





This is the season for graduation and commencement. It is also the time to honor educators who taught and nurtured students to prepare them for the next level of their education.

God has a lot to say about beginnings, new beginnings, dedications, commencements and invocations.

Graduation and commencement are the beginning of a new era or season for your life. We most often recognize this with graduation from high school and college. This truth is also connected to Imago Dei, the image of God within you. We also have "kindergarten

graduation," but we know that is for encouragement. In fact, five years olds do not graduate.

This truth is also connected to Imago Dei, the image of God within you. Only people, who are made in the image and likeness of God, have the power to commence, begin, or invoke.

We also have commencements, beginnings, and new beginnings, in items such as marriage, new jobs, relocation, military training, becoming a registered voter, ministry licensing and ordination, and many other milestones that change your trajectory.

Commencement is also connected to **Imago Dei,** the image of God within you.

Only people, who are made in the image and likeness of God, have the power to commence, begin, or invoke.

An Invocation and a Doxology Psalm 67:1

God be merciful to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us, Selah 2 That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations. 3 Let the peoples praise You, 0 God; Let all the peoples praise You. 4 Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, And govern the nations on earth. Selah

An Invocation and a Doxology (an expression of praise and prayer to God) from Psalm 67:1;

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shall bless us. 7 God shall bless us, And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

An Invocation and a Doxology Psalm 67:5

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Why is graduation called "commencement?" The word reflects the meaning of the Latin inceptio – a "beginning" – and was the name given to the initiation ceremony for scholars in medieval Europe. The original college degree certified that the bearer could instruct others in a given academic discipline. As part of the graduation ritual, which usually included a feast given by the graduate as a thank you to his professors and friends, the newly-minted scholar delivered his first lecture as a legitimate teacher. Commencement, then, means "commencing to teach."

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Genesis 1:1, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

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Genesis 1:1-3, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness [a]was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

Genesis 1:1 באשִׁית rê'shîyth, (ray-sheeth'); This word means **the first, in time, order or rank.**This word **beginning** doesn't have the same meaning as we use for commencement today. Closest word to commencement in the Bible is the word beginning.

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Genesis 13:1-4

Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the South. 2 Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. 3 And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been **at the beginning**, between Bethel and Ai, 4 to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the Lord.

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Genesis 13:1-4 (YLT)

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In education, it is the occasion when degrees are conferred by colleges and universities upon students and others. The graduation ceremony itself is also sometimes called: commencement, convocation or invocation. Anything that begins has a moment of commencement. That's why a graduation ceremony is called a commencement — a graduate is embarking on a new life, and the commencement ritual marks the official beginning of that life.

The baccalaureate ceremony originates to 1432 at Oxford University where each bachelor was required to deliver a sermon in Latin as part of an academic exercise, according to the Net Glimpse Internet Web site, which deals with the history of ritual ceremonies.

Today, each graduating student need not give a sermon; an educator associated with the university or a guest well respected by the school now does it.

The traditional graduation dress of cap and gown started in the 13th and 14th centuries when universities began forming throughout Europe, Cooper said. The graduation cap and gown date back to England. In the late 1800s, colors were assigned to signify certain areas of study.

While medieval universities initially inspired the academic dress, the first recognized schools that officiated graduation attire were Oxford and Cambridge. By 1321, they forbade "excessive apparel" in universities requiring everyone to wear long gowns during ceremonies to create unity.



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For Christ followers, invocation is also important as it recognizes the hand of God on your commencement. We think of implication as the prayer offered during the ceremony. It is better to think of the entire ceremony as an invocation, since we look to God for blessing and guidance.



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For 2020 many people graduated but did not get a formal commencement ceremony because of COVID. But it is not the ceremony that denotes the commencement. Recognition of the completion of the requirements is the commencement. Your ceremony is public recognition of the completion. For me, I completed a doctor of ministry degree July of 2020 from a Bible college in Georgia, but they canceled all commencement exercises during COVID. They also canceled this year because of the logistical problems of people coming from different parts of the country.

My recognition came in the form of a letter and announcement on the Bible college Facebook page. That was my commencement without a ceremony. I already experienced commencement ceremonies for my Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Science and Master of Education degrees at IUPUI an IU Bloomington.

