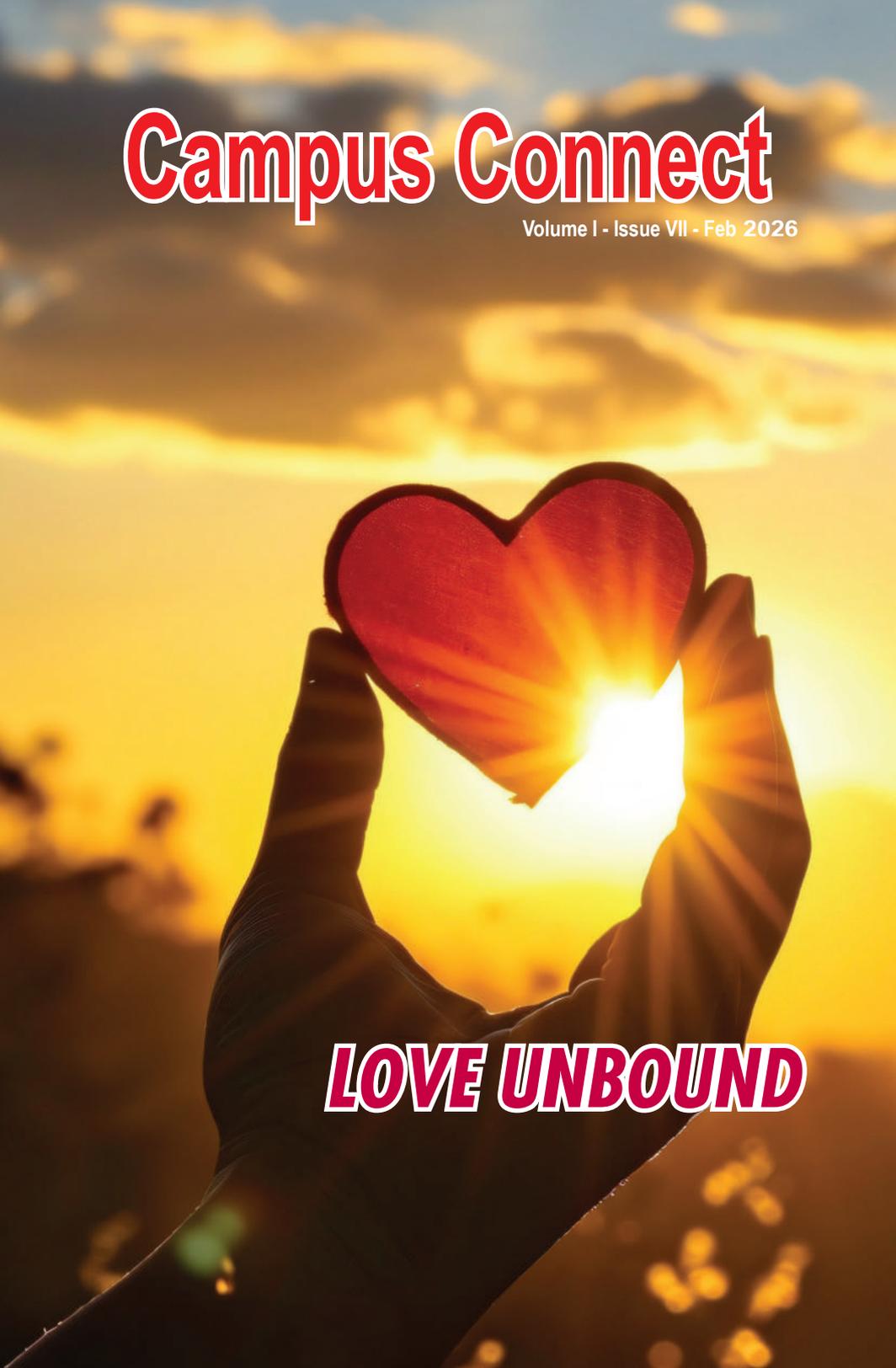


Campus Connect

Volume I - Issue VII - Feb 2026

A hand is shown holding a heart-shaped cutout against a bright sunset background. The sun is positioned behind the heart, creating a lens flare effect. The sky is filled with soft, golden clouds. The overall mood is warm and romantic.

LOVE UNBOUND

When the midday sun over Calvary lost its brightness and darkness took over, the words that rang out from that cross - "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing" - gave love a whole new meaning in human history. Even when the brutality of the Roman Empire and the hatred of religious fundamentalists came together to try and bind Christ, that love broke free from even the chains of death and kept flowing - it was truly 'without limits'. Throughout history, many have built empires by spilling blood and through deception, but the only power that conquered hearts through love alone and left an everlasting mark through the ages is divine love.

The verse "For God so loved the world" (John 3:16) is foundational in showing us just how much the Creator loved His creation. That word 'so' here points to an infinite measure that's beyond human comprehension. Worldly love expects something in return, looks for worthiness; but divine love goes searching for those who aren't worthy. The apostle Paul, writing to the Romans, declared, "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Meaning, it wasn't our righteousness that moved Him, but our desperate condition that caused that nectar of love to pour down. This is divine will without any favoritism. Like a river cascading from a snow-capped mountain rushing toward its destination, the Father's love left behind heaven's glory and flowed all the way to Calvary, breaking every barrier.

In a believer's life, this 'love without limits' shouldn't just stay as a theory - it needs to become a way of life. A devoted follower named Augustine once said, "Love God, and then do whatever you want." Because a person bound by God's love can't become a slave to sin. True love has no chains of selfishness. 1 Corinthians chapter 13 describes the characteristics of love, making it clear that it "doesn't seek its own benefit." In today's society, it's easy to build walls, but building bridges is tough. Yet Christ's love tore down the wall of hatred between enemies. Behind Stephen praying for those who were stoning him to death was nothing but this 'love without limits'. This might seem foolish to worldly logic, but for a believer, it's heaven's testimony.

Ultimately, our spiritual maturity doesn't depend on how much devotion we're showing, but on how much we're loving. The Lord declared, "By this everyone will know that you're my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35). Without love, all our prayers, fasts, and sacrifices are just "a resounding gong and a clanging cymbal." Love without boundaries doesn't mean breaking the rules - it means fulfilling them. Love completes the law. So let's be filled with that Holy Spirit's power to push away the darkness of hatred around us, to forgive those we can't forgive, to love those we can't love.

May Christ's love compel us!

- K. John Bhushanam

Campus Connect

(English Version of Vidyarthi Velugu)

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REQUEST

Dear Vidyarthi Velugu and Campus Connect readers,
Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We would like you to note the following:

1. For address change, non-receipt of magazine, new subscription, or renewal, please contact the office staff, Brother K.Phani Kumar (8985482388).
2. Pray and encourage so that Vidyarthi Velugu has no postal issues and everyone reads and receives spiritual benefit.

Each month, send only two important praise and two prayer points of EU and EGF through the V V Prayer Points link by the **20th**. Those interested in writing may send their essays, stories, and poems to editorvv2018@gmail.com.

- Editorial Board



LOVE UNBOUND

"Love." Is there anyone who doesn't feel a stir in their heart just hearing that word? Love, Mahabbat, Kadhal, Ishq, Pyar... the language might change, but the feeling was always supposed to be the same. That used to be true, at least! But in our modern world, everyone seems to be writing their own definitions to suit themselves. Yet, who among us can say they don't need love?

