

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.

Content: Jesus' person and work as appearing in the Gospel of John and themes of the flesh and the world, love and light in the letters of John.

Expectations: At the conclusion of this session, students should understand: 1) How and why John is distinct from the other Gospel accounts; 2) Jesus' role as the Word made flesh, the Son of God; and 3) the distinctive themes of John's letters.

Key Readings: John 1, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20; 1 John 1

Fall Course Schedule

Mark
Matthew
Luke
Acts
James & 1-2 Thessalonians
Galatians & Romans
1-2 Corinthians
Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon
1-2 Timothy & Titus
Hebrews
1-2 Peter & Jude
John & 1-3 John
Revelation
Review

Things to Remember:

- The Lightbearers Institute aims to teach Biblical literacy and doctrinal soundness. The Old Testament portion of the Institute aims specifically at Biblical literacy. In particular, **the theme that we want to trace for students is that the whole story of the Bible is one of God glorifying Himself by dwelling among a holy covenant people.** From God walking in the garden to the tabernacle to the temple to Jesus coming to “dwell among us” and then sending His Spirit to live within us and within the church as we long for God to dwell with man again, the theme fills the pages of Scripture. Drawing attention to this theme helps students see Scripture as one grand narrative rather than a series of disconnected stories.
 - In John and 1-3 John, we see this theme in the revealing of Christ (“the Word made flesh and dwelt among us”), the self-proclamations of Jesus (e.g. “I am the light of the world), the promise of being born of the Spirit (John 3) and receiving the Spirit (John 14, 16), as well as in the encouragement of how to live as a people of God (1 John-3 John).
- Our theme verse for the New Testament class is Hebrews 1:1-2: “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.” Please point out to students the revelation of God’s plan in Christ, and Christ’s continuing work on the earth through the Spirit and as head of the church.
- 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 difficult passages, but please acknowledge to students where there is notable legitimate debate on an issue. A desire for Christian unity and a love of Scripture should be displayed above the ability to win an argument.
- 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.
- Please prepare an outline for students. As our aim is Biblical literacy, please give students an overview of each book so that they understand the main subjects and themes while also diving into two or more sections at greater depth, including the key chapter.
- 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.