everything!

I believe going off to college is more challenging than some of the other major transitions in life, like moving cross-country, changing careers, or attending a different high school. It might even be more challenging than getting married or having children! (Not that I would know.)

Your Transition to College

But what about your upcoming or recent transition to college? To varying degrees, you have just spent the first eighteen years of your life in familiar and secure surroundings. You went to school and spent time with friends, were involved in after-school activities like sports, music, or work, and then went home to your family in the evening. Perhaps you went to church on Sunday mornings and to youth group on Wednesday nights.

While you associated with your friends quite a bit, much of your time was spent with people older than you—parents, teachers, coaches,

employers, youth leaders. Yeah, you spent a little time with your younger brother or sister too.

More often than not, you had to abide by the rules of your house. Sure, you broke them at times, but there was an abiding presence at home limiting your freedom to do whatever you wanted, whenever you wanted. You had to let Dad or Mom know where you were going and with whom, and what time you would return. If you botched your end of the bargain, there were consequences.

In short, you lived a *real life*. You had a daily routine, associated with people of varying ages, and heeded someone's authority. As a matter of fact, you had it *better* than real life because you weren't fully supporting yourself financially. What a deal!

College is going to be different . . . a lot different. First of all, unlike any other time in your past or future, you will be living and spending almost all your time with people your own age. While this may seem perfectly splendid, this is actually *not* ideal because it often fosters an environment of immaturity.

Spending time with people older than we are tends to mature us. Even spending time with younger people can lead to the development of leadership qualities. But I believe spending the majority of your time with those of similar age results only in stunted maturity. The positive influence that parents, teachers, coaches, or other leaders provide won't occur naturally in college because they are simply not around as much. This lack of authority and the same-age dynamic on campus are just two of the ingredients in the recipe for collegiate disaster.

The difference between home life and campus life doesn't end there. Most aspects of college will be solely up to you: registering for classes and getting to them on time, keeping up with schoolwork, feeding and transporting yourself, managing your finances, choosing new friends, doing laundry, and sleeping enough hours to function.

Congratulations—you are now on your own!

And therein lies the major problem: You—a young adult still in the process of maturing mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually—are leaving all that is familiar to you for an extremely different and precarious environment that is going to require critical and mature decision-making skills the moment you step on campus.

The transition to college would be less serious if all that mattered

was polishing up your personal discipline and time management skills. In reality there are far more important and difficult issues you will have to face in college, namely the three Pillars of Peril, which I'll explain in chapter three.

Better be prepared, for you are going to be smack-dab in the middle of a *battle for your soul* on campus. What does that mean?

It means that the *broad way that leads to destruction* will be battling and beckoning your soul to stray off the *narrow way that leads to life* (see Matthew 7:13–14). It means that your present, future, and even your afterlife are going to be directly affected by which “way” you choose in college.

An overstatement? Not at all. For example, if you choose to have premarital sex in college, you will be weakening yourself for future sexual immorality and extramarital affairs, which often result in broken marriages and families. If you choose to get drunk or use drugs in college, you will be setting yourself up for all kinds of future trouble and anguish, even bouts of addiction. If you choose to believe the anti-Bible, truth-is-relative philosophies taught by certain professors, you will eventually become unprincipled, unstable, and ungodly in your thoughts and action. If you choose to cheat on exams or schoolwork, you will be desensitizing yourself to future deception in business or taxes.

Yet the opposite is also true. If you navigate the troubled waters of college successfully—if you are true to God and His Word—you will be paving the way to a life of purpose and contentment, a life that honors and glorifies God. There is no greater accomplishment than that.

You might be thinking, “College is my four years to experiment. I’m going to have my fun now and settle down later in life.” Don’t believe the “later” lie. First, you don’t know if there will even be a later—no one knows his or her future. And second, you (and everyone else) are not exempt from the consequences of sin just because you’re in college, where “everyone else does it” and then *appears* to carry on with no lasting effects.

Rather, the *later truth* is this: *When you choose the beginning of the way in college, you are determining the end of the way later on.* Realize it or not, you are composing your own destiny by your actions in college. And it all starts with your mind.

Consider this process: *A thought becomes an action. An action becomes*

a habit. A habit becomes your destiny. Think about that. Your thoughts, your ideas, your views of the world determine what you do and what you will become. In short, they determine who you are as a person.

The Bible states this important principle in the book of Proverbs: “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7a).

There it is—what you “think in your heart” will determine your degree of success—or failure—in college.



Everyone knows the positive results of a *tremendous transition* to college: the opportunity for you to gain an education, to grow in maturity, to get prepared for the future, and to have the time of your life. Wow.

Unfortunately, not everyone fully understands, or cares to understand, the other real possibility—the transition to college can turn *traumatic* in a hurry if you’re unprepared and make the wrong choices. Whoa.

The purpose of this book is to help you make a tremendous transition to college, all the while avoiding a traumatic one. It is not written to a boy or a girl, but to the young man or young woman that you now are. It will push and it will prod you. You will not find pie-in-the-sky platitudes, but rather practical and powerful ways to make college a University of Instruction, not a University of Destruction.

Ready? (Are you prepared for college?)

Set? (What are you thinking in your heart?)

Transition! (Tremendously, not traumatically.)

VERY IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE:

Although the transition to college can be difficult and dangerous, how you think on campus will define your destiny.

MESSAGE TO MEMORIZE:

For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. PROVERBS 23:7