From a newborn baby to an elderly person in their final days, everyone needs love. It nurtures the little ones, sends the youth on a rollercoaster of emotions, and gives assurance to the elderly. In short, this simple four-letter word rules the world. Perhaps that's why a poet once said, "Love is the root of the universe, Love is the form of God, Love is eternal life, and that very Love is the path to salvation."

“ Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.”

— Frederick M. Lehman

It's true—God's love is an astounding reality. It is an act of grace, shown through His inherent compassion toward sinners. "God loves the unworthy." Human love is usually awakened by some quality in the beloved that attracts us. But God's love is free, natural, and utterly without cause. There was nothing in us that attracted or triggered it.

1. God's Love – A Different Nature

In this world, love is often measured by performance, acceptance, and success. But the love God teaches in the Bible is completely different. God's love isn't something we earn, nor is it something that can ever be withdrawn. It is unconditional love—freely given, trustworthy, and everlasting.

"God loves people because He has chosen to love them... There is no reason for His love other than His own sovereign pleasure." Yet, there are so many misconceptions about the phrase "God is love" (1 John 4:8). That is why we must examine what God's love truly is, as revealed in His Word.

"God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). This doesn't refer to our love for God; it's about understanding how deeply God loves us. The phrase "poured out" means "flowing abundantly" or "flooding over." It suggests being filled like a flood. Divine love isn't about fleeting feelings; it speaks of deep, strong emotions that overwhelm the heart.

God's love is not in conflict with His holiness: "The God of love is first and foremost the God of light." He isn't indifferent to moral distinctions; He is a God who loves righteousness and hates wickedness. What He desires from His children is wholeness and perfection.

J.I. Packer's Definition

"God's love is an exercise of his goodness toward sinners... The act of God's love is the act of identifying himself with their welfare, giving his Son to be their Savior, and bringing them to know and enjoy him in a covenant relationship."

2. God's Love is Unconditional and Eternal

The Bible clearly declares that God's love is rooted in His character, not in our behavior.

- + "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)
- + "I have loved you with an everlasting love."

His love doesn't fluctuate based on our spiritual performance. Just as a mother loves her baby before the child has done a single thing to earn it, God loved us long before our actions came into the picture.

3. Worldly Love vs. God's Love

In the world, the mindset is, "I will be loved only if I am successful." But with God, I am loved simply because He chose to love me. I am accepted not because of my achievements, but because of Christ. The danger is that those attracted to worldly love often end up serving God out of fear and guilt rather than love. Grace-based

love, however, produces gratitude, joy, and courage.

4. Value in Our Identity as God's Children

Our culture determines value based on appearance and achievement. God determines value based on our relationship with Him. "Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you..." (Isaiah 43:4).

Our identity in God's Word:

Not rejected – but Chosen

Not worthless – but Redeemed

Not forgotten – but Deeply Loved

5. Trusting When Circumstances Contradict

Suffering, trials, and rejection can all cast doubt on God's love. Faith means trusting God's character over our feelings. The crucial truth is that God's love was proven at the Cross, not by our current circumstances. Clouds may hide the sun, but they cannot remove it. Similarly, trials may obscure our view of God's love, but they can never erase it.

6. Gratitude for God's Perfect Love

Gratitude allows us to experience God's love every day. "Give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). A grateful heart becomes a joyful heart, and a joyful heart reflects God's love to the world.

What It Means to Love God

- + Desiring God himself beyond his gifts.
- + Treasuring God himself beyond his gifts.
- + Delighting in God himself beyond his gifts.
- + Being satisfied in God himself beyond his gifts.
- + Cherishing God himself beyond his gifts.
- + Savoring God himself beyond his gifts.
- + Valuing God and prizing God and revering God and admiring God beyond his gifts.

7. Conclusion

God's love is unchanging and eternal. It is not a prize for the worthy, but a gift for the needy. When we truly grasp this love, we find freedom from fear, stability in our identity, strength in suffering, and a life filled with gratitude.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

If I love God, everything happening in my life is for my good. Everything I experience—good or bad—is for my benefit and for God's glory. If I do not love God, then everything

in my life is not working toward my good.

God doesn't love you because you are valuable. You are valuable because God loves you.

Dear friend, have you forgotten to love the God who loved you enough

to give His life for you? Can you not offer even a little love to the One who left everything to come for you?

Reference: "Knowing God" by J.I. Packer

- Rakshan Seelam
Graduate, Kothagudem



Nuthana Sirshika



YOUR QUESTION - OUR ANSWERS

February Month Question: *Bible Reading: Quality vs. Quantity?*

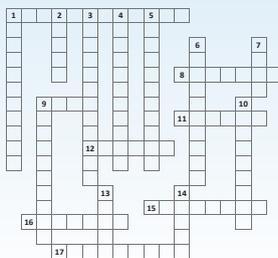
Answer: Bible Reading: It's All About Quality
As believers, most of us make it a priority to spend time in the Word to connect with the Lord. But here is something important to remember:

- It is not about the quantity (how long you spend doing it); it is really about the quality (how focused and deep you go).
- It isn't enough to just clock in the hours in God's presence. We need to make sure it is genuine "Quality Time."
- When we get too hung up on quantity, we tend to rush through chapter after chapter just to say we finished them. The problem is, when we do that, we cut short the time we spend actually soaking in the message and meditating on it.
- True "Quality Time with God" happens when we combine four things in our daily lives: reading the Bible, thinking deeply about it, understanding it, and then applying it to how we live.
- Think about it this way: trying to race through the whole Bible just to finish it is a quantity mindset. But reading to understand and letting it change your life? That is a quality mindset.
- Simply put, if you are just reading the words, you are focusing on quantity. But if you are deeply meditating on those words, you are focusing on quality.
- The more quality time you spend meditating on Scripture with the Lord, the deeper your spiritual growth and well-being will be.

- D. Ramu, Kataram

March Month Question
Why is the Bible so special?
Send your answer by **February 10th.**

February '26 Book of Ezekiel (23-24 Chapters)



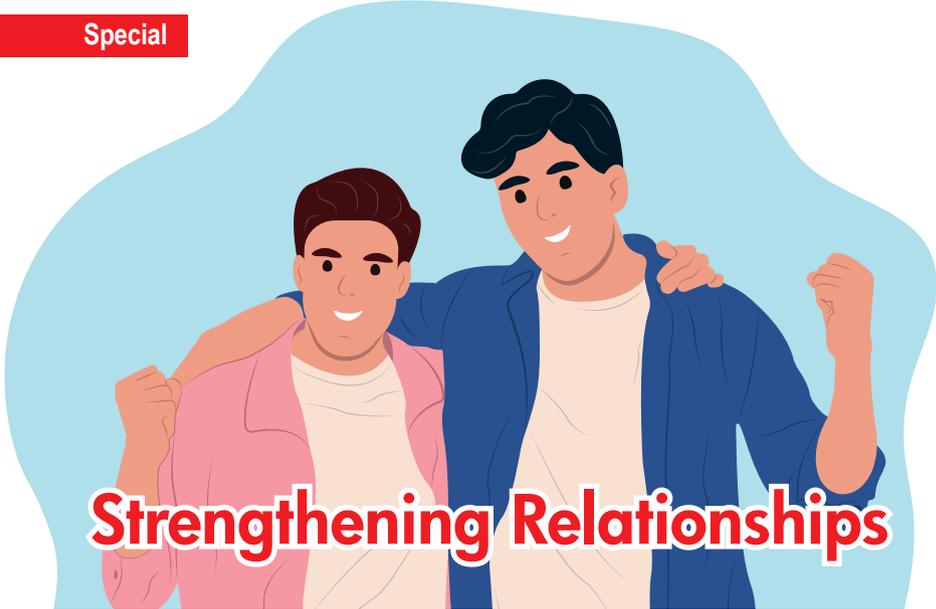
Across

1. They will strip off your clothes and do what with your fine jewels?
8. The desire of your eyes I will take away from you with what?
9. Those who remain in you shall be consumed by what?
11. Which name belongs to Samaria?
12. You will drink from it and be drunk and filled with what?
15. Which name belongs to Jerusalem?
16. On this day, the king of which country is coming against Jerusalem?
17. Woe to the city where what people dwell, says the Lord GOD?

