

ekklesia

Christian Life Ministries

Bible Study Course Book

Ekklesia Christian Life
1401 Bluegrass Ave Louisville, KY 40215
EkklesiaChristianLife.org

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Introduction

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

"A book which, if everything else in our language should perish, would alone suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power."

Thomas B. Macaulay

Basic Considerations

The Bible is a library of books about God and the relationship between him and his human family on the planet Earth. The Bible reveals God as the all-powerful, all-knowing creator and sustainer of all things; that every man, woman and child is made in God's image and likeness. It outlines God's covenants and promises which set out the principle of mankind's freedom of choice. In the Bible one finds passages dealing realistically with the conflict between good and evil including that which is in each individual. A general truism is found to the effect that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. God promises that he will visit his people in the flesh through a virgin woman in order to reconcile all people to himself, to abolish sin through his own son's death, and return in the spirit to dwell within his children. The Bible sets out principles and guidelines for human conduct and people's interaction with each other. These principles are calculated to assure an anxiety-free life on earth and in the hereafter in harmony and right-standing with God. These revelations are set out in the Bible in 66 books of varying types and lengths written over a time span of about 1500 years.

What the Bible is According to the Bible

One cannot read the Bible without soon discovering that it claims to be the word of God. God speaks. He speaks out directly; he speaks through angels; he speaks through prophets. God directs Moses to write his words, and he directs the prophets to be his spokesmen. His words are spoken by Jesus Christ of Nazareth and recorded by the gospel writers. The epistle writers convey God's messages of instruction and encouragement. The apostle Peter sums up the Bible's view of itself when he says, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost." (II Peter 1:21)

The apostle Paul in writing to his aide, Timothy, defines the nature and purpose of scripture in these words: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (II Timothy 3:15-16)

Why Should We Read the Bible?

Why are you interested in reading the Bible? Whatever reason you may have for reading it is a good reason. What a person receives from the Bible quite often is governed by the point of view, the problem, or the question motivating the reader at the time. For example, are you a believer or a nonbeliever? Are you interested in it because it is ancient literature? Are you merely curious about what it says? Do you believe that the Bible is the word of God, or do you regard it merely as the ideas of men? Regardless of the particular circumstance causing you to read the Bible, you will feel its challenge, for one must come to grips with what it claims for itself and the fact that it demands a response. You may respond by acceptance or rejection, but you will form some kind of response to the views and principles which it set forth. Perhaps the biggest challenge to our minds is that the Bible speaks in the spiritual realm, and we are not always ready to "shift gears" and leave our materialistic frame of reference to contemplate the idea that we are spiritual beings with a future in a totally spiritual setting.

Spirituality

Our English word "spirit" comes from the Latin word *spiritus* which means "wind" or "breath." In the Greek language, the word is *pneuma* and in Hebrew, *ruah*. The World Book Dictionary says that "spirit" refers to the aspect of every human which is not material. It is equated with "soul" or "personality". Webster's Dictionary defines "spirit" as "the breath of life" or "life-giving force," connecting it with mind and emotions. These definitions show a universal awareness of our spiritual nature which we recognize or suspect whether or not we deem ourselves to be very "spiritual."

A starting point for gaining a sharper conception of our nonmaterial makeup is to reflect upon the variety of well-known human characteristics. Consider, for example, such attributes as personality, thought, ideas, reason, belief, intellect, emotion, and intuition; also, love, hate, wisdom, character, right and wrong, anxiety, humility, pride, compassion, peace, joy, and happiness. None of these elements is physical; yet each one is very real. There are, of course, many more than these, and it might be both interesting and revealing if you would make a list of those qualities, attributes, and capabilities which apply to you. Others you might also consider are talent, creativity, language, insight, and mystique. These aspects of our being are invisible, but we know that they exist, and we have words in our language describing them. They give us clues to understanding our personal identities which are not confined to the limits of a three-dimensional world. If these attributes are in another dimension, that is, a nonphysical, perhaps fourth, dimension, is not our real identity in the same dimension, which we may refer to as the spiritual dimension? Every civilization has had a concept of this realm as evidenced by a belief that a person lives on after the demise of the physical body. The person in this continuum is referred to as a "spirit" or "soul". A realization of this status, whether consciously or subconsciously, moves mankind to seek a supreme being who has power and authority over the universe and who through his love and concern communicates with and helps his people.

