I loved my friends in high school. I was very lonely throughout high school, and having my friends around me cured that loneliness. I loved them because when I was around them, I felt whole, but when I wasn’t around them I felt empty. I loved my friends selfishly. The person who suffered the most from this, besides me, was my best friend Ivy. We were constant friends, and she was the person I would always message if I felt alone or empty. For that, I loved her, but this was not a Godly love. During the summer before college, she became so busy with her job that we couldn’t talk regularly. This is where my love fell short. I became so embittered with her because she wouldn’t fill my loneliness any more, and I wanted her to suffer as deeply as I suffered.

Coming to college, I was hoping for a clean slate and for new friends, and God provided. A random guy in my lecture invited me to JCA, and I found the friends I was so desperately looking for. I had never met people who were so willing to sacrifice for you, whether it was their time or their money. I wanted to be around them, not only because of the companion ship, but also because I wanted their love to flow into me. I went to services, and listened to sermons about a God who loved, and in His love, I saw how imperfect my love is. I saw how I withheld it from people I thought didn’t deserve it. I saw how I loved not for anyone else but myself. The clearest place where I was withholding love was with Ivy, the best friend that I turned my back, and I knew that God would want me to forgive her. At the same time, God revealed a lot of brokenness in the lives of my friends, whether it was a family sickness, relationship problems, or simply being lost. I prayed for these people to this loving God that I didn’t even believe in because it was the only way I could help them.