Down

1. To whom did I deliver her?
2. In which country did they commit harlotry?
3. With what should you put it into the fire?
4. What place that is pleasing to your mind am I going to defile?
5. With whom do they have relations as they have relations with her?
6. What will be imposed upon you according to your deeds?
7. What am I also going to heap up?
9. For whom should you not mourn but sigh in silence?
10. What will you become according to the sins you have committed?
13. They took her sons and daughters captive and killed her by what?
14. What should be boiled thoroughly?

- K. Kiran Kumar, Staff, Mahabunagar



Strengthening Relationships

Life is inherently relational. As human beings, we are part of a family and broader community. Whether man or woman, young or old, we are called to depend on one another.

It is impossible to live apart from human relationships that involve responsibilities of giving and taking—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. This is by design—God's design—and has been true from the beginning of time.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we have become part of a larger family: the family of God. “So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith... There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26-28) However, if we follow our old nature, our relationships will quickly become characterized by immorality, impurity, selfish ambition, and division. So how do we strengthen these relationships?

Bonding Through Love

Bonding Through Love - This is the main thing that strengthens relationships.

Apostle Paul described God's love as “a more excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:31). The fifteen characteristics of love mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13 provide our guide. If we practice these characteristics attentively, our relationships will reach a higher level. All these characteristics can be summed up in three virtues: mutual acceptance, dependence, humility, and unity.

Accepting One Another

“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you” (Romans 15:7).

Paul emphasized that accepting others as they are is key to growing relationships. We are to accept other Christians just as Jesus Christ accepted us—unconditionally, with all our weaknesses and imperfections.

The phrase “one another” appears

seventy-five to one hundred times in the New Testament: devoted to one another, honoring one another, accepting one another, admonishing one another, greeting, serving, carrying one another's burdens, bearing with one another, welcoming, esteeming others higher than ourselves, encouraging, and more. All these principles are embodied in the Lord. We must draw our inspiration from Him, which helps us maintain healthy, holy, and harmonious relationships within and outside the family.

The Danger of Finding Faults

Engaging in constant criticism or fault-finding is hazardous to our relationships. Jesus said,

"Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3-4).

We tend to exaggerate others' faults while minimizing our own. If we judge ourselves before judging others, we will be in a better position to help them and bridge our relationships.

Jesus's standards for relationships are incredibly high and healthy. Our behavior and attitudes toward others should be neither harsh nor condemning, but caring. We must first examine ourselves, correct our own faults, and then help others—this leads to constructive relationships.

The guiding principle

"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

Handle with Care

Another important area in

relationships is how we handle our tongue. King David said, "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Psalm 34:1).

Besides giving us taste, our tongues enable us to express ourselves verbally, to show love and concern, and to encourage and build one another up. But if not handled with care, our tongue can cause shame and damage. Our tongue plays a leading role in improving relationships. If used incorrectly, it's like a fire (James 3:6).

The Golden Rule

Learn to keep your mouth shut. Don't say anything you would later regret. We must trust the Lord to anoint our tongues with His love, understanding, and patience so that our words will glorify and edify our spouses, children, relatives, and everyone we encounter.

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Philippians 3:13

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Venue: Study Centre, Jangampet

SPEAKERS

- Keynote Address: Mr. T. David Hanumakonda
- Devotions: Mr. R. Prabhudas
Former President, UESI - AP (United)
- Expositions: Dr. P. John Paul
President, UESI - TG

OTHER TALKS

- Roles & Responsibilities as In Laws
Mrs. & Mr. M. Obulapathi
- Manage Your Emotions
Mr. V. Nageshwar Rao
- Grooming Church Leaders
Mr. Prasanna Kumar

Coordinator: Mr. P. Jeevaratnam, Devarakonda (9848467550)
Shepherd Cell Secy.: Mr. Shanthi Kumar (9490208955)

Freedom from Guilt, Finding Assurance

In his thought-provoking book "The Screwtape Letters," C.S. Lewis narrates how Satan's agents get Christians to dwell on their failures. Once people begin feeling guilty about their past and performance, they are no longer a threat to Satan's program. We must take care that guilt does not devour us continuously and endlessly.

We should ask for God's forgiveness, remembering that He is here to free us, not to punish us. "I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins" (Isaiah 43:25).

Forgiving others whom we think have

harmed us or damaged our reputation also helps widen our relationships. When we forgive others, it releases God's blessing in our lives. When we don't forgive, we block God from working not only in our lives but also in the lives of those against whom we hold a grudge.

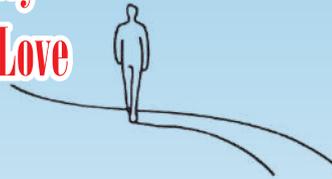
"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15).

- K. Satyanarayana, Kompally



Testimony

My New Journey in God's Love



My name is Srikanth. I was born into a Hindu family. When I was little, my parents used to worship our caste deity and idols. But after some time, they heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and believed in Him. So from the time I can remember, I used to go to church. However, there was no real change in my heart; I just lived the way I wanted to. My life continued like this until my first year of B.Tech.

College Life and Spiritual Turning Point

I got a seat for B.Tech at JNTUH. Even though admission was done,

I couldn't get a hostel right away, so through my brother's friend, I found out about a guy staying in a P.G. hostel there. That's how I went to their room and stayed there for about ten days. I can definitely say that was a major turning point in my life. Because if I hadn't stayed in that room, I wouldn't have met Panthu Anna, and maybe I wouldn't have personally accepted Jesus Christ.

Panthu Anna was my brother's friend's roommate. He used to talk

to me very lovingly and respectfully. After a few days, I joined the college hostel. One day, Panthu Anna took me to an EU prayer meeting. At first, I didn't understand what was going on there. After that, whenever Anna invited me to Bible study, I used to make excuses saying, "It's a waste of time, I could be studying instead," and dodge it. But Panthu Anna didn't give up on me and kept showing concern for me. That's how my first year of B.Tech ended.

Later, Panthu Anna introduced me to Sunil Anna. When Sunil Anna also invited me to Bible study, I went for the first time. The way they conducted the Bible study really impressed me. I was amazed thinking,

"Wow, they're explaining the Word so wonderfully!"

From then on, I started attending Bible studies regularly. Through the Word, I was able to deeply understand that He is the true God. That's where I learned about UESI.

Love and Support

I can proudly say there are two things I definitely gained in my student life: one is selfless love, and two is mentoring. The senior brothers showed immense love towards me. With that inspiration, they took me to e-camp. At that camp,

I fully understood that Jesus Christ is God and Savior. In 2018, right there, I confessed all my sins and accepted Jesus as my personal Savior.

After that, I attended DT and LT camps and learned how to read the Word, how to do PBS and GBS. That Christ-like love shown by the brothers helped me know God's immense love. By God's grace, while I was a student, I also participated in God's work for two years.

