

## **Comments on Each Week's Study in DC101 (Last updated: March 2016)**

*After a re-organization of week 1 in the Leaders Guide, the page numbers have changed since we did the video. The first reference to p. 21-22 is now on p. 27-28. Then, the video and LG line up again at the bottom of p. 22. The next reference (to p. 23) is now on p. 24—and most of the remaining discussion is also off by a page.*

### ***Week 1. Introduction: An Intro to Each Other and to DC***

#### **1.) Roster/Introductions**

-Distribute name tags to be written on with Sharpies/markers. (Pens are not easily visible across a room).

-Make sure you have appropriate contact info for your roster. Collect info on family and career as well—to know them better, inform your prayers about them, and make them more comfortable within the group. Consider getting birthdays. Put together a pictorial directory with biographical and contact info—for you and your DC'ers (e.g., using Word, Excel, or Shutterfly). Work to study faces and put them with names—and encourage them to do the same. You may also find an email list-serve effective (e.g., Google Groups) or a Facebook group.

-Toward the beginning, we recommend at least two ice-breakers—one with brief biographical info (again, you might want to focus on their spouse—e.g., one thing they love about them) and the other communicating each person's expectations of this group.

-At Southeast, make sure they've purchased the DC101 Course Book and Ian Thomas' *The Saving Life of Christ*. At other churches, distribute the books. (You might want to note that we won't read from the Thomas book until weeks 5 & 8.) Some people may find it useful to convert the DC book to spiral-bound.

-Recommend (but don't require) *The NIV Exhaustive Concordance* by Goodrick and Kohlenberger. (It is quite useful for the word studies which start in week 6 of DC101 and continue throughout DC.)

-We have numbered (rather than dated) each lesson. Please have your members put the appropriate dates in their books.

-At Southeast, security's phone # is 502-253-8911 if you need help to get in the building.

## **2.) On DC as a program of Bible memory, Bible reading and Bible study:**

→ throughout this part of the discussion, refer to week 1's notes in the DC book as useful

a.) *Look at the Table of Contents for DC101 (the 2<sup>nd</sup> page into the book)*—to note the three components of DC—*and then look at week 2*, as an example of what each week will look like. As you guide them through a quick look at week 2...

- a.) show them the variety of memory verse methods;
- b.) note the quotes in the margin;
- c.) show them where they will write their reflections on the Bible reading;
- d.) encourage them to underline highlights in the articles; and
- e.) note the lay-out of the study section (including the extra/blank pages on the left-hand side in case they need more room to write) and the optional verses in parentheses (allowing for different levels of study).

***2b.) Then lead them through a discussion (not a lecture!) of the three components of the program...***

### **I. What will we study?**

-See: Table of Contents for all of DC (on the inside front cover) which provides an overview of the topics we will cover over the 21 months—a program vs. an intense focus on a single topic or a book of the Bible

-Revisit Table of Contents for DC101 which is introductory/foundational: basic theology and an overview of the Word, including useful tools and concepts (e.g., sins of omission and commission; prayer as a lifestyle and event; etc.)

### **II. Why Bible memory? (Not for a legalistic “check the box”...)**

-You might want to read week 2's memory verse as “open book”—and joke that “it'll be closed book” next week.

-Jesus did it (Mt 4)!

-It allows one to reflect on those verses more deeply; it will inform your prayer with God and counsel to others (Col 3:16).

-Knowing more and more verses—and where they come from—will help one connect the dots within their Scripture reading/understanding.

-On how to do Bible Memory, see: article in week 2, the assortment of memory techniques in the book, and the ability to download an audio version of the verses at ThoroughlyEquipped.net.

-Other resources include MemorizeNow.com, [ScriptureTyper.com](http://ScriptureTyper.com), <http://quizlet.com/2559510/dc-101-flash-cards/> (for each semester), [files.me.com/b.ratt/2a6wqg](http://files.me.com/b.ratt/2a6wqg) (MV's as screensavers), and phone apps such as Bible Memory by Mobilize Faith.

-David Jeremiah notes that the brain is an amazing creation—with “unfathomable circuitry and unimaginable complexity”—and “with a brain like that, you can memorize Scripture”.

-They can work with their children or pray the verse for DC'ers.

### **III. Bible reading?**

-Discuss the differences between reading and studying. Some people have developed a tendency to do studying exclusively, rather than reading. Others don't know how to read the Bible; they've been told to do it, but without help in doing it. We'll do both in DC.

-Why “read”? To gain “bullet” insights and to see the forest rather than the trees. See also: Psalm 119's promises.

-Reiterate that the reading is mostly about what struck each person rather than trying to figure out every detail and asking a lot of questions about the reading.

