



READY.

SET.

NEXT.

THE JOURNEY AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

BY CHUCK BOMAR



simply for students

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to everyone who is open to being who
God has called them to be.

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START HERE

AN INTRODUCTION

You have a lot to think about right now.
But this book wasn't written to give you a bunch of information.

This book is about helping you think, for yourself.
This book is about following the journey of a few people who are in the same season of life that you're in right now.

John, Amy, and Chloe—all three of them, like you, are at a pivotal point of life.

It's a sort of fork in the road for them.
This is where life directions are chosen and lessons are learned.

Whether or not you feel ready for this next phase of life, there are likely a lot of things you have yet to think through. That's why getting a glimpse into the lives and struggles and questions of John, Amy, and Chloe can be helpful.

You will identify with certain parts of their lives.
And you will likely find things in their stories that are different from you.
But I believe you can learn from both sides of that fence.

Nobody has all this figured out, so I'm sure you have hesitations and concerns about life after high school, much like the characters

in the following pages have.
But there is much to be excited about.
And even more to process through.

Life is about to surprise you in many ways. Some things you will definitely enjoy—and others will shockingly slap you in the face.

But this book isn't filled with a bunch of do's and don'ts for you to follow.

This is just a look into the journey of three people in their first few years after high school.

My hope is that this book helps you think, perhaps a little differently and more intentionally, about a few areas of your life.

I'll first introduce you to John...

CHAPTER 1

THERE'S A LOT TO THINK ABOUT

PROFILE: JOHN

Age: 17

Year: High school senior

Sport: Baseball

Parents: Divorced

Car: 1978 BMW 320i

Genre of music: Pretty much anything but country

Paused on iTunes: Drake—“Hold On, We’re Going Home”

Quirk: Genius thing with math

Wants to: Own his own business

Pet peeve: Getting his socks wet

Messages

Stephan

Contact

Stephan

Dude, ur about to graduate!

John

Yep, catchin up to u

Stephan

Excited?

John

To get out the house? Yep.

Stephan

Ha! Mom drivin you nuts?

John

Dad too. They r worried about EVERYTHING. Ask SO MANY questions! Ugh

Stephan

Hang in there bro. They did that w me too. They will come around

John

I'll call later. Peace.

Stephan

K

Send

John and Stephan didn't always get along when they were younger, but these days John loves talking with his big brother. Stephan is such a perfect sounding board. He lives a few hours away from the family, and he has a solid idea of what John's about to face because he's gone through a bunch of his own big transitions in life—some smooth, many rocky.

It's not like graduating from high school will be John's first big transition. His parents divorced when he was 8. That was rough. He lives with his mom, but he still spends a lot of time with his dad. Things are better than they used to be. But his life is far from perfect.

John respects his parents—a lot. He knows they love him and want the best for him, but they keep asking him a ton of questions he can't answer yet. Both his mom and dad want him to go to a “good school,” but he isn't convinced. In fact, he thinks it's kind of a waste of money at this point. He doesn't even know what he wants to do with his life yet. His girlfriend's parents seem to be a lot more chill about this whole college thing than his parents are. And her parents seem to have a much more practical view of how much money it would cost.

Ahh yes, his girlfriend. John's a popular guy at school, with a lot of friends, and everyone likes him—but especially Sasha, who's also a senior. They've been dating for about seven months, and each week he seems to learn something new about how their families are so, well, *different* from each other.

Sasha's parents seem to be handling everything so much better—and that gets John even more annoyed with *his* parents. It's super frustrating, but he can't really talk to them about what he wants to do after high school because it always seems to turn into an argument. They just keep reminding him of all the things he is *not* doing—all the stuff he still has to finish before graduation.

John finds himself just wanting to be on his own. He feels like he needs some space. More freedom would be nice.

It's not that John doesn't understand that a lot of things in his life are about to change. He gets it, and he *is* excited for the change. It just seems like his parents don't think he realizes *just how much* things are gonna change.

This all came to the surface one morning last week. John was sitting at the island in the kitchen, eating a bowl of Lucky Charms. His mom walked in, poured coffee into her favorite mug, leaned against the island, looked him straight in the eye, and asked, "Are you doing OK?"