In 2020, during the severe COVID pandemic, my father fell ill with a lung disease and passed away in the hospital. Since it was COVID time, none of our relatives could come to console us. In such difficult times, the UESI family stood by us. The brothers came to our house and comforted us. Especially Brother Dasari Rajesh strengthened us so much during that time. I can never forget what my mother said on that occasion:

"At this time when even our own relatives couldn't come, your UESI family stood with us."

Through this incident, our family also directly experienced God's love.

Mentoring

'Mentoring' has been a crucial aspect in my life. I had great mentors who guided me both spiritually and

academically. Whenever I had any doubt, I used to share it with my mentor. I must especially mention Brother Sandeep Raj here. I used to ask him countless questions. He would patiently clear all my doubts. I also used to share my PBS, GBS, and quiet time matters with Anna; he would review them and correct me where necessary.

The brothers also encouraged me a lot in my studies. They taught me how to set priorities. Once, a brother told me this:

“
As a believer, I used to pray to be the top student in class.
”

Those words inspired me so much. I also started praying the same way. Amazingly, in one semester, I stood as the 'third topper' in my class. I couldn't believe it myself, but I understood it was the grace God bestowed upon me.

Career Guidance and Job

Along with education and spirituality, Brother Ravinder constantly guided me in the important decisions of my life regarding job and career. Without Anna's mentoring, I don't even know what state I would be in now.

After completing my B.Tech, I was preparing for GATE and government jobs for one year. After writing the GATE exam, Ravinder Anna called

me and scolded me saying, "Why are you wasting time on government jobs?" and advised me to try for software jobs. Following Anna's suggestion, I applied to companies like TCS, Infosys, and Cognizant.

After a few days, I got a rank in GATE, at the same time, I got a job offer at TCS, and interviews were scheduled at Infosys and Cognizant. When all these options were in front of me, I asked God, "What should I choose?" Then God spoke to me through the Word to go to TCS. So with Ravinder Anna's guidance and God's leading, I joined TCS.

Current Ministry

For the past four years, I've been working at TCS. By God's grace, I also got promoted to 'Team Leader'. I worked from home for the first 8 months. After that, due to project requirements, I had to stay in a hostel in Uppal for a few months. During that time, Ravinder Anna called me again and said, "We shouldn't stay away from ministry, we should stay attached," and introduced me to Ramanthapur zone.

The brothers in Ramanthapur welcomed me very lovingly. Since then, I've been actively participating in Ramanthapur EU and EGF programs, and God is helping me live even closer to Him spiritually.



Setting Healthy Boundaries

There was an EU student named Mayomi who was kind, capable, and well-liked. Everyone described her with one word: helpful. Mayomi never said no. If a friend needed notes, she shared them, even if it meant missing her own study time. If someone wanted to talk late at night, she listened, even when she was exhausted. Group projects, extra favors, last-minute requests, Bible studies, Christmas programs—Mayomi accepted them all, telling herself, "Being kind is more important."

Slowly, her days became crowded with other people's needs. Her phone buzzed constantly. Her study plans were interrupted again and again. When she tried to focus, guilt whispered, "If you don't help, you're selfish." So, she ignored her own limits.

As exams approached, Mayomi felt overwhelmed and anxious. She was always busy, yet never prepared. Her grades slipped—not because she lacked ability, but because she lacked boundaries. She gave everyone access to her time, energy, and attention—except herself. On exam day, her mind was tired. The knowledge was there, but her strength was gone. When the results were announced, Mayomi had failed. Her story illustrates a crucial truth: when we cannot set boundaries correctly, life spirals out of control.

Understanding Your Boundaries

To establish healthy boundaries, you must first increase your self-awareness and understand your primary calling from the Lord. You need to recognize your capabilities and limitations, acknowledging that

you have finite resources and cannot be everywhere at once. Be honest with yourself about who you are, what you want, and how you wish to be treated.

Remember:

Boundaries only frighten those who were never meant to remain in your life.

People around us can influence us to step beyond healthy limits. Yet Jesus Christ serves as our perfect role model. He never surrendered Himself to those attempting to control Him. When Jesus saw that the crowd was ready to force Him to be their king, He slipped away into the hills by Himself (John 6:15). Recognizing that people were pressuring Him to cross a healthy boundary, Jesus withdrew to the mountain for prayer.

When Christ is at the center, our boundaries remain intact. We understand our limits clearly from the Word of God, where His commands establish healthy boundaries. Studying Scripture helps us define these limits with confidence.

Healthy boundaries are not walls—they are gates and fences that allow you to enjoy the beauty of your own garden. One of life's greatest regrets is becoming what others want you to be rather than being yourself.

Boundaries don't limit your life; they expand it. Each time you set a healthy boundary, you say "yes" to greater freedom. Real freedom comes when we have the courage to say "no" to premarital sex, drugs, alcohol, and sinful choices.

Communicating Boundaries Respectfully

Once we know our boundaries clearly, we must learn to communicate them without hurting friends and family members. We need to express our boundaries frequently so others become aware of our values. Jesus frequently communicated that doing His Father's will was His highest priority (John 4:34, 5:19, 5:36). The Father's will served as Jesus' boundary, and He refused to cross it.

A healthy "no" leads to a more authentic "yes."

Setting boundaries requires being respectful, kind, and firm. Maintain a calm and neutral tone when establishing limits. Communicating this way increases the likelihood that others will be more open to hearing and understanding your boundary. Using an angry or accusatory tone will likely cause defensiveness and resistance.

If you have tried setting a boundary kindly and calmly but find that

someone is not responding, you can gradually increase the firmness of your request or the intensity of your "no." It is also important to adjust your communication style to match your audience. You may want more love and kindness when setting boundaries with a spouse, but more respect and neutrality when addressing your boss or coworkers.

Practical Phrases for Communicating Boundaries

- ✦ "I need time to study in the evenings."
- ✦ "I am not available on that day."
- ✦ "I feel overwhelmed when plans change at the last minute."
- ✦ "I would like to assist, but I need to focus right now."
- ✦ "I am glad to help another time, but today I need rest."
- ✦ "As I said, I am not available."
- ✦ "That doesn't work for me."
- ✦ "I understand, but my answer is still no."

Prioritizing Spiritual Health

There is always tension between pleasing people and pleasing the Lord. Pleasing the Lord blesses your spiritual health but may not always gain approval from those around you. There is a thin line between these two

priorities, and you need God's help for discernment.

We are not called to be popular by pleasing people, but to be faithful to the Lord. Which is easier: pleasing people or pleasing the Lord? Pleasing the Lord may appear difficult because results aren't immediate and His expectations are high. However, pleasing the Lord is ultimately more satisfying and achievable because His expectations are directly proportional to the abilities He has bestowed upon us. He never expects us to exceed our capacity.

"Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant." - Galatians 1:10

Paul makes it clear: you can please God or please people—you cannot do both. Personal well-being is stewardship, not selfishness. When you try to please people, your energy drains. You feel overwhelmed, exhausted, and tired, yet there will be no tangible spiritual outcome. Setting healthy boundaries helps us respect others' freedom while protecting our own.

Identifying Boundary Violations

A boundary violation occurs when someone ignores, dismisses, or

repeatedly crosses your stated or implied limits. Friends may become uncomfortable when you define and maintain your boundaries. They may make multiple attempts to pressure you into violating your established limits.

Boundary violations do not always come from external pressure; often, they arise from within when we ignore our own limits. When you sense pressure instead of peace, when you feel drained, resentful, or like a failure—these are internal signals indicating boundary violations. One sign of a violated boundary is the quiet, persistent feeling of guilt that follows.

