

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 4: Theology 1 - Who is God?

Thesis: God is infinite and eternal and His greatness is unsearchable. His ways are not ours and His thoughts are higher than ours. At the same time, however, Jesus says eternal life is that we might know God and that He will abide in us. How can these seeming paradoxical statements be true? How can God be one person and yet Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct? These facts can be true because God Himself is true and is the plumbline by which we measure all other things.

Primary Objectives: At the conclusion of this session, students should understand the following truths from Scripture: 1) God exists; 2) We can know God truly though not completely; 3) The character of God; 4) God exists in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—that are distinct persons and yet truly one.

Key Readings: Exodus 34, Psalm 23, Psalm 145, Isaiah 6, John 1, Romans 1, Revelation 4

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	CHAPTERS	TIME
I.	God's Being	(9-10, 14)	(40 min.)
	A. God's Existence and Knowability	(9-10)	(20 min.)
	B. The Trinity	(14)	(20 min.)
II.	God's Attributes	(11-13)	(50 min.)
	A. God's Incommunicable Attributes	(11)	(25 min.)
	B. God's Communicable Attributes	(12-13)	(25 min.)

Fall Class Sequence

WEEK	DOCTRINES
(1)	Introduction / Bibliology
(2-3)	Biblical Theology / Hermeneutics
(4-5)	Theology
(6-7)	Man + Sin
(8-9)	Worldview
(10)	Jesus
(11-12)	Salvation
(13)	Holy Spirit

Resources

TITLE/AUTHOR	CHAPTERS
Systematic Theology Grudem	(9-14)
Historical Theology Allison	(16)
The Christian Faith Horton	(13)
Christian Theology Erickson	(27-31)
Classic Christianity Oden	(-)

Additional Web Resources

Capitol Hill Baptist Church
http://capitolhillbaptist.org/resources/core-seminars