

What is the Lightbearers Institute?

The Lightbearers Institute is the primary teaching element in the Lightbearers Discipleship Community. It is a classroom setting where over the span of two years, students attend over fifty class sessions and complete two courses: Biblical Survey and Theology and Practice. The Institute seeks to give students Biblical literacy and sound doctrine, equipping them as church members for a lifetime and then stepping away to allow their churches will build upon this introductory foundational knowledge. In addition to participating in the Institute, students in a Lightbearers Discipleship Community live in intentional small groups led by a house leader, meet regularly with a mentor from their local church and are exposed to the work of the body of Christ among the nations. Our prayer is that these commitments connect students for life with Jesus, his people and his plan for the ends of the earth while we use their rental income to fund mission projects in Asia and northern Africa.

Lightbearers is not the church but, rather, exists to serve the local church. This conviction has impact in many areas, including the fact that the Lightbearers Institute is primarily taught by local pastors in order to emphasize to students our ministry's subordinate role and to introduce students to several healthy local churches. Remaining classes are taught by Lightbearers staff members and, in some instances, church laymen and laywomen.

Week 22: Church History 1 - The End of Acts to 1500

Thesis: God did not stop working when the books of the Bible were completed. Indeed, the astounding claim of Jesus that his message and disciples would cover the globe became a reality. The story of the move of the church is an engaging one—revealing the stories of faithful and flawed men and women and the God whose purpose would not be thwarted.

Primary Objectives: At the conclusion of this session, students should understand: 1) The benefit of an introductory understanding to church history; 2) God was at work in the early church; 3) Some of the key debates among early Christians and how those debates were resolved (e.g. the deity of Christ, the canon of Scripture); 4) How believers should consider failings of the early church (e.g. some of the atrocities of the Crusades); and 5) The names and stories of at least a couple of believers from past centuries.

Key Readings: Acts 1-2, Acts 8, Acts 27, **Acts 28**, Galatians 2, 2 John

Things to Remember:

- The Lightbearers Institute aims to teach Biblical literacy and doctrinal soundness. Christian unity and a love of Scripture should be displayed above the ability to win an argument. On potentially contentious doctrines, we primarily want to emphasize to students the bounds of historical evangelical orthodox faith. You are free to outline your particular opinion on these doctrines, but please acknowledge to students where there is notable legitimate debate on an issue.
- Class sessions usually run for 90 minutes and take place in an academic setting (students seated at tables), but please communicate with your local campus staff for exact details and location.
- In an effort to encourage students to engage with Scripture, students have assigned key readings (listed above), so it is wise to reference some of these readings. We do not ensure students have completed the assigned readings but mentioning and/or discussing these readings, particularly the bolded chapter, during class reinforces to students the need to complete these readings.
- Lightbearers Theology and Practice course follows an outline loosely based on Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology. Please note, however, that students have not read Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem.
- Please prepare an outline for students. A sample outline follows, but please note that this material is suggestive rather than prescriptive. Please use this sample to whatever extent is helpful to you, and communicate with local campus staff with any specific questions you have.
- Our most successful instructors consistently do three things: 1. Demonstrate clearly that their teaching and opinions are based in Scripture; 2. Communicate with students in an engaging manner; 3. Have a passion for the Scriptures and the God who inspired them

Proposed Teaching Outline

TOPIC		TIME
I.	The Early Church (50 AD-250 AD)	(30 min.)
A.	The people of the early church	(10 min.)
B.	The people of the early church	(10 min.)
C.	The persecution of the early church	(10 min.)
II.	The Institutionalization of the Church (250 AD-500 AD)	(30 min.)
A.	Constantine	(10 min.)
B.	Augustine	(10 min.)
C.	The church councils	(10 min.)
III.	The Church in the Middle Ages (500 AD-1500 AD)	(30 min.)
A.	Major figures	(10 min.)
B.	Major debates	(10 min.)
C.	Major flaws	(10 min.)

Spring Class Sequence

WEEK	DOCTRINES
(1)	Fall Review
(2-3)	Sanctification
(4)	Disciplemaking
(5-7)	Ecclesiology
(8)	Missions
(9-10)	Church History
(11-12)	Eschatology
(13)	Spring Review

Resources

TITLE	AUTHOR
Church History in Plain Language	Bruce Shelley
2000 Years of Christ's Power	N.R. Needham
Confessions	St. Augustine

Additional Web Resource

Biblical Training
https://www.biblicaltraining.org/foundations/essentials-church-history/gordon-isaac