As we are continually nurtured by the Word of God, we gain clarity and discernment to identify when boundaries are being violated. Scripture sharpens our conscience. When Samson moved away from God's Word, he lost the ability to discern danger, and boundary violations slowly led him into the enemy's trap.

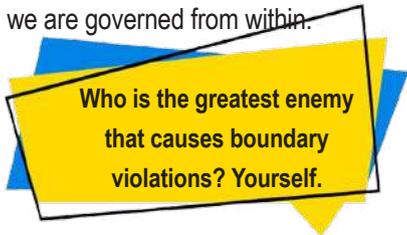
"Be careful to do what the LORD your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in obedience to all that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess." - Deu 5:32-33

Biblical Basis for Self-Control

Self-control is evidence of the Spirit's work within us. It is not mere self-discipline; it is Spirit-enabled restraint and wisdom—a fruit of the Spirit. A life filled with the Holy Spirit bears the fruit of self-control, which brings clarity and discernment about our boundaries.

We often succeed in managing others and circumstances but struggle with mastering our own hearts. While we try to control the world around us, we neglect the harder task: self-control. Human nature pushes us to control external things, but true spiritual maturity begins with self-mastery. It is easier to direct others than to discipline ourselves, yet Scripture calls us first to self-control.

Galatians 5:23 says self-control as the fruit of the Spirit, not the result of personality or power. Likewise, 1 Corinthians 9:27 shows Paul disciplining himself, not others. Here is the truth: it is easier to rule a city than to rule the self. But when the Holy Spirit rules our hearts, we no longer need to dominate others—because we are governed from within.



Self-control is how we guard what

enters our thoughts, emotions, and choices. "Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control" (Proverbs 25:28). Walls represent protection; without self-control, a life becomes exposed and vulnerable.

Social Media and Self-Control

Social media is designed to capture our attention, but self-control reminds us that our time belongs to God. We choose when to engage rather than being controlled by endless scrolling. Unchecked social media can lead to comparison, anxiety, lust, or anger. Self-control acts as a boundary that guards our thoughts and emotions.

Set rules to limit social media usage. Here are practical examples worth following:

- * No social media before Bible reading or prayer each day.
- * Use timers; when it rings, STOP.
- * No social media in bed, especially at night.

Conclusion

Healthy boundaries are not walls to shut people out, but God-given limits that protect what He has entrusted to us. When we communicate boundaries with grace and clarity, we honour both others and ourselves. Choosing spiritual health over people-pleasing is not selfish—it is faithful stewardship.

As we learn to recognize boundary violations and respond wisely, we walk in maturity rather than guilt or fear. Ultimately, the power to live this way comes from the Holy Spirit, who produces self-control and teaches us to steward our time, energy, and calling for God's glory.

Prayer
Lord, fill us afresh with Your Holy Spirit. Teach us to honour You with our boundaries, and give us the grace to live balanced, obedient, and fruitful lives. Amen.

– Suresh Arja, Warangal

* * * * *

January '26 Book of Ezekiel (21 - 22 Chapters)

Across:
1. KingofBabylon, 3. Despising, 6. Detestable, 9. Idols, 10. Sword, 12. Judgment, 13. Sanctuary, 14. Shedblood

Down:
2. Oppression, 4. Mockyou, 5. Jerusalem, 7. Lewdacts, 8. Slander, 11. Mywrath



Grain of Wheat Joseph Abhishek Rao

(1947–1971)

**UESI-AP Student
Movement Pioneer**

Joseph Abhishek Rao was the trailblazer who laid the foundation for the Union of Evangelical Students of India (UESI) student ministry in the united Andhra Pradesh state. Like a single "wheat grain" that transforms and falls into the ground, through his sacrificial life, he sparked a vast harvest among students across the Telugu states. His personal transformation, the strategic methods he followed, and his core leadership principles still guide us with our duties even today.

Early Life – Before Transformation

Born on October 15, 1947, in Rajahmundry, Joseph Abhishek Rao's life before accepting the Lord was on a completely different path. A woman who knew him described him as a "terrible person." Looking at the main characteristics of his earlier life—deceiving others, frequently lying, and stealing without remorse were his nature.

His behavior was so intense that people used to say, "Any girl going to college would be scared to walk on the road where this Joseph is around."

His conduct brought severe shame and pain to his parents, who had a good reputation in society. Despite this destructive behavior, his active participation in the Student Christian Movement (SCM), even holding a leadership position, clearly shows the contradiction in his life.

Highfield Camp – Life's Turning Point

The UESI camp at Highfield in Nilgiris in May 1966 permanently changed his life. After his parents moved from Rajahmundry to Vijayawada in 1965,

he joined Andhra Loyola College. Encouraged by his elder brother Israel Bhaskar Rao, who was working as an engineering lecturer in Delhi, he attended that camp. Joseph was the only student who attended that camp from all 23 districts of united Andhra Pradesh. Initially, he had no personal faith.

At the camp, he experienced intense intellectual and spiritual struggle. He argued fiercely with P.C. Varghese, a camp staff member. As an answer to the questions that arose within him about his sins and the possibility of forgiveness, Varghese showed him Isaiah 1:18:

— “
***Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow.***
” —

This verse touched his heart deeply. On the third day after the camp started, Joseph surrendered his life to Christ. In that moment, he transformed from "darkness" into a person filled with indescribable joy.

Life is Rebuilt

Immediately after returning from the camp, clear changes appeared in Joseph's life. His transformation wasn't just an emotional experience; it was clearly expressed in his actions. Like Zacchaeus, he decided to make amends for his past. He started repaying every person from whom he had taken money unjustly or caused harm.

Despite being unemployed, repaying

debts even through monthly installments demonstrated his new moral responsibility. His father used his reputation to get him a job at a tobacco company. However, believing that working in an industry that manufactures cigarettes harmful to people's health was contrary to his Christian principles, he unequivocally rejected that job.

Though this action angered his father, it proved how firm and uncompromising his new faith was. This new moral firmness and sacrificial determination wasn't limited to just personal change; it soon became the driving force behind the bold strategies he developed to reach the student world of Andhra Pradesh.

Visionary Strategist

Joseph Abhishek Rao's influence didn't stem just from his personal enthusiasm; it was the result of a systematic strategy built on three pillars: prayer, information, and fearless initiative. In an era without modern technology, he used planned and methodical approaches to build a student movement from scratch.

The Power of Prayer and Information

To launch a state-wide ministry, Joseph recognized the importance of information gathering and prayer. He created the "Andhra Pradesh Evangelical Fellowship Prayer Bulletin" for 1968-69. Keeping a map of Andhra Pradesh with him, he collected comprehensive information and statistics

about all the colleges in the state and compiled that data as a strategic prayer resource.

In that prayer bulletin, he attached a straightforward warning: "This bulletin is not for throwing in the trash can, but for persistent prayer," demanding active, prayerful accountability from each member.

Boldly Starting Student Groups

Joseph Abhishek Rao didn't just stop with prayer; he took the initiative and directly entered the field. His "penetration approach" played a key role in starting student groups. His method was to go to a new college, obtain a list of Christian students there, directly contact them, and ask them to start a Bible study.

Despite facing opposition for distributing Protestant pamphlets at Andhra Loyola College in Vijayawada, he continued his work undeterred.