Nine Bible Courses

These nine Bible-study courses, in this study guide, provides structured programming with appropriate and progressive theme/subject sessions for problem-solving reading, seeking answers for problems or questions arising from daily life, including both personal and interpersonal situations, personal goals, health, and healing. This type of reading and study is used in counseling and involves correlating passages dealing with the type of problem presented and applying these passages in a practical way. This type of study can be done individually or in a group.

Each course has six sessions. Each session has four options from which one can choose for a particular sitting. Choose either the Old Testament option or the Gospel Story option, and one other option because they have ready-made built-in agendas to follow.

COURSE 1

DISCOVERING MY IDENTITY

1. My Self Image

--Old Testament Story God Created -- Genesis 1:1-2:3
--Psalm Devotional Psalm 8
--Gospel Story Conceited -- Luke 18:9-14
--Epistle Study Competent -- II Corinthians 2:12-3:6

2. My Values

--Old Testament Story Job Tested -- Job 1
--Psalm Devotional Psalm 26
--Gospel Story Foolish -- Luke 12:13-21
--Epistle Study Forsaken -- Philippians 3:1-11

3. My Strengths

--Old Testament Story Samson's Secret -- Judges 16:1-22
--Psalm Devotional Psalms 27
--Gospel Story Talents -- Matthew 25:14-30
--Epistle Study Weakness -- II Corinthians 12:1-10

4. My Desires

--Old Testament Story Jacob Con Artist -- Genesis 25:27
--Psalm Devotional Psalms 73
--Gospel Story Ambitions -- Mark 10:35-45
--Epistle Study Striving -- Philippians 3:12-4:1

5. My Past

--Old Testament Story Jacob Wrestling -- Genesis 32:9-32
--Psalm Devotional Psalms 78
--Gospel Story Forgiven -- Luke 7:36-50
--Epistle Study Dead or Alive -- Ephesians 2:1-10

6. My Heritage

--Old Testament Story Moses Adopted -- Exodus 2:1-10
--Psalm Devotional Psalm 67
--Gospel Story Peter Restored -- John 21:15-25
--Epistle Study Most Blessed -- Ephesians 1:1-14

COURSE 2

WORKING THROUGH MY PROBLEMS

1. Self-worth

--Old Testament Story Grand Tower -- Genesis 11:1-9
--Psalm Devotional Psalm 44
--Gospel Story Small Man -- Luke 19:1-10
--Epistle Study Gifted Body -- I Co 12:12-27

2. Procrastination

--Old Testament Story Balaam's Ass -- Numbers 22:21-35
--Psalm Devotional Psalm 90
--Gospel Story Belated Guests -- Luke 14:15-24
--Epistle Study Slow Learners -- Hebrews 5:11-6:12

3. Quitting

--Old Testament Story Jonah Flees -- Jonah 1
--Psalm Devotional Psalms 42-43
--Gospel Story It's Not Over -- Luke 24:13-35
--Epistle Study Finish the Race -- II Timothy 3:20-4:8

4. Rejection

--Old Testament Story Why a King -- I Samuel 8
--Psalm Devotional Psalm 60
--Gospel Story Why Not Jesus -- Luke 4:14-30
--Epistle Study Chosen -- Romans 11:1-10

5. Fear of Failure

--Old Testament Story Moses' Fear -- Exodus 3:1-15
--Psalm Devotional Psalm 46
--Gospel Story Peter's Fear -- Matthew 14:22-36
--Epistle Study Timothy's Fear -- II Timothy 1:1-2:13

6. Will Power

--Old Testament Story Gideon's Fleece -- Judges 6
--Psalm Devotional Psalm 62
--Gospel Story Gethsemane -- Mark 14:32-42
--Epistle Study Working It Out -- Philippians 2:12-18

COURSE 3

LEARNING THE BASICS

1. Sin

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Cursed – Genesis 3:2-23
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 6
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Caught -- John 7:53-8:11
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Consequences -- Romans 1:18-31

2. Redemption

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	From Egypt -- Exodus 14:21-31
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 90
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	From Condemnation -- John 3:1-21
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	From Death -- Romans 3:21-31

3. Law

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Ten Commandments -- Exodus 20:3-17
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 42-43
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Law Not Enough -- Luke 18:18-30
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Faith Alone -- Romans 4

4. Grace

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Grace Renewed -- Joshua 24:1-27
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 60
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Gracious Father -- Luke 15:11-32
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Under Grace -- Romans 6:1-14

5. Atonement

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	By a Holy God -- Isaiah 6
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 46
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	On the Cross -- Matthew 27:45-56
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	One in Christ -- Ephesians 2:11-22

