

Learn to Read the Bible Effectively

Distance Learning Programme

Introduction and Course Guide



INTRODUCTION AND COURSE GUIDE

Introduction

Welcome	Page 1
Your tutor	1

Course Guide

What is the aim of the course ?	2
How is the course arranged ?	2
Topics covered	3
Why are we offering this course ?	4

Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to the “Learn to Read the Bible Effectively” Distance Learning Course. This course has been developed from a series of evening classes held in centres around Britain. As the title implies, it is designed to help *you* read *your* Bible *more* effectively.

We know that your time is valuable, so the material is structured to enable you to make the best use of the time you spend on this course. From comments received from those who attended the seminar evenings we know it will prove to be both useful and enjoyable.

Your tutor

You have been given a tutor who is there for you to refer to. If you don't understand any part of the course, your tutor will be there to assist.

Feel free to write or 'phone your tutor. The onus is on you – apart from giving you course information, your tutor will not contact you unless you ask.

Course Guide

What is the aim of the course?

The Distance Learning Course is designed to help *you* to read *your* Bible effectively. By this we mean:

- To help and encourage *you* to open it and read it for *yourself*
- To do so in a more organised way so that it is easier to understand and to remember what you read

We want to help you discover the real Bible message for yourself. Regardless of how much (or how little) you know about the Bible, we hope that this course will give you the ability to decide what the Bible really means.

How is the course arranged?

The course is divided into twelve easily managed sessions, each consisting of 2 sections. Each section would take less than an hour at an evening class, but you will of course be able to spend as much time as you like on each one.



To help you start reading your Bible effectively, we have included activities in most sections. Most of these activities involve looking up verses in the Bible. These activities will all have a Bible icon and be enclosed in a box like the one that surrounds this paragraph.

There are several assignments which are entirely voluntary. These are meant to assist your learning and your understanding by giving you something to explore in more depth if you so wish. Writing something for yourself is one of the best ways of learning. You can send your assignment to your tutor if you wish, but this is not essential.

In addition to the assignments, there are question sheets at the end of sessions 4, 8 and 12. These are intended to make you think about what you have learned.

We would encourage you not to take our word about what any section of the Bible means but always look at it for yourself. Your tutor will be pleased to hear from you by letter or 'phone if you have any problems. If you do not have access to a Bible, we can arrange to send one to you.

Topics covered:

Session	Section 1	Section 2
1	Background to the Bible	The Bible interprets itself
2	Overview of the books of the Bible (Part 1)	The Old Testament is the foundation of the New Testament
3	God's covenants	The role of prophecy
4	Tips on reading	Overview of the books of the Bible (Part 2)
5	Study tools (Part 1)	Terminology (Part 1)
6	Overview of the books of the Bible (Part 3)	Terminology (Part 2)
7	Cross-references	A law ahead of its time
8	The purpose of God revealed	Overview of the books of the Bible (Part 4)
9	Study tools (Part 2)	Terminology (Part 3)
10	The place of the Jews in God's plan	The balance of grace and truth
11	Motivation in reading the Bible	Overview of the books of the Bible (Part 5)
12	Terminology (Part 4)	The problem of suffering

Why are we offering this course?

We assume from your interest so far that you believe there is something special about the Bible. You may already believe that it is the inspired Word of God, or you may not yet be totally convinced of this. We also assume that since you are taking this course, you wish to improve your understanding of the Bible. There are many reasons why people ask for help, including not knowing where to start, confusion and a sense of being overwhelmed by the size of the task. We hope we can provide you with keys and tips to overcome such problems.

Our motive is to encourage respect for, familiarity with, and understanding of the Word of God.

It is not our role to convert you to our way of thinking in this course. We may come to agreement on matters or we may not. If not, your conscience and ours must be satisfied independently. For this reason we shall avoid a debate on doctrine. It is our aim to help you to read your Bible effectively and from this we hope that God's message will be made plain to you.