



Suggested readings for Christian students and parents wanting to engage in serious thought about choosing a college, here is my suggested reading list. Some of these authors write from a distinctively Christian perspective; others (marked by \*) do not.

Dan Crabtree, Wheaton Academy

*Colleges That Change Lives* by Loren Pope\* - A great place to start – you must read the first 19 pages! Loren Pope, former education editor of the New York Times, was a strong advocate of the small liberal arts college. His introduction, with a no-holds-barred criticism of “designer-label colleges” and “brand-name universities,” makes a convincing case for the kind of education that takes place in a good liberal arts college. These 19 pages will take you only fifteen minutes to read, and they may significantly change your ideas about what makes a good college.

*A Question of Price vs. Cost* by Steve Henderson - This online article – originally published in Christianity Today – presents a heartfelt case for Christian colleges based on Henderson’s research (Railsback) that indicated a dramatic decline in “religiosity” among students who do not attend a Christian college. (Read an interesting article by The Christian Connector found [here](#).)

*College Unranked* by Lloyd Thacker\* - Thacker presents an excellent collection of essays on the current state of affairs in college admission that “recenters the focus to the student’s development and well-being.”

*Harvard Schmarvard: Getting Beyond the Ivy League to the College that is Best for You* by Jay Mathews\* - Mathews, of the Washington Post, is my favorite education reporter. He also writes a weekly column in the Post called “Class Struggle” which I believe should be required reading for high school students and parents.

*The Idea of a Christian College* by Arthur Holmes - This classic book “provides a concise case for the Christian college and defines its distinctive mission and contribution.” Not a quick read, but worth the effort.

*Engaging God’s World: A Reformed Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living* by Cornelius Plantinga - “Written as a guide for college students, this volume spells out the central themes of the Christian faith from a Reformed perspective and shows how Christian higher education fits inside a view of the world and of human life that is formed by these themes.” I recommend this thoughtful exposition on Christ-centered learning.

*Conceiving the Christian College* by Duane Litfin - This book, by the former president of Wheaton College, “makes an important contribution to the conversation about the nature and purpose of Christian colleges and universities.” I especially appreciate Chapter 4, on the meaning of a Christ-centered education.

*Choosing the Right College: The Whole Truth About America’s Top Schools* by ISI\* - Written from a decidedly conservative (not distinctively Christian) perspective, this book assesses the “academic curriculum, political atmosphere, and campus life” of 125 colleges and universities. As with Pope’s book, you can catch the essence of the book in less than half an hour by reading the introductory twenty-four pages.

*How to Get Any Job with Any Major* by Donald Asher\* - With a different focus from the other readings on this list, the title speaks for itself. Asher advocates convincingly for students to major in the field about which they are most passionate.

Others: *God on the Quad* by Naomi Schaefer Riley; *The Fabric of Faithfulness* by Steve Garber;  
*An Educated Choice* by Frank Brock; *Quality with Soul* by Robert Benne;  
*The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* by George Marsden.