

Transformation of a Christian Pharmacy Student to a Christian Pharmacist

by Jocelyn M. Freimuth, PharmD Candidate

Finally, after years of faith, hard work, and dedication, my big day has almost arrived – I will soon be graduating as a Doctor in Pharmacy. For years I have worked to make this dream a reality, and now I feel like a sprinter anticipating the victory lap. While finally receiving my diploma will be a culmination of all my work over the years, I do realize it's not an ending point. If anything, it's a beginning. Now I embark on the next big adventure of my life: namely, the transition from collegiate life to a working professional life. With this transition, my experiences with time commitments, money management, and navigating new work environments will be vastly different from those I have experienced as a student. Another big change that will come with these new responsibilities is maintaining my Christian foundation in an entirely new environment. Having spent most of my education in a Christian setting, moving into a career in which these beliefs are not a core component will almost certainly prove to be a new challenge. Although there are many new experiences about to come my way, I find it equally important to prepare for how I can use my position as a pharmacist to continue and strengthen my Christian role as a servant-leader.

One of the roadblocks I foresee encountering in my future profession is potentially losing track of my original drive when I first decided to pursue a Doctorate of Pharmacy. From the beginning, I always wanted to utilize the gifts that God has given me to serve my community and help make a significant difference in people's lives. But it's important for me to remember that my career will not always contain those big moments of significance. Most of my work will be daily, mundane tasks that will likely fall into a monotonous routine. Tasks like that can be great sources of discouragement. Sometimes when you aren't experiencing the immediate, community-impacting job you dreamed of in college, you can feel like nothing more than a cog in a machine that isn't really making a difference. Add to that the secular environment of most careers, and it's easy to see how many people can become discouraged. But I believe that just as every business has a vision and mission statement, every person should also have their *own* vision and mission statement. If you make your vision and mission reflect Jesus' example to be a servant-leader, the workplace environment can still be an inspirational, significant, and Christ-like place every day.

The greatest hurdle I will likely face is the secularism of the work place. I have been blessed with the opportunity to receive almost all of my education in a Christian environment; but in the secular workforce this will not be the case. There will likely be no weekly chapels attended by my colleagues, nor open discussion of God's blessings. Going from an environment where it is commonplace to pray together before an exam, into a secular career where public prayer is not accepted, will likely be a shock to many pharmacy students; and that lack of spiritual support may be jarring. But even without this, it is important to remember what gave you the boost you needed in the first place and to use that inner strength to continue being a godly example on your own. Being away from that faith-based community does not mean my weekly worship will end. I will continue to live those same values going forward so that others may know Jesus

through me as I shine His light brightly.

I will also need to actively and intentionally make time for God. Just as my hours and lunch breaks are going to be more regimented in the workplace, I may also feel more time constraints on my serving outside of it. Being in school with flexible schedules has been a blessing; and now that I am entering into a more tightly-structured life, the opportunities to serve may seem to lessen. Also, places to serve were endless while in pharmacy school. Whether it was helping someone in need from our community or participating in a mission trip overseas, there were countless ways to be a servant-leader. Without that same access to student organizations that always provided new opportunities to give back, I will have to seek my own connections. I will now have to use those skills I learned through that environment to actively find people within my community to help and serve. There are always opportunities to provide help in that same way in our church, our communities, and even the workplace. If we are willing to live a Christ-like life and seek those who might need our help, then the biggest challenge will be reminding ourselves to do it. God will always provide us with opportunities to serve, and it is our duty to recognize and act on them. And even greater, remember that with our Doctorate of Pharmacy degree, we can give back in even more unique ways than before!

Ultimately it is my personal mission to honor the greatest Servant-Leader, Jesus, by giving back through those gifts He has given me: my salvation and my education. Knowing all of this about myself, my Lord, and my future, I'm confident that my transition from Christian pharmacy student to Christian pharmacist will be a successful transformation.

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. – Matthew 5: 14-16 NKJV

Jocelyn Freimuth is a PharmD candidate in the class of 2017 at Palm Beach Atlantic University Lloyd L. Gregory School of Pharmacy. She began her education in nursing prior to pursuing her education in pharmacy, affording her a long and diverse work history in healthcare. She strives to help others in all that she does, ideally working in an environment utilizing both nursing and pharmacy backgrounds collaboratively.