Call to Full-Time Ministry

In February 1968, Joseph Abhishek Rao received a clear call from God for full-time ministry. Luke 4:18 touched his heart. God confirmed this call in three ways on the same Sunday: in his personal reading, in the pastor's sermon at church, and when the same verse was written on the blackboard at the library he visited. After this undeniable confirmation, he applied to join UESI staff. On July 21, 1969, the day man first set foot on the moon, Joseph Abhishek Rao was appointed as UESI staff—it was a historic moment for

student ministry in Andhra Pradesh.

Firm Determination, Single Focus

Joseph Abhishek Rao's leadership impact was not only in his methods but also in his personality. His leadership was a combination of core characteristics like intense focus, a strong sense of divine necessity, and complete dependence on prayer.

His friend Brother Dinabandhu described him as "a man of prayer, single focus, and a passionate worker." This single focus echoed in his words and prayers. Taking inspiration from John Knox's prayer for Scotland, he would challenge his friends:

"Give me Andhra or I die."

These words reveal the immense burden and passion he had for the students of Andhra Pradesh.

Sacrificial Service

Joseph Abhishek Rao viewed his ministry not as an ordinary job but as an urgent divine calling. When a colleague advised him not to take ministry so intensely, he prophetically replied: "How do I know how long I'll live? Therefore, I must do whatever I can right now."

This urgency was clearly visible in his work. Despite suffering from a chronic and painful ulcer, he traveled tirelessly without considering his health or comfort, establishing Bible studies in hostels.

Foundation Built on Prayer

The foundation for all of Joseph Ab-

hishek Rao's intense activities was his prayer life. His colleagues, especially Brother Vishal Mangalwadi, testified to his prayer commitment.

His routine began with prayer and ended with prayer. Every morning, before others woke up, he would be on his knees spending time in prayer and Scripture reading. Every night, he would kneel in prayer asking forgiveness for the works he had done in his ego during the day. His life was immersed in prayer, and his ministry was the fruit born from those prayers.

Abundantly Fruitful Seed

As stated in John 12:24, Joseph Abhishek Rao's life is a powerful example of a "wheat grain" that fell into the ground, died, and bore abundant fruit. Though his life tragically ended at just 23 years, the fruits of his ministry are clearly visible even today.

Joseph Abhishek Rao's influence becomes clear through the testimonies of those who worked with him. His life left an indelible mark on many. Then-staff member Brother Chand Pillai noted, "Rao showed in a very short time what a dedicated and enthusiastic servant of Christ should be like." Brother Satyakeerti Rao—they mentioned kneeling at Rao's grave and offering praises to God for his testimony of life.

From a Single Student to a Growing Movement

The greatest evidence of Joseph Abhishek Rao's persistent prayer is the growth of the movement he started. He began the journey as the only student who attended the UESI camp from all 23 districts of united Andhra Pradesh. Today, hundreds and thousands of students attend UESI camps and gatherings. This phenomenal growth is the direct result of Joseph Abhishek Rao's foundational work, tireless service, and intense prayers.

Conclusion

Joseph Abhishek Rao died on March 1, 1971, from a severe illness. His life, though tragically short, stands as an eternal testimony to transformational leadership. His legacy lies not in the number of years he lived but in the depth of his faith, the clarity of his vision, and in the enduring movement born from his sacrificial life that continues to bear fruit even today.

The seed he planted has truly yielded a vast harvest. I hope the life of Joseph Abhishek Rao can inspire all of us moving forward with the vision to reach the student world.

(The above article was collected from the book 'Grain of Wheat - Joseph Abhishek Rao's Biography' published by UESI Publication Trust and from internet resources)

**– Ruth Vinay, Pragathi Nagar,
Cyberabad**



Not to Run Away Bro... But to Run Forward

Life is like a race, bro. Sometimes it's so hectic you can barely catch your breath. Even when you're sitting down to eat or drink, your mind's racing with all the stuff you've gotta do. There's always this burning desire to hit your targets. And to reach those targets, you need a plan for each day. We write down all our tasks on a piece of paper, prioritize them with numbers, and stick it on the wall or door where we can see it. As we knock off each task, we put a tick mark next to it on the list... and when we've reached our target by the end of the day... that thrill is indescribable... it's honestly next level, bro!

"What exactly are you trying to do? Why are you telling me about your tasks? Why all this 'lecture' just to talk about your work?" - that's your doubt, right bro? Well, that's where the real fun is... in telling about it... in actually getting those tasks done, bro.

Oh my god! Why have I become like this? I'm talking exactly like in those reels. What I just explained about "how to do work" - I said it all while looking at myself

in the mirror, just for fun. Even though this all seems kinda funny, I'm just now realizing how deeply this 'reels' influence has affected me.

In the past, I used to plan things out, write them on paper, stick them on the wall or door, complete each task and tick them off. But now, that whole system has fallen apart.

There are sticky notes on the wall, plans staring at me, but they're not being put into action. Hours upon hours are flowing away like water just scrolling through reels. The more I watch, the more I want to watch - but stopping? That thought doesn't even cross my mind.

Interrupting my thoughts, I heard my mom's voice.

"Hey! How long are you gonna take to get ready? These days boys are taking hours and hours to get ready, just like girls!"

Startled by mom's call, I came out. "Mom, what - you called me? No wait... you yelled at me, I mean."

"Your dad's busy. Take me to the market on the scooter. We're completely out of

vegetables," she said with mild irritation.

"The scooter?" I asked, surprised.

"Yes, the scooter! I'm not getting on that bike of yours that sits up high like an ant's back. I don't even know how to get on it," she said quite angrily.

At the market, while mom was picking vegetables, she kept talking. She asked about my friends, studies, prayer life in such a friendly way, extracting all the information from me. That's mom's specialty. You don't even feel like you're being interrogated, but she finds out everything. I answered honestly too. But then I realized mom had noticed how many times I stayed up past midnight on my phone instead of sleeping.

Four days later...

"Look, son! What I've noticed about you lately is... you're on your phone for hours, laughing to yourself. Before, you only used your phone for studies, taking notes. But now I understand how you're using it at college, at the hostel. Whatever it is, using anything beyond what's necessary becomes harmful. I don't know what your spiritual condition is like. Since you've come home, I haven't seen you doing 'quiet time' or praying. First thing in the morning, that phone has become your whole world."

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." - Romans 5:8

"The thoughts and actions of sinful people are far from God's righteousness. Yet through His Son's death, He made arrangements so we could have a peaceful relationship with Him again. Because of this, we now have the opportunity for a good relationship with God, and also the hope of eternal life in the future," mom explained.

While mom was talking, I got caught watching reels on my phone. I put the phone aside and fell into thought, listen-

ing to what mom was saying. All of this was truth I already knew. I had believed that Jesus Christ died for my sins, asked for forgiveness, and accepted Him as my personal Savior. But somewhere, I'd gone off track.

Mom came back with some snacks to finish what she wanted to say. "Read Romans 1:30-31 on your phone itself," she said.

I started reading. Those verses revealed situations where people rejected God and walked in sinful ways they preferred, growing distant from God. The passage warned that even though they knew God's righteous decrees very well, they fearlessly walked against Him, doing things worthy of death.

"Look, son! Satan uses our weaknesses very strongly. He takes us little by little away from God, closer to himself. The book of Proverbs says, 'Where there is no vision, people perish.' The Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Those who forget that Word are as good as being without light. Those in darkness don't know where they are or where they're going," mom warned very seriously.

A strange heaviness filled my heart. "Mom! Will God forgive me?" I asked sadly.

