



GOING GREEK WITHOUT COMPROMISING YOUR CONVICTIONS

created by
Ryan Leong

Going Greek Without Compromising Your Convictions

Created by // Ryan Leong

Are you thinking about joining a fraternity or sorority? Maybe you are discipling someone interested in “going Greek?” If you have anxiety about yourself or someone you mentor getting swept away by the party culture of the Greek system, you’re in the right place. This is a resource for believers who are interested in entering the Greek system and for college ministry leaders leading them. I hope to spark interest in you towards reaching the Greeks by becoming one of them, without compromising your convictions and devotion to Christ.

It is my personal belief that the Greeks are one of the major unreached groups at the university and that student leaders of collegiate ministries should take advantage of the opportunity to be in chapter houses! Many of the Greek chapters around the country have no faithful followers of Christ in their midst. This is such a missed opportunity considering that becoming a brother or sister in a house provides a steady influx of people with whom to share the gospel. People are more inclined to be open with someone they trust and know. These men and women are capable of influencing people around the world for the rest of their lives. They inherently have a drive to make a difference and impact the world. Is there a better way of directing them to their true purpose in loving the Lord and making His name known by becoming an insider?

I really enjoy watching undercover police TV shows and movies. There is something about disguise and assimilation to the hostile environment that puts me on the edge of my seat! Being a follower of Christ and a fraternity brother has a pretty similar feeling to this. The big difference is that you’re not out to arrest anyone, but to share the gospel and pull them from the path that is dragging them toward a Christless eternity.

If you are thinking about going Greek, take some time to think over and consider the following questions:

- Do you drink/smoke?
- Do you do drugs?
- How is your personal purity going?
- Why do you want to be in Greek life?
- What is the financial cost? What is the time commitment?
- How well do you handle peer pressure?
- Is there a specific house? What is their reputation?

If you are currently struggling with drinking, doing drugs, involved in any sort of interpersonal sexual activity, or are addicted to pornography, pledging a fraternity or sorority would not be helpful in advancing the gospel. As a follower of Christ, the goal of reaching Greeks is to be an influence for Christ, not to be influenced by the culture.

The intention with the above questions is to weigh out your motives and analyze the costs and benefits. I am all for sending students into the Greek system, but let's be prudent and wise before putting yourself in a situation where one's walk with God could potentially be drawn away. This is a huge commitment that should be taken seriously. Jesus says it best in Luke 14:28, "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?"

I believe the best way to reach Greeks is to become an active member and start sharing the gospel with them as a peer, rather than an outsider. Now this does not just happen instantaneously. It is going to take hard work, financial cost, and time! Some pledge processes can last up to 12 weeks! But think about the number of people that are concentrated in a chapter. When is there ever going to be another opportunity for someone to have immediate, close access to 60+ college students who do not know Christ?! During my active years in Alpha Sigma Phi, it was rare to walk to my next class without seeing four or five brothers on campus.

Let's be honest with the fact that those in the Greek system live lifestyles that are often contrary to a follower of Christ's. Members often delve into the party and hook up scenes. Drama and conflict can fester between others and explode at any time. It is crucial to know what you are getting into, the pressures that will come, and that you are firm in your identity in Christ.

Just as an undercover cop is careful, wise, and missionally focused, so should those who are being sent in. Four names come to mind when thinking about all of this: Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego. They were training to be in the king's service, the most ancient pledge process! Take some time to read over their experience in opposition with governing authorities and their obedience to the Lord in the book of Daniel.

I am actually in favor of our Christian students attending parties and going to dances. It is pretty counterintuitive to be in the Greek system and not go to socials and events. Every weekend I volunteered to be a "sober bro." A "sober bro" would help with security, defuse conflict, and help transport people safely home. Occasionally being a "sober bro" was a requirement for pledges and a disciplinary punishment for actives, so it was not a job people were jazzed about. There is a level of discernment when you do not need to be present (strippers, bodily ridicule, brawls, bar crawls, etc). Our students know that if things start to get sketch, they should get out of there.

Here are three key insights for standing by your convictions throughout your time in Greek life.

Communication and Honesty

At some point, everyone has trouble with learning to say “no”. The more honest and up-front you are with your potential Greek life peers, the better off you will be. Don’t beat around the bush with your convictions. Be as Daniel was in the Bible, where it says, “But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way” (Daniel 1:8) One of our student leaders, Ellie, stood by her convictions during initiation. She spoke up, knowing there was a chance she would not be initiated, but God provided a way for her to join the sorority!

