

God's Word Impacting Secular University Campus

"One day, my small group leaders stormed into my dorm room dressed up as ninjas and invited me and my roommate to an InterVarsity freshmen volleyball tournament," said Neal. "We thought we would be the only ones dressed up, but it turned out that everyone else in the tournament also dressed up."

Neal arrived at James Madison University as a freshman eager to make new friends and get involved in a Christian organization on campus. He had met a couple InterVarsity small group Bible study leaders at a freshmen welcome event and ended up going to their Bible study.

"Being a part of that small group was one of the best decisions I made," stated Neal. "In that small group, I met 10 guys who are today still my closest friends. These relationships carried me through college."

Letting God's Word Teach

Every week, Neal and his small group pored over Scripture, letting God's Word teach, guide, and transform them. One of the passages that struck Neal was the Great Commission, where Jesus instructs His followers to make disciples of all nations.

"I loved this passage because this was not just a command that Jesus was giving His disciples at a particular time," said Neal. "This is God's vision for the entire world—that we all go and make disciples of all nations."

As Neal considered this, he realized that many of his non-Christian friends had negative perceptions of Christians—that they were too judgmental—and wanted nothing to do with Christianity.

“There are so many people who have negative perceptions of Christians and still haven’t heard the gospel,” said Neal. “Negative perceptions prevent people from seeing and experiencing the truth. This is why getting people to engage with Scripture is so important.”

God’s Word Inspires a Vision

Neal was moved to host a campus-wide worship event, where Christians on campus could invite their non-Christian friends to come and hear the Word of God.

“I was praying something like that would happen, but figured nothing would,” said Neal. “But then, one day a couple of my friends came up to me and told me that they had just reserved a room so that we could do the event.”

Neal and his friends started planning, gathering support and help from InterVarsity and other campus ministries along the way.

“This was a monumental time in my college career,” said Neal. “I had never taken any steps of faith like this before or organized such a large event before.”

Everything seemed to be going well as Neal and his friends planned: They found speakers, a worship band, the funds and sound equipment.

But five days before the event, everything fell through—the speakers, the band, the funds and the venue. The only thing that didn’t fall through was the sound equipment, but the production company threatened to sue Neal if he broke the contract.

It’s Time to Pray

“I started to panic, so I contacted my small group Bible study and other friends in InterVarsity and told them about my situation,” said Neal. “My friends in InterVarsity organized prayer for me, and word of my situation quickly spread. I was

also encouraged by their faith to go and pray myself—so I went to a prayer room on our campus and began to pray.”

Thirty minutes after Neal had finished praying, a friend gave Neal \$1,000 in cash to pay for sound equipment, Neal got his brothers’ band booked to play, and he remembered a connection he had to a well-known speaker.

Two hours later, every detail for the campuswide event was taken care of.

New Life

“When the day of the event came, the auditorium was packed with 600 people,” said Neal. “The worship was powerful, the speaker shared the gospel, and at the end of the night, seven non-Christians decided to start following Jesus.”

Now Neal is preparing to graduate and attend Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, but he is extremely grateful for his faith-growing experiences in InterVarsity. InterVarsity gave him a greater vision for what making disciples of all nations could look like. Now his dream is to one day become an urban church planter and a writer so that he can engage as many people as possible with God’s Word.

“When people think about changing the world, it seems impossible to them,” observed Neal. “But from my experience and from what I’ve seen in Scripture, changing the world is a natural result of following Christ.”