10 Tips to Graduate Well

Tip #1: *Breathe*

Alright Parents, here it is. A chapter that has felt so far in the distance has quickly approached. However, this first tip is going to be the best one to get through each step of the way. Breathing easy and walking together.

Tip #2: *Stay Present*

In this season, be sure to keep the phones away and remain fully present with your graduate. If possible, try to encourage them to do the same. This is done best by modeling the behavior yourself.

Tip #3: *Careful of "Lasts"*

This is a dangerous word that can stir up many emotions and create undue pressure on situations that should just be fun! By using this taboo word, sometimes it could cause more harm than good. I'm not saying to ignore the sentiment of the events taking place, but feel free to also just enjoy the moment without so much pressure. For every last there is another first you take part in as a parent.

Tip #4: *Celebrate Change*

There are so many mixed emotions for both you + your graduate as you approach this season together, but in all the newness that is happening, celebrate together as a united front, supporting your graduate and being genuinely excited for them in their new chapter.

Tip #5: *Wrestle with Choices Together*

Visit churches together, compare colleges, think ahead to those decisions you might not want to make at the moment but have your answers prepared. Utilizing the 'Choosing a College' and 'The Next Four Year' tools, you get the opportunity to sit with your graduate and plan ahead together, facing choices, basing them on scripture, and doing so as a team.

Tip #6: *Unique Graduate Experience*

Be mindful that each graduate will act and respond differently. They might even want different things from this season. Regardless of what their sibling did or how they responded, this is truly your graduate's individual experience. You know your child better than anyone, be sure to be mindful of subtle changes in demeanor throughout the season and just like you, let them feel out their emotions fully and be there for support.

Tip #7: *This is No Competition*

Just like every graduate is unique, there is no way to possibly compare to how another family is handling the graduation season. Don't let any sense of comparison steal the joy and attention meant for your individual graduate.

Tip #8: *Protect Your 'Goodbye'*

Do not save your goodbye for the hustle and bustle of moving in, or in their new dorm as their roommate looks on, awkwardly. Protect it by making it personal and what makes most sense for you and your graduate.

Tip #9: *Grieve Well + Hope Well*

Everyone's grieving process is different, so allow yourself to feel your emotions to their full extent. This might look like going through photos of your graduate when you miss them, visiting their room, or not doing either. Take it a day at a time, and let your emotions come as they may. Allow your grief to move your heart to hope in Christ for yourself and your graduate.

Tip #10: *Rely on Those Around You*

Thankfully, you aren't alone in this season! There are plenty of other parents facing the same challenges and "heart hardships" as you. Use this time to also build community with those walking through this changing season as well, so that you might lean on one another, as your graduate departs.