"Why wouldn't He? He loves you as you are. He didn't give you salvation based on your goodness or your works. He gave it purely based on His grace and love. That love has no limits, no conditions."

Mom lovingly stroked my head and said:

This love forgives

Frees us from fear

Releases us from the bondage of sin

Gives hope and expectation in despair

"God didn't save us to fall down or to run away, bro... but to run forward in a way that's worthy of His calling!"

"Thanks, Mom," I said gratefully, holding both her hands.

- Chegudi Shyamala Kriparao

Teacher and Graduate, Rajendranagar Zone



Skills > Grades

Former President of India and the "Missile Man of India," Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, strongly advocated for a paradigm shift from a marks-focused system to one emphasizing skills. He believed that education should create thinkers, innovators, and doers—not just exam toppers.

By integrating practical competencies like creativity, problem-solving, and communication alongside academic rigor, he suggested dedicating as much as 25% of the curriculum to skill development to enhance employability and nation-building. He stressed that true learning leads to creativity, thinking, knowledge, and ultimately greatness, making usable skills vital for real-world success beyond grades.

“ The future belongs to those who learn more skills and combine them in creative ways.
— Robert Greene ”

The real issue facing today's youth is not a lack of employment opportunities, but rather a crisis of employability—the readiness of the workforce. This challenge stems from a "skills gap," or a disconnect between the theoretical knowledge job seekers possess and the specific competencies companies require. Despite high unemployment rates, employers frequently struggle to find "job-ready" talent, even when inundated with applica-

tions. Employability encompasses the skills, qualifications, and competencies that make individuals suitable for employment, blending education, training, work experience, and crucial soft skills such as communication, teamwork and problem solving.

1. Grades vs Skills

Grades matter—they open doors. Many companies shortlist candidates based on academic performance for initial exams, group discussions, or interviews. Your marks help you make a strong first impression before you have the chance to demonstrate your abilities. However, if you want to thrive in both work and life, the skills you carry through those doors matter far more. Employers increasingly hire people who can think clearly, communicate warmly, collaborate effectively, and adapt quickly.

2. Why Skills Matter More Than Grades

Grades measure how well you have learned content. Skills measure how well you can do things and how effectively you apply that learned content—to solve problems, lead teams, persuade stakeholders, innovate solutions, and care for people. In the marketplace, individuals who combine competence with character and collaboration are the ones trusted with responsibility.

In a world where automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are rapidly evolving, your value is no longer defined by your ability to memorize facts for a test. Instead, the demand is rising for things only humans can do.

- * **Automation:** AI can handle routine tasks, making uniquely human traits like Emotional In-

telligence (EQ) and creativity significantly more valuable.

- * **Rapid Change:** Constant technological shifts demand continuous learning and adaptability rather than static knowledge.
- * **Real-World Impact:** Employers seek individuals who can apply knowledge, collaborate, and solve complex problems, not just recall information.

3. Top Soft Skills Employers Actually Seek

The "Next-Gen Skillset" highlights a necessary pivot from traditional academic scores to practical, future-proof abilities. Success in a rapidly changing world often supersedes rote memorization, favoring critical thinking, digital literacy, and resilience.

- * **Communication:** This involves clear writing, persuasive speaking, and listening with empathy. Success depends on how you present your ideas to the world. You must learn to "sell yourself" and your concepts, building a portfolio of actions rather than just a resume of words.
- * **Problem-Solving / Critical Thinking:** Move beyond remembering information to diagnosing issues, weighing options, and making decisions in real-time.
- * **Technological Literacy:** Comfort with digital tools, AI interaction, and understanding new interfaces is essential.
- * **Emotional Intelligence (EQ):** Managing emotions, demonstrating empathy, and handling conflict are important. In an AI world, EQ is crucial when dealing with humans.

- * **Teamwork & Collaboration:** Working across differences and committing to shared goals is vital. Notably, 86% of workplace failures are attributed to a lack of effective collaboration.
- * **Adaptability & Resilience:** Adjusting to new circumstances, technologies, and chaotic schedules while learning quickly.

4. Practical Ways to Develop Critical Thinking

You can cultivate these essential skills through daily habits:

- * **Ask better questions:** For every lecture or reading, write down probing questions rather than just notes.
- * **Practice “thinking aloud” with peers:** Form a 30-minute weekly discussion group where one person presents a short problem, and others ask clarifying questions to test assumptions.
- * **Do short case studies:** Pick a news item, a technical problem, or an ethical dilemma. Spend 20–30 minutes mapping causes, identifying stakeholders, and proposing three viable solutions with pros and cons.
- * **Write a 300-word reflection:** After solving a problem, document what you did, why you did it, what worked, and what failed. Over months, you will see patterns and growth.
- * **Use the “Red Team” method:** Privately argue against your own preferred solution to spot blind spots faster.
- * **Pray for wisdom:** As said in James 1:5, practice discernment to differentiate truth from noise.

5. Value of Teamwork and Collaboration

Teamwork and collaboration are

foundational 21st-century skills that directly translate to workplace success, often outweighing individual technical talent. Demonstrating these abilities indicates that a candidate can navigate complex work environments, manage interpersonal relationships, and contribute meaningfully to shared goals.

6. Using College and Church/Ministry Tasks to Practice These Skills

We can practice these skills within our college environment through group projects, technical presentations, participation in student committees, writing for college magazines, and utilizing labs for programming. Furthermore, we can refine these skills in our churches and student fellowships (like UESI/EGF) by utilizing our God-given gifts.

Personal Testimony:

Before being introduced to the UESI ministry, I struggled with an inferiority complex stemming from poor communication skills, my background, and my appearance. When I was saved by God’s grace and began getting involved in ministry, I understood the true value of my life—that I am precious in God’s sight. This realization helped me overcome my inferiority complex. I realized my identity is in the Lord, and I am valuable because I belong to the Creator of the universe.

I started attending group Bible studies, camps, and conferences. I went to North India as Tentmaker. I took opportunities to lead Bible studies, organize camps, coordinate with students and graduates, and invite friends to gospel meetings. God entrusted me with responsibilities like EU Treasurer, Secretary and Student Member in the State Committee.

Through these activities, God shaped me in stewardship, commu-

nication, interpersonal skills, problem-solving, teamwork, and cultural understanding.

These life skills remain vital in my professional life today. For example, during campus selections at NIT-Warangal, I was never eliminated during group discussions. This was largely because I had practiced maintaining eye contact, sharing ideas, and leading groups effectively during Group Bible Studies.

7. Skills for the Expansion of God's Kingdom

Viewing skills through the lens of Kingdom service transforms ordinary tasks into acts of worship and amplifies one's impact for God. Effective service involves leveraging both God-given spiritual gifts and practical, developed skills to build up the church and minister to others.

- * **Fundamental Spiritual Attitudes:** Servant mentality, stewardship of gifts, humility, integrity, and dependence on God.
- * **Practical Leadership & Ministry Skills:** Clear communication and listening, team building and empowerment, conflict resolution, administrative organization, and strategic planning.

8. Conclusion

Academic excellence and grades may help us enter classrooms and interview rooms, but it is skills that sustain us, shape us, and send us forward. In a world driven by automation, AI, and global collaboration, employability is no longer about certificates alone—it is about character, competence, and the capacity to learn continuously. As Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam emphasized, true education produces thinkers, innovators, and contributors to society, not merely exam achievers.

Developing skills such as critical

thinking, communication, emotional intelligence, and teamwork bridges the gap between theory and practice, transforming learners into leaders.