6. Lordship

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Abraham Submits -- Genesis 22
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 62
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Peter Confesses -- Matthew 16:13-28
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Lord of All -- Colossians 1:15-23

COURSE 4

HANDLING CRISIS

1. Moral Failure

--*Old Testament Story*
--*Psalm Devotional*
--*Gospel Story*
--*Epistle Study*

David's Disgrace -- II Samuel 12:1-14
Psalm 51
Peter's Denial -- Mark 14:66-72
Israel's Unbelief -- Romans 9:30-10:31

2. Family Death

--*Old Testament Story*
--*Psalm Devotional*
--*Gospel Story*
--*Epistle Study*

Son's Death -- II Kings 4:8-37
Psalm 30
Brother's Death -- John 11
God's Comfort -- II Corinthians 1:1-11

3. Unmet Needs

--*Old Testament Story*
--*Psalm Devotional*
--*Gospel Story*
--*Epistle Study*

Daily Manna -- Exodus 16
Psalm 23
Daily Bread -- Luke 11:1-13
Being Content -- Philippians 4:10-19

4. Big Hurdles

--*Old Testament Story*
--*Psalm Devotional*
--*Gospel Story*
--*Epistle Study*

Shepherd Boy -- I Samuel 17
Psalm 52
Good Shepherd -- John 10:1-21
Elder Shepherds -- I Peter 5:1-11

5. Left on your Own

--*Old Testament Story*
--*Psalm Devotional*
--*Gospel Story*
--*Epistle Study*

Aaron Panics -- Exodus 32
Psalm 91
Jesus Resists -- Luke 4:1-13
Faith Persists -- Ephesians 6:10-24

6. Outnumbered

--*Old Testament Story*
--*Psalm Devotional*
--*Gospel Story*

Fighting with 300 -- Judges 7
Psalm 3
Feeding the 5000 -- Mark 6:30-44

COURSE 5

FACING THE ISSUES

1. Money Matters

--*Old Testament Story*

--*Psalm Devotional*

--*Gospel Story*

--*Epistle Study*

Wealth & Women -- I Kings 10:23-11:6

Psalm 115

Costly Ointment -- Mark 14:1-11

Hilarious Giving -- II Corinthians 9:6-15

2. Success vs. Service

--*Old Testament Story*

--*Psalm Devotional*

--*Gospel Story*

--*Epistle Study*

King's Service -- Nehemiah 1:1-2:9

Psalm 132

Self Service -- John 13:1-17

Full Service -- Galatians 5:13-26

3. Social Concern

--*Old Testament Story*

--*Psalm Devotional*

--*Gospel Story*

--*Epistle Study*

Abraham's Plea -- Genesis 18:16-33

Psalm 137

Samaritan's Purse -- Luke 10:25-37

Doing Good -- Galatians 6:1-10

4. Corruption -- Abuse

--*Old Testament Story*

--*Psalm Devotional*

--*Gospel Story*

--*Epistle Study*

Josiah's Reform -- II Kings 23:1-25

Psalm 50

Jesus' Reform -- Mark 11:12-19

James' Reform -- James 2:1-13

5. Tough Decisions

--*Old Testament Story*

--*Psalm Devotional*

--*Gospel Story*

--*Epistle Study*

Solomon's Wisdom -- II Kings 3:4-28

Psalm 58

Pilate's Dilemma -- Matthew 27:11-26

Caesar's Rule -- Romans 13:1-7

6. Spiritual Renewal

--*Old Testament Story*

--*Psalm Devotional*

--*Gospel Story*

--*Epistle Study*

Dry Bones -- Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalm 19

Spirit Baptism -- Mark 1:1-8

New Life -- Romans 8:1-17

COURSE 6

STRENGTHENING FAMILY TIES

1. Roots

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	The First Family -- Genesis 2:15-25
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 110
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Angel's Prophecy -- Luke 1:26-38
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Adam's Legacy -- Romans 5:12-21

2. Uprooted

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Abraham's Family -- Genesis 11:27-12:7
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 121
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Jesus' Family -- Luke 2:1-20
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Abraham's Seed -- Galatians 3:26-4:4

3. Dedicated

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Infant Samuel -- I Samuel 1
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 118
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Infant Jesus -- Luke 2:21-40
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Child of Promise -- Galatians 4:21-31

4. Called

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Samuel Listens -- I Samuel 3:1-18
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 130
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Disciples Tell -- John 1:35-42
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Paul Receives -- Galatians 1:11-24

5. Broken Homes

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Brother's Revenge -- Genesis 37:12-36
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 55
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Prodigal Returns -- Luke 15:11-32
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Earning Respect -- Ephesians 5:22-6:9