-The acronym SPECS may be useful here: encourage them to look for Substance about God; Promises of God; Examples to follow; Commands to Obey; Sin to forsake. Although you might easily take this for granted, some of your DC'ers have probably developed a tendency to do only a few of these as they read.

-Note that our goal is to *read* through the entire Bible over the 21 months. Unfortunately, few people, including Christians, have done this.

-Ask them to consider using an unfamiliar translation when reading. And encourage them to avoid a Study Bible—at least insofar as it might distract them from (mere) reading (vs. study) and tempt them to make more “technical” comments.

-Note that the reading will only intersect with study topic on occasion.

-Encourage daily reading, but even moreso, what works for them. For some of your group members, it will be helpful to develop a daily reading discipline.

→ It may be helpful to note that all of us take the effectiveness of Bible study—and especially Bible memory and Bible reading—on faith to some extent.

### 3.) The Covenant...

**-Read the covenant out loud and discuss it**, emphasizing the ten-week commitment. **Tell them not to sign it until they're ready.** Illegible signature should include printed names. Collect the covenants of those willing to sign today and keep for your records.

-Resolve and then publicly commit to letting them out of the meeting on time.

-If you have multiple DC groups at your church (or in your area), **let them know that they should attend one of those (if at all possible), if they will be missing** one of your group meetings. Ideally, they tell you beforehand and you make contact with the leaders of the other group beforehand and get brief feedback afterwards.

-With respect to “Be Accepting” though the rest of the covenant...

-Each person needs to set appropriate (vs. inflated) expectations for all aspects of the course—in what they’ll learn and experience, about building relationships with the co-leaders and each other, etc.

-At least for men, there has occasionally been confusion over the level of “accountability” in DC. Accountability occurs organically in DC, as a by-product of the relationships being formed.

-Make clear that different people will get different things out of this study, depending on where they are in their walk with Christ. Newer Christians are more likely to be profoundly challenged—as they pick up Bible study tools and are exposed to a Biblical worldview on issues like marriage, work, and fellowship. More mature Christians will pick up nuggets of insight along the way, but be especially interested in the thornier doctrinal issues we will cover in the second year. All will get a solid Bible study, some accountability (encourage this but set reasonable expectations), some experiences, and the opportunity to form deep friendships with like-minded Christians—in a small group setting.

### On them, the group, and the material...

→ This is a *guided self-study*...

-Encourage them to pray before and while they are answering the study questions.

-Talk through strategies on how they might get “the work” done.

**-Give pointers on how to take notes outside of the meeting.** For example, they may find it helpful to write verses on the left-hand side of the page and observations on the right-hand side. Mark up the articles as they read them. Etc.

→ Encourage them to start working on DC today if possible!

→ This is a *guided self-study* in a small group setting with assistance from the facilitator and fellow group members.

*-Make clear that you will not cover all the material in the meeting.* (That said, make sure they feel free to raise other questions.)

*-Make sure to communicate the expectation that everyone will actively participate in class discussions.*

### **For the end of your meeting...**

-If not mandatory, begin to pin down how many will attend the Fall Retreat—or if there are multiple retreats, which they will attend. (*You'll need this info no later than next week.*) *The Leaders Guide for the Retreat is available on-line.*

→ Ask them if they have any questions!

-If you have time...

-Provide an overview of where DC fits within the programs/goals of your church.

-You may want to consider a brief mention of broad table-setting topics and caveats such as: the importance of freedom/charity in gray issues and unity on black/white issues; the need in the Christian life for intellect and experience; the connection between one's roots and fruits; the connections between belief and actions, between theology and life. You may find I John 2:6, Proverbs 27:17, Romans 10:17, and I Thessalonians 2:8 useful.

-Consider another (fun) ice-breaker.

-If you didn't do this before DC, consider having each of them share part of their "work/career" story.

-Don't close with a round-robin of "prayer requests". Break into prayers; do something creative; or just close with a prayer. (Remember our long discussion about prayer in the Intro portion of the Leaders Guide!)

## ***Week 2. The Character Traits of a Disciple of Jesus***

**Suggested Format of DC101 Meetings** (after week 1): *1.5 hours*

- I. Opening Prayer, Announcements, and Memory Verse (*5-10 minutes*)
- II. Discussion of Bible Reading (*20-35 minutes*)
- III. Topic-of-the-week Bible study (*40-55 minutes*)
- IV. Closing Prayer and Fellowship (*2-5 minutes*)

### *Administrative Details*

-Review names; you should definitely know all names and faces by the end of this meeting. Use name tags and continue to encourage them to learn each other's names.

-Revisit the covenant briefly and collect/keep any remaining covenants.