These skills are not acquired overnight, nor are they confined to corporate training rooms. They are cultivated daily in classrooms, group discussions, projects, ministry involvement, and service opportunities.



When viewed through the lens of faith, skill development gains an even deeper purpose. Our abilities are not just tools for career success, but gifts entrusted to us by God for serving others and advancing His kingdom. By intentionally building a next-generation skillset and aligning it with God's purpose, we become not only job-ready but life-ready—equipped to make a lasting impact in the workplace, society, and the Kingdom of God.

"Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men" (Proverbs 22:29).

God filled them with skill to do all kinds of work (Exodus 35:31-35).

"Whatever you find to do with your hands, do it with all your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

So, let's not focus on our weakness. Instead, let's develop our skills relying on God's enabling power, and use them for His glory and the expansion of His kingdom.

– U. Joseph, Ghatkesar



Why Urban Students' Ministry?

"If you want to reach the next generation, reach the city. If you want to reach the culture, reach the city. If you want to reach the world, reach the city."— Dr. Tim Keller

Urban students are young people (typically age 17-25) pursuing higher education in cities or metropolitan areas. These students are shaped by the unique social, cultural, and spiritual dynamics of urban life. They live in a fast-paced environment characterised by diversity, mobility, and complexity. This section of the Indian student population is exposed to and influenced by western media and ideologies.

Understanding Urban Students

Urban students are exposed to a pluralistic worldview, relativism, and hyperconnectivity. They are influenced by global pop culture, social media trends, and consumerism. Often, they are pressured by performance

expectations, loneliness, and mental health struggles. While spiritually curious, they remain sceptical of institutional religion, longing for authenticity, community, and purpose.

Key Concepts

- * **Pluralistic worldview:** The belief that multiple independent realities, beliefs, and groups coexist.
- * **Relativism:** The philosophical idea that truth, knowledge, and morality are not absolute but are instead relative to an individual, culture, or historical context.
- * **Hyperconnectivity:** The state of being constantly interconnected through digital technology, where people, devices, and data are

linked in real-time through the internet.

- * **Global pop culture:** The world wide exchange and adoption of cultural products, trends, and ideas, such as music, fashion, and entertainment, facilitated by technology and media.

Urban City Influence

Cities are sources for inventions, revolutions, art, music, politics, business, and communication. They serve as hubs for innovation, with current inventions largely focused on developing "smart city" technologies that improve efficiency, sustainability, and quality of life for residents. These modern inventions leverage data and technology to manage urban systems more effectively. Cities are focal points for various kinds of "revolutions", which can be broadly categorised into ongoing societal and technological shifts (everyday life) and historical political uprisings.

Ongoing Urban Revolutions

- * **Culturally:** "The 21st century will not be dominated by America or China or Brazil or India but by the city. In an age that appears increasingly unmanageable, cities, rather than nations, are becoming the islands of governance on which the future world order will be built. Time, technology, and population growth have massively

accelerated the advent of this new urbanised era. Already more than half the world lives in cities; that percentage is growing rapidly. Just 100 cities account for 30% of the world's economy and almost all of its innovation."

* Missiological Perspective

Cities are strategic for four key reasons:

1. **Next Generation:** If you want to reach the next generation, reach the city.
 2. **Unreached People:** The most unreached people in the world are more reachable in cities. If you want to reach the most unreached people, go to cities.
 3. **Influencers:** The people who tend to make the films, write the books, and do the business deals are in cities; the people who have the biggest impact on culture are here.
 4. **The Poor:** One-third of the world's people are moving to cities, and many are poor. God loves and cares for poor people.
- * **Viscerally:** In Jonah chapter 4, God loves people and cities more than plants. 300 years ago, 3% of the population lived in cities, but now 50% of the population live in cities. It is estimated that 8 million people move into cities every two months.

Why Urban Students Are Important

Urban students contribute to a city's economic and social development, and their educational environments often provide more opportunities for academic and professional growth. They benefit from greater access to advanced resources, a wider range of extracurriculars, cultural diversity, and professional networking opportunities, which helps them develop into critical thinkers and engaged citizens.

- * **Higher educational attainment:** They have higher academic performance, which is partially explained by factors like access to better resources and more advanced infrastructure.
- * **Future leaders:** They are positioned to become future leaders in business, science, and the arts, as they are more likely to have access to top universities and major corporations often located in urban areas.
- * **Economic contribution:** They make economic contributions as educated individuals in urban areas, helping to grow GDP per capita and filling jobs in the service sector.
- * **Social and cultural importance:** Campuses are often diverse environments, exposing students to a wide range of cultural perspectives

and fostering tolerance and understanding.

- * **Critical thinking:** Educational environments in cities can promote critical thinking and encourage participation in collective decision-making processes, which is vital for urban governance.
- * **Rich experiences:** Urban students bring a unique set of experiences and knowledge to the classroom that is often different from their rural counterparts, enriching the learning environment for everyone involved.

Challenges of Urban Students

Students are often pressured by performance expectations, loneliness, and mental health struggles. They are spiritually curious but sceptical of institutional religion, longing for authenticity, community, and purpose.

- * **Identity confusion:** Who am I? What are my values in a shifting world?
- * **Isolation:** Despite being “connected”, many are emotionally alone.
- * **Moral ambiguity:** No clear right or wrong, just personal preference.
- * **Burnout culture:** Pressure to excel academically, socially, and professionally.
- * **Spiritual apathy or superstition:** Mixing religion and spirituality without truth.

The need of the hour

“The urban student is caught between modernity and tradition, consumerism and conscience, apathy and activism. That’s why the gospel must be contextualised, bold and relational.”

- Ajith Fernando.

Challenges to Reach Urban Populations

1. The city is multicultural. We must be extremely patient with constant changes of cultural insensitivity.
2. Cities must show people how their faith relates to their work and their vocation.
3. You must help and must be open to disorder and change.
4. Ministry must be intensely evangelistic and famous for its concern for justice at the same time.
5. There must be commitment to the arts.
6. Churches or organisations must be cooperative with other churches or organisations.

Vision of UESI Urban Ministry

“To facilitate UESI constituency and the church at large in relevantly reaching every urban student with the gospel and to make them disciples of our Lord Jesus in line with the vision and aims of UESI”.

Objectives

To fulfil the following primarily, but not limited to, among the UESI constituency:

1. To create awareness about the urgent need for ministry among the urban students at local, state and national levels.
2. To conduct research and develop responses to suit the changing cultural, political, and social realities among the urban students in India.
3. To provide appropriate and contemporary training (in consultation with the Training Department) to the constituency on methods and methodologies of reaching and disciple-making among the urban students.
4. To create resources useful for reaching urban students (data base of speakers, white papers, notes, manuals, books, audio/visual resources, internet-based resources, and equipment, etc.).
5. Networking with other organisations for reaching urban students.

References

1. Urban City - Dr. Tim Keller
 2. Not Beyond Reach - Mr. Aaron Pierce
- Dr. B. Vishal Raja Zacharias**
Secretary, Urban and Premier,
Telangana

Touch Me

Touch me while I am asleep
And awaken me to Your truth Oh Lord
For many times I fail to acknowledge
Your presence.

In the midnight hour touch me
To meditate upon Your word
And to commune with you!

Oh the splendor of delight to
Awaken to Your touch
To be renewed as the morning
Dew upon the grass of the field.

Touch me Oh Lord continuously
That I may never forget
In You I live, move, and breathe!

Touch me that I may know You
In the power of Your might
And receive Your Resurrection Power!

- Margaret C Mullings



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