6. Forgiveness

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Merciful Joseph -- Genesis 45:1-15
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 32
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Unmerciful Servant -- Matthew 18:21-35
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Onesimus Returns -- Philemon 8-25

COURSE 7

RESHAPING MY LIFESTYLE

1. Heart Attitudes

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	David's Heart -- I Samuel 16:1-13
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 23
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Beatitudes -- Matthew 5:3-10
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Christ's Attitude -- Philippians 2:1-11

2. Clear Conscience

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Saul Spared -- I Samuel 24:1-22
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 18
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Paralytic Healed -- Mark 2:1-12
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Conscience-Stricken -- I Corinthians 10:23-11:1

3. Single-Minded

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Defeating "Baals" -- I Kings 18:16-45
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 135
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Healing Legion -- Matthew 6:25-34
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Going "Solo" -- I Corinthians 7

4. Strict Discipline

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	No King's Food -- Daniel 1
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 125
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	No Crooked Paths -- Mark 1:1-8
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	No Hindrances -- Hebrews 12:1-13

5. Right Priorities

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Joshua's Choice -- Joshua 24:1-27
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 15
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Kingdom First -- Matthew 6:25 -34
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	No Earthly Things -- Colossians 3:1-17

6. Strong Foundation

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Faithful Ethics -- Daniel 6:1-24
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 14
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Wise Builders -- Matthew 7:24-29
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Inspired Scripture -- II Timothy 3:10-4:8

COURSE 8

CATCHING A WORLD VISION

1. Worldwide Purpose

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	I Will Bless -- Genesis 11:27-12:7
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 96
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Fulfilled in Christ -- Luke 4:14-30
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Fullness in Christ -- Ephesians 1:15-23

2. World of Possibilities

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Go and Tell -- Isaiah 6
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 87
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Grace and Truth -- John 1:1-18
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Glory Unveiled -- II Corinthians 3:7-18

3. World of People Part 1

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Within Our Walls -- Nehemiah 1:1-2:9
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 139
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Cross Cultures -- John 4:1-26
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Unreached -- Romans 15:14-33

4. World of People Part 2

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Spiritually Dead -- Ezekiel 37:1-14
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 38
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Without Christ -- John 3:1-21
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	None Righteous -- Romans 3:9-20

5. World-sized Part 1

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Majority of One -- I Kings 18:16-45
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 98
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Fishers of Men -- Luke 5:1-11
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Ambassadors -- II Corinthians 5:11-6:2

6. World-sized Part 2

<i>--Old Testament Story</i>	Take My Life -- Jonah 4
<i>--Psalm Devotional</i>	Psalm 89
<i>--Gospel Story</i>	Feed My Sheep -- John 21:15-25
<i>--Epistle Study</i>	Share Your Life -- II Thessalonians 2:1-16

COURSE 9

EXPLORING DEEPER THINGS

1. Evil Things

--Old Testament Story
--Psalm Devotional
--Gospel Story
--Epistle Study

Wickedness -- Genesis 6-8
Psalm 69
Temptation -- Luke 4:1-13
Lawlessness -- II Thessalonians 2:1-12

2. Revealed Things

--Old Testament Story
--Psalm Devotional
--Gospel Story
--Epistle Study

Still Small Voice -- I Kings 19:1-19
Psalm 29
Transfiguration -- Mark 9:2-13
Anointing -- I John 2:18-27

3. Risky Things

--Old Testament Story
--Psalm Devotional
--Gospel Story Peter
--Epistle Study

Rahab Hides Spies -- Joshua 2:1-21
Psalm 138
Steps Out -- Matthew 14:22-36
Two Risk-Takers -- Philippians 2:19-30

4. Miraculous Things

--Old Testament Story
--Psalm Devotional
--Gospel Story
--Epistle Study

Fire Escape -- Daniel 3:13-30
Psalm 116
Wine Aplenty -- John 2:1-11
Resurrection Body -- I Corinthians 15:35-58

5. Secret Things

--Old Testament Story
--Psalm Devotional
--Gospel Story
--Epistle Study

Secret Judgment -- Isaiah 6
Psalm 115
Secret Kingdom -- Matthew 13:1-23
Secret Wisdom -- I Corinthians 2:6-16

6. Greater Things

--Old Testament Story
--Psalm Devotional
--Gospel Story
--Epistle Study

Deborah Can Do -- Judges 4:1-16
Psalm 68
Disciples Can Do -- John 14:1-14
Righteous Can Do -- James 5:13-20