

## The Plan from the Beginning Bible Class Introductory Lesson:

### I. **Format of the annual Bible reading program**

- Lessons will be in the form of weekly reading outlines.
- There will be a primary reading that will, over the course of a year, take us through the major storyline of the Bible.
- There will be additional readings, some supplementary and complimentary to the primary reading, others may just be additional readings (i.e., Psalms, Proverbs). These readings are “optional”.
- The primary readings will cover just shy of 300 chapters in the Bible, or an average of about 6 chapters a week.
- The additional readings will add another 560 chapters.
- The total read is 859 chapters. There are 1,189 chapters in the Bible, so if you read just the primary, you will cover only 25% of the Bible, but if you read the entire plan, you will cover 72% of the Bible.
- The pace for all of the readings is about 2.3 chapters/day.
- What we are missing:
  - Some genealogy chapters.
  - Portion of Exodus covering the tabernacle contents and construction.
  - All of Leviticus and portions of Numbers and Deuteronomy that cover offerings, priesthood, census, proportioning of land and the reiteration of the same in Deut.
  - Portion of Joshua where the territories are divided, cities of refuge established
  - Some lesser known Judges.
  - Genealogies in the first 9 chapters of I Chronicles.
  - Middle portion of Job containing the discussion with his “friends”.
  - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel
  - The visions of John in Revelation.

### II. **Format of the weekly class**

- Brief review of where we are in the Scripture by summarizing the previous week’s reading or introducing the current reading.
- Introduction to the current reading with some interesting facts, social/cultural/geographical setting and/or purpose of the writing.
- Discussion on the primary reading and maybe some on the additional reading. A set of questions will be asked by the leader and also time for class questions. Participation is a key element. The only dumb question is the one unasked.
- Beware-if the leader knows you, you may be called on!!!!
- Explanation of Summer Faith format.

### III. **Why do we study the Bible?**

- To increase our trust in God (Romans 10:17).
- To grow in our salvation (I Peter 2:1-3).
- God expects us to mature (I Corinthians 3:1-3)
- So we can discern (Hebrews 5:12-14).
- So that we can be ready for work (II Timothy 3:16, 17)

### IV. **Can we trust that the Bible is the inspired Word of God?**

- Do we all agree on that point?
- What does inspiration mean?
  1. The Greek word in II Timothy 3:16 is “theopneustos” or “God breathed.
  2. It means the Bible does not contain the will of men (II Peter 1:20, 21).
  3. The disciples that were sent on the “limited commission” were told by Christ they would be given the words to say (Matthew 10: 19, 20).
  4. Paul explains the Spirit’s role in I Corinthians 2:11-13. We can gather three things from this:
    - Only a man’s spirit really knows a man’s mind. Only the spirit of God knows the thoughts of God.
    - The NT writers received the Holy Spirit from God and can know the thoughts of God. We have the Holy Spirit within us; can we make the same claim?
    - The thoughts of God have been put down in words the Spirit taught the inspired men.

5. The Bible claims inspiration for itself; any text can do that, what makes the Bible different?
- **Some theories have been put forth on the method of getting the thoughts of God onto paper.**
1. The dictation theory holds that God spoke the exact words to the writers and they wrote them down verbatim.
  2. Some hold that the thoughts in the Bible are inspired, but the words are not. This helps some deal with apparent contradictions, perceived inaccuracies, etc. Difficult to accept as it would be impossible to tell which was right.
  3. Some say that since the different authors, say of the Gospels, tell the story different because of the “flute” theory. They are all playing the same musical score, but the notes sound different from each writer just as they would sound different on different instruments. Each is playing the exact note, with a different sound.
  4. The Bible contains no theory or explanation of the method of inspiration other than the text itself. Certainly the writers of the Bible maintained their distinctive personalities and writing abilities. They were guarded from error.
  5. Jesus was perfectly divine, yet perfectly human. The Word of God is perfectly infallible, yet communicated through fallible men, kept from error by the Holy Spirit.
  6. It can be surmised, that since the writers, especially Paul, James, Peter and John, were writing letters to correct issues within the Body and/or to provide information/further enlightenment, that they had no idea that their works would one day be formed into one cohesive New Testament. Yet, they agree, without collaboration and even without identical time frames. What a great evidence for the inspiration of the Word we have today!!!
- **Why do we believe the Bible?**
1. We can spend hours looking at historical corroboration to prove the Bible.
  2. We can examine the Bible’s resilience and perseverance despite many efforts to destroy it.
  3. We can review prophecies in the bible and their manifestation.
  4. We can see the influence it has had for nearly 3,000 years in some state of existence (Hebrew writings were in effect for at least 1,000 years before Christ)
  5. We can recognize the uniqueness of the Bible and its literary, poetic and religious genius.
  6. We can see the unity of the Bible. The Bible was composed by more than 40 authors over 1,400 years, but it is not 66 books, rather one book; a love story that starts at creation and ends with God’s people at home in heaven.
- The single greatest reason we can rely on the Bible is the work it does in the lives of people and the Church. It is the word of God because it works in our lives. The Good News of Jesus Christ has the power to change lives (Romans 1:16). The story of the cross is the power of God to the saved (I Corinthians 1:18-24) and shows the foolishness on man’s wisdom. Even without the life changing effect that Gospel preaching has in the stories from Acts, we can see it today I our brothers and sisters in Christ. We can see Jesus Christ save those who are living in sin, just as it did in Corinth (I Corinthians 6:9-11). The life changing effect of God’s Word, taught accurately and faithfully, is the best evidence anyone can give.