-Finish pinning down who is ***not*** going on the Retreat (if that's an option at your church) or which weekend they're going (if you have two options). At Southeast, send these numbers/names to the Men's Ministry secretary immediately after your meeting.

-Re-emphasize DC as a program of Bible memory, Bible reading and Bible study. Reiterate that you will not cover all material; DC as a guided self-study.

-Note that there will be a number of times when deeper topics will come up, especially in discussing the Bible reading. Familiarize yourself with the rest of the curriculum, especially the topics at the 400-level, so you can refer group members to the list of topics and defer many of those questions until a better time. Although you may want to address them on occasion, they are typically long and incomplete tangents that are more fruitfully pursued when done so thoroughly at their appointed time.

***-Publicly:*** Present a *brief* outline of the schedule/format for the meetings (on a white-board or at least verbally). For example, this week, it might be opening and memory verse from 6:00-6:10; Bible Reading from 6:10-6:45; and so on. If the group members have a better sense of how much time you're trying to devote to each part, it will probably make your job easier.

***-Privately:*** Have *detailed* plans to deal with time management and class participation. Prepare a detailed schedule (e.g., Ephesians 4-6 from 6:15-6:25) and a plan to get quieter members in the mix (e.g., if I haven't heard from everybody by the time we get to Titus, then I'm going to ask those individuals for their thoughts on those chapters).

*Week 2 Administrative Details (cont'd)*

-If you have more than one group leader doing DC, consider sitting in on each other's classes. This can promote consistency and give each person ideas on how to be more effective.

*Discussion*

-Encourage/exhort them if they struggle with the memory verse. If they really struggle, consider calling them this week and providing some assistance and accountability. Other ideas: work on it in the shower or in the car; make the verses "more memorable" by doing them as if you were an actor/actress.

-In general, it is often useful to discuss the memory verse—either what you or they found interesting. This week, note that II Peter 3:18 describes our goals for the course—to grow in both grace and knowledge. Beyond that, you might talk about how it ties into a disciple's broad goals with respect to family, work, church, and neighbors. It might open undesirable cans of worms, but it's interesting that 3:18's immediate context is 3:17's warning.

-This week, you might find it most appropriate to cover the article before the reading.

-*Intro to Ephesians*: A letter from Paul to the church he founded in Ephesus. A classic book on the Christian walk, emphasizing our resources and identity in Christ (chapters 1-3), before turning to our responsibilities and opportunities in Christ (chapters 4-6) with the pivotal "then" in 4:1. (Watchman Nee's *Sit, Walk, Stand* develops these themes, focusing on the three key terms in each of the three sections of Ephesians.) The latter includes key passages on unity, marriage, children, work, and the "armor of God". (Read/recommend Revelation 2:1-7 to read the sobering account of how the church fared a generation later.) Note also that the division in Ephesians parallels the division of material in DC101 vs. DC201-202—a good reason for us to start with that book.

-Ephesians 2:2-3 lists our three enemies—the devil, the flesh, and the world.

-*Intro to Titus*: One of Paul's "pastoral letters"—written to encourage and instruct the leader of the church at Crete.

-Note the call to leadership using the Titus reading (again, a nice topic for our first week's reading) and the need for wisdom using the Proverbs 1-4 reading.

-*Intro to Proverbs*: Note that Proverbs should be read as general principles rather than universal truths or commands. (Refer to a proverb or two to illustrate this—e.g., 15:25,30.) This is a recurring theme in DC101—the need to recognize literary type when interpreting Scripture.

*Week 2 Discussion (cont'd)*

-At least once during the study, reference one of the quotes in the margin of the pages—to invite group members to discuss those as they see fit.

-Reiterate that verses in parentheses are optional.

-Question #1a: Consider asking for “popcorn answers”—e.g., Jesus avoided sins of omission and commission; balanced grace and truth; his intentionality in building others up through relationship and apprenticeship (ultimately fulfilled in the coming of the Holy Spirit). The priorities of Jesus imply the trade-offs between the choices of the good and the best.

-#1b and 1d can be nice opportunities for early transparency within your group—and/or a big use of time. Think about how you want to set this up—asking most DC’ers to say something or just trying to stick to more significant stories.

-#4a: Faith and obedience largely run hand-in-hand. Note the importance of believing that God always wants the best for us—so that our faith and trust lead to following God and his commands.

-6b: A tree alludes to growth and provides sustenance, shade, fruit, etc. A tree is dependent on a strong root system and outside sustenance.

-As an intro to basic doctrine in the rest of DC101, you may find it useful to share a “Statement of Faith” from your church or denomination. And as an intro for next week, briefly address how we reach the goal of loving God and others—in broad terms, including us in partnership with God/Spirit and us relying on God’s word and godly counsel.