"Yeah, I'm fine," John replied. He wanted to say, "Don't interrogate me like I've just been arrested." But he didn't.

His mom poured French Vanilla creamer into her coffee. John wasn't convinced she believed that he really was fine.

"Hey, I was thinking," she said. "Maybe tonight we could look over some of the dorm orientation stuff together."

“I’d rather not,” John said. He couldn’t hide his obvious frustration. Discussing dorm orientation stuff with his mom sounded as fun as pulling out a fingernail with a pair of pliers. Well, not really, but it was just about the last thing he wanted to do—especially after a full day of school and then baseball practice.

“Well, you may not want to,” she said, “but you should know what’s going on. I mean, do you know what the meal plan is like, or what you’re supposed to do before you move in, or how they choose your roommate?”

“No. And, truthfully, Mom, I don’t really care right now.”

“I think you should care. There’s a lot to think about. Well, just know that I’d like to talk about it tonight, OK?”

“Sure,” John mumbled as he got up and walked over to the sink.

This wasn’t a new discussion. It seemed like John was having this kind of conversation all the time with each parent. They kept getting on him over every little detail about what he was going to do in a few months. He just figured everything would work itself out. From his perspective, his parents were freaking out. Because that’s what parents do, right?

John went to school and then baseball practice. When he got home, he grabbed four Oreo cookies from the pantry and headed to his room. He opened his laptop and scrolled through Facebook to see what all his friends were up to. One particular post caught

his eye, from a friend who graduated from his school a year earlier. As John read it, he started to get a little overwhelmed...



Suddenly and unexpectedly, John got even more nervous. He opened another tab in his browser and searched for “Stress in college students.” He didn’t immediately click on any of the links. He didn’t have to. Just seeing the summaries for the endless list of links was totally overwhelming. He decided to check out some of the links, and he quickly realized that stress was a huge issue in college—and for everyone making the jump from high school into a new season of life, whatever path they choose.

He closed the laptop, stood up, and went and plopped down on his bed. All sorts of thoughts crossed through his mind...

What’s my roommate going to be like?

Am I gonna lose Sasha by moving to another town?

None of my friends are going to the same school.

I gotta talk to my dad about how we are gonna pay for all this.

Maybe I should get a job.

I’m super bummed I can’t take my car as a freshman.

John was beginning to realize that life after high school wasn’t going to really be what he thought, hoped, or expected. But did that mean it was something to fear?

READY. SET. NEXT.

Take some time to process through what you envision life after high school will be like for you. Maybe write out your thoughts on a page or two, or summarize things in a few bullet points. You might even want to chart out what you think the schedule for a typical week might look like. Consider the following questions:

- 1. What are some specific things that excite you about life after high school?**
- 2. What are some specific things about this next season of life that make you a little nervous?**
- 3. What is one specific dream you have about your first year after high school?**
- 4. What are some unanswered questions you have?**
- 5. What do you think will be the biggest, toughest transition you'll face?**

LIFE IS ABOUT TO SURPRISE YOU IN MANY WAYS.

Some things you will definitely enjoy—and others will shockingly slap you in the face. Welcome to life after high school.

Using three fictional characters whose stories resemble yours, *Ready. Set. Next.* will help you gear up for these critical years that will shape your faith, your relationships, and your direction in life.

Author Chuck Bomar served as a college pastor for many years, so he's helped countless young adults discover how to identify top priorities after graduation, understand the changes in friendships and family relationships, and pursue God's plans and purposes.

It's OK that you don't have this all figured out—you've got time. And there are so many reasons to be excited about life after high school. Use this book as a guide, a companion, and a compass as you think a little differently and a little more intentionally about this incredible season of life.



CHUCK BOMAR planted and serves as lead pastor of Colossae Church in Portland, Oregon. He's written more than a dozen small group resources and eight books, including *Better Off Without Jesus* and *Losing Your Religion*. When he is not traveling the country speaking at conferences or consulting with church or denominational leaders, he is home with his family, the place he loves to be more than any other. Chuck and his wife, Barbara, have three beautiful daughters: Karis, Hope, and Sayla.



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