Not having a ceremony would have been disappointing if I did not know what I had accomplished and that I had commenced when the work was completed and the recognition was sent.

We should not think of education solely as academic vs. non-academic.

We must also be mindful that education too often plays into class and caste distinctions

Let me share my thoughts on expectations for commencement at different academic levels. There are other significant educational experiences such as vocational disciplines.

We should not think of education as academic vs. nonacademic. We must also be mindful that education too often plays into class and caste and distinctions. Our education model came from Europe, which has long been steeped in classism with noblemen vs peasants, royals vs. commoners, and such.

Caste: one of the classes into which the Hindu people of India were formerly divided \cdot 2: a division or class of society based on wealth, rank

Class: socioeconomic status

So we have to guard against treating people with greater or lessor value, even though person's abilities and skills will vary greatly.



Education levels:

High School diploma: Commence as a committed learner, having learned how to learn.

Associates & Bachelor: Commence as a skilled practitioner in the area of your study

Master: Commence with specialized knowledge to advance in your

field

Doctorate:

Education levels (western society):
Doctorate: Research & Professional
Research Doctorates: Ph.D. & Ed.D, Th.D.
Commence as doing original and applied research that tests theory and adds to the existing knowledge in their particular field or discipline.

Research doctorates: Ph.D. & Ed.D, Th.D. - Commence as doing original and applied research that tests theory and adds to the existing knowledge in their particular field or discipline.

Professional doctorates: Business (DBA), Public Health (DrPH), Nursing Practice (DNP), Psychology (PsyD), Health Administration (DHA), Public Administration (DPA), and Social Work (DSW) Ministry (DMin) Commence with exceptional competency and knowledge as a practitioner in your field, focused primarily on applying existing theories and knowledge to solving a real-world problem.

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Research doctorates: Ph.D. & Ed.D, Th.D. - Commence as doing original and applied research that tests theory and adds to the existing knowledge in their particular field or discipline.

My degree, Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) in pastoral leadership, is a professional degree, not a research degree such as Ph.D. My degree did not require a dissertation. It did require a major DMin project. My project became the book "Biblical and Social Justice: What is it?, that included qualitative research

Everyone's graduation education path is different and unique. People

who become researchers opt for Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) People who seek to increase knowledge and expertise in their current field opt for professional doctorates. Typically, people who earn research doctorates are customarily called "doctor" because of the extraordinary amount of research accomplished with a dissertation. Using the title doctor is less common for persons with professional doctorates, though it is not unacceptable and the work accomplished was extensive and demanding. Will more about types of doctor degrees later.

A doctorate from a dedicated Bible school is a different path from a traditional academic institution, secular of Christian. Regardless of what people may think about your path for your path, the question is have you commenced on a new level?

Education in the Bible

Exodus 35:30 And Moses said to the children of Israel, "See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; 31 and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship, 32 to design artistic works, to work in gold and silver and bronze, 33 in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of artistic workmanship.

Education in the Bible

Exodus 35:34 And He has put in his heart **the ability to teach**, in him and Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. 35 He has filled them with skill to do all manner of work of the engraver and the designer and the tapestry maker, in blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine linen, and of the weaver—those who do every work and those who design artistic works.

Commence and Invoke

- 1. Stand in your space. Earn and demand respect
- 1 Timothy 4:12 "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity."
- 2. Commit Yourself to God

Proverbs 16:3 "Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed."

Commence and Invoke

3. Trust the Lord more than your own understanding. Honor the Lord

Proverbs 3:5-10 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."

Commence and Invoke 4. Work for God, not only for people Colossians 3:23 "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men." 5. You were built for purpose Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

2021 Graduates

Congratulations!

Your college degree is evidence of knowledge, personal organization for learning (no one FORCED YOU to do anything), as well as a commitment to inquiry, excellence, and lifelong learning. Your degree is neither a shortcut in life nor an emblem of privilege. You still have to become skillful in your field and earn the professional respect of people who know and do more than you.

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To high school graduates: Good job, but THEY MADE you do it! You've just finished learning how to learn. Don't settle. #GoForward