Throughout your time in Greek life there are going to be tests and trials—it does not stop after initiation. The pressure of drinking, smoking, or participating in reckless behavior will always be a temptation. Daniel did not want to defile himself with the king’s food, so he had asked for permission not to partake in it. Yet despite his actions, he obtained a leadership position that he used for the glory of God! God gave Daniel and his companions favor in the eyes of King Nebuchadnezzar.

As a pledge, early on in the process you should make it clear to those in charge, such as the president or the pledge educator, about your convictions. Identifying as a follower of Christ right away breaks the ice with those in the organization. It will be an uneasy and intimidating conversation, but well worth it. They will respect your initiative and will likely stand up for you during the sketchy parts of the pledge process. Members in your pledge class, who will be with you throughout college, will probably respect your beliefs as well! When making your convictions clear, ask God to give you wisdom with the words to say, so like Daniel you can speak with wisdom and tact (Daniel 2:14).

We encourage our student leaders to be open and honest about their convictions during recruitment week and throughout the pledge process. But don’t overdo it; the message will come across wrong. Be firm, but not overly intrusive.

Cover my Six

In military terms, “cover my six” means to “watch my back.” Soldiers who have blind spots need fellow soldiers to watch those spots for them. Last time I checked, you and I are not The Terminator or John Wick, so we need someone with us if we’re going into enemy territory.

The most strategic thing to do is rush a house with another mature Christian in your college ministry. It is encouraging to walk with someone who is experiencing the exact same things you

are, and it leads to increased accountability. You can strategize your outreach and pray with one another. Two of our student leaders rushed together and are currently in Phi Delta Theta. Together they plan their Bible studies, pray for their brothers, follow up with men they shared the gospel with, and pray for one another. They are really living out Proverbs 27:17, which states, “as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” We have three other teams who are also doing this in other Greek houses.

The enemy is going to do whatever it takes to get you off track. He will isolate you from your brothers and sisters in Christ, and push you into the worldly culture. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were in the midst of heavy temptation to conform, yet I’m sure they supported one another, especially when they took a stance and refused to bow to the king’s golden idol: “If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up” (Daniel 3:17-18). They did life with one another and even went through a blazing furnace together in standing up for God in the presence of an entire nation. However, as a ministry, we have sent students in alone or have had one partner graduate (leaving one person alone), which has made it more difficult for them. In those circumstances, it is pivotal to have extra accountability and encouragement so temptations and distractions are not entertained, like it says in Hebrews 3:13: “But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called ‘Today,’ so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.”

Not only is accountability important in the battlefield, it is equally valuable off the battlefield. Don’t be afraid to call for help! When military forces are in trouble or pinned down, they radio for reinforcements or rescue. Be sure to keep the person discipling you in the loop with your struggles, temptations, and successes. Withholding one’s thoughts or adversities is a shortcut to isolation and destruction. Embrace humility and your leaders will be a huge assistance to you and will pray for you.

Your Best Teammate

In the NBA, Steve Nash was the leader in assists five different seasons and currently leads in all-time free throw percentage at 90.43%. Nash can pass the ball and drain free throws. He is the kind of guy you want on your team because he makes everyone succeed. Either as a pledge or as an active, you need the best teammate in this mission field that will lead you towards success. In and out of Greek ministry, that teammate is the Holy Spirit. As Jesus says in John 14:15-17, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”

It is not easy being immersed in Greek Life. But Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will indwell every believer! How amazing is it that? Resting in the reality and assurance of the Holy Spirit role should fill you with joy and confidence in ministering to Greeks. The Holy Spirit is going to be your best teammate in this culture. So it is crucial to be solely dependent on God and keep in step with the Lord.

I love how the Apostle Paul encourages the Church in Galatia: “So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh...Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16, 25) You should be on guard because you are in a hostile environment. You need to walk and live by the Spirit in order to make an impact because the enemy will tempt you. By ourselves we have limited strength, but with the Holy Spirit we have lasting strength.

Conclusion

The road to becoming an insider will be tough, but comes with incredible reward. It’s crucial to stand firm in your convictions to truly represent Christ and point others to repentance and faith in Him. Your integrity and witness toward others will leave an impact, and you will honor the Lord. Hold fast, as Paul commands in 1 Corinthians 15:58: “Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

When you step out into the Greek system, be open and honest before others about your convictions, surround yourself with accountability, and keep in step with the Holy Spirit. When you pledge, you are an ambassador for Christ. Your life should reflect a godly character that exemplifies Christ. If He is not reflected as the top priority in your life, you run the risk of compromising your convictions and assimilating to a worldly culture. Be strong and courageous—with God’s help you got this!

Reflection Questions

Describe a time you let your guard down and compromised your convictions.

How has this resource been helpful with standing by your convictions?

How will you stand up against temptation when your convictions are tested?