

Dear CCF Family,

I cannot believe that I am finally one of the graduating seniors giving my advice to our community. I am so humbled by this community and the amount of love that it holds in my heart. This community has by far been the best and most impactful part of my time at Western. When I came to Western, I was terrified that I wouldn't find any Christian community. Thanks to Jesus and some of his faithful CCF servants, the complete opposite was true. I was immediately embraced and accepted by our community. God completely turned my life around. I once was a girl who didn't ever think that she could have a personal relationship with Christ, who didn't know what true friendship was, and who believed that she could never show her true self. I am now someone who is passionately in love with Christ, who values true friendship above almost everything else, and who is confident in the person that Christ made her to be, and that is because of this community. So, thank you CCF. Thank you for those who went before, thank you for those who have ministered to me in my time here, and thank you to those who will carry on the ministry for others.

I have learned so much while being in this community. I could probably talk for hours about all the things this community has taught me. Seriously guys, we are so blessed to have all the resources CCF provides. But here are some of my biggest takeaways. First, God is an extremely intentional God. He loves and cares for us so much. None of the things that happen in our lives happen by accident. Whether good or bad, our God works everything that happens in our life into the best plan for us. Second, during my time in CCF I learned that stepping out of my comfort zone is a GOOD thing. As a girl who loves her comfort zone, this was and is a hard thing to take in. But, some of my greatest moments of growth and intimacy with the Lord came when I had to rely on him because I was outside of my comfort zone (This also applies to change). Last, I have learned the importance of trust and faith. God has an amazing plan for each of our lives, but sometimes that plan looks VERY different from what we ever imagined. I have learned that in the moments where life is headed in a completely different direction than you planned, when you are stuck in a cycle of pain that seems debilitating, or when you feel lost and confused, having faith in our God will pull you through. I faced many battles that I thought would never be won. But when I trusted in the Lord, I saw his faithfulness in amazing ways.

Now, as I look back at my time in CCF here are some things I would like to encourage you to do. First this community wasn't created and sustained by accident. It was created by intentional people who took their call from God seriously. You will get out of this community what you put into it. If you want to be a part of a committed community, that loves people, and serves the Lord with everything they have, then you need to be a committed person, that loves the people in this community and serves they Lord with everything that you have. Guess what? Your corefas, staff, and other official leaders are not the only ones that are called to serve. God calls all of us to serve. If you ever doubt your ability to contribute to this community, just show up! I guarantee that God will use in incredible ways if you just show up and are willing. Make Jesus your priority. School is important, it's why we are here. But, Jesus is more important. When you focus your sight on God, you allow for him to transform your life in radical ways. But that starts with putting Jesus and his people above all else. Last, **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO TRY SO HARD**. When life seems hard or overwhelming, stop and turn your eyes to Jesus. Remember that you are a dearly loved child. At every moment, God is pursuing you with his everything. You do not have to fight your battles. When you focus on the battles before you they can seem too big to win. Instead focus on the victories that God has given you in the past and rest in the promise of God's faithfulness to carry you through the next battle. Declare the truth of the Lord over yourself every day. The words spoken in the Bible are God's words for you. If you cannot hear his voice, it can always be found there. He loves you more than you can ever imagine. Pursue the him with your everything and he will pursue you right back.