

A Surprising Pathway

By Martha Perkins

If I had been told four years ago that I would be graduating from college with a degree in camping, I would have said, "Thanks, but no thanks."

At that time the second semester of my senior year in high school was coming to an end, and I still had no idea where I was going, or what I was doing with my life.

I was interested in music, singing, and drama. I had always loved the outdoors and physical activity, but at the time I thought my passion was the performing arts. I was also interested in at least one year of Bible College somewhere, just to start before making more permanent plans. For most of my life I had been familiar with Appalachian Bible College and thought it was a good school, but just not for me. However, God had other plans, so, after much prayer, I decided to follow the advice of a close friend, and decided to head to ABC for one year, then see what happened from there. Little did I know that God had some great surprises in store for me.

I started my first semester in the missions program. I figured that was the best route at the time, since I really didn't know what specific career path to follow. I plunged into school choir, the English hand bell choir, and the drama team. They were great programs, but all the things that I thought I had been so passionate about were slowing losing their zeal.

Not long into the semester the ministries of Alpine Adventures, an extension of the college, was brought to my attention. I was immediately intrigued by the thought of guiding campers, youth groups, and retreats in activities such as caving, hiking, paintballing, rappelling, and whitewater rafting, yet the biggest obstacle in front of me was that I had no experience. The more I prayed about it, the more I realized that it was something that I really wanted to do and changed from the mission program to

the camping program. I had also considered joining the Gospel Heralds, the college's traveling summer music group, but after much prayerful consideration, the Lord lead me to work for Alpine Adventures for the summer, and I've been there every summer since, and have gained experience in all the activities and elements involved with adventure camping.

My freshman year turned out to be full of changes, but I would not have had it any other way. In the camping program, I have taken such exciting skills classes as high and low ropes, high angle rescue, adventure based counseling, backpacking, outdoor leadership, and orienteering. These are just a few of the classes that helped form a unique, experience-based education, and gave me an entirely new perspective on life. I love the concept of using the beauty and wonder of God's creation to help emphasize His love and power. Working at Alpine has taught me many things, and it has given me confidence, but most importantly, it has definitely helped strengthen my walk with the Lord.

As my senior year of college winds down to graduation, I prayerfully explore my options for where to go next. I haven't made any decisions yet, but I want to stay open to the Lord's leading. I'm aware of the fact that God could change my plans at any time, but I'm ok with that, because my plans could never be as exciting as His anyway.



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