-As you wrap up, encourage them to think through how they’ve written in their books this week—and make adjustments for how they’ll prepare in weeks to come.

-If you haven’t done it already, consider having each of them share part of their “work/career” story.

-This is one of the shorter weeks in terms of material for DC101. That said, there are more administrative things to do—and you may struggle with time management this first week. All that said, if you have time for more than a closing prayer, consider asking them to break into pairs and praying about a particular trait from the day’s discussion. (You might also consider another ice-breaker.)

### ***Week 3. God, the Father***

#### *Administrative Details*

- For at least one more week, publicly present a brief outline of time expectations—and have detailed plans in hand to deal with time management and class participation. Prepare a schedule (e.g., John 4-6 from 6:20-6:30) and a plan to get quieter members in the mix (e.g., if I haven't heard from everybody by the time we get to John 7-9, then I'm going to ask those individuals for their thoughts on those chapters).
- Continue to work toward even class participation. Ironically, you may have more trouble balancing the level of comments from your group members this week. Some of your more talkative members might have “found their legs” after week 2.
- Exhort them if they struggle with the memory verse again (maybe they didn't know what to expect last week, but now they should know!)—and talk with them outside of your meeting about how they're trying to do it. Consider calling them this week and providing some assistance and accountability.

#### *Discussion:*

- Memory verse: It's inspiring that God has prepared these works “in advance”, anticipating our arrival—as opposed to merely coming up with something for us to do when we happen to show up in the Kingdom. Note also: the context of Ephesians 2:8-9.
- This is your first opportunity to cover review verses. Have everybody do it—or pick two or three people *at random*.
- Intro to John*: Not one of the three “synoptic” gospels (from Gr. “syn” meaning together and “optic” meaning “seeing”); i.e., Mt, Mk and Lk were prominently based on the same sources. A profound book, focusing more on theology and philosophy than the other gospels, while still relaying the historical events of Christ's ministry.
- On John, you may find it more difficult to deal with tangents. Given the material, there will be a tendency to move away from applications to discussions of difficult doctrine and trivia/knowledge.
- Simpson article:
  - A good article where it may be difficult to close the discussion—or it might be difficult to get discussion going (if they haven't figured out how to mark up their articles appropriately).

*Week 3: Discussion—Simpson article (cont'd):*

- A useful framework might be to talk about how Christians and non-Christians tend to over-emphasize or under-emphasize a fear of God. A nice way to wrap up may be to say that the author is trying to convey the necessity of holding onto the term “fear”, but recognizing the baggage of misunderstanding it—either watering it down too much or causing us to be too fearful.
- It may be useful to note that a.) the most frequent command in Scripture is “fear not”; b.) a lack of fear is often attached to circumstances; and c.) with respect to circumstances: if you fear God, you won’t fear anything else!
- You may find it useful to ask them what fear does *not* mean.
- Remind them to mark up their books as they read the articles!
- As you intro to the Bible study, note C.S. Lewis’ point that we are all theologians. The question is whether we’re good or bad theologians!
- 1c is a trick question, but note the common over-emphasis on God’s judgment in the OT and under-emphasis on Christ’s seemingly softer approach in the NT (even within his First Coming). John 3:16-17 is a nice reference here.
- 1d: Willard has a good idea for J (p. 35). Chesterton’s quote (p. 31) takes care of Y (for God as “young”). One person suggested Xenophilic for X. It’s fun to go around the room and have each person take one letter. If you have time, do it a second or third time!
- 2: Note that all of these point to a personal God who is interested in relationship—vs. God as a mystical power or an impersonal, deistic god (define deism for them).
- 2e: Ezekiel 16 is optional and lengthy but highly recommended for those less familiar with this picture of God.
- 3a: History involves God’s work with Israel and other nations in the OT, the life and ministry of Christ, miracles (esp. the Resurrection), and our personal history.
- 3b: This refers most obviously to “nature”, but more broadly, to all forms of God’s creation.
- 3b and 3c: Note the implications for evangelism.
- 3c: You may want to note that this is the pretext for C.S. Lewis’ *Mere Christianity*.
- 3: Consider using Lewis’ quote on p. 35 to prompt discussion.
- 4b: Often, we reduce sin to sins of commission. Those in the World often reduce it further to “really bad” sins of commission, helping them to imagine that one can be a “good person”.

*Week 3: Discussion (cont'd):*

-4c: This will be illustrated more directly using a word study in week 6. God saves us from our sin, ourselves, a profitless life, eternal death/separation from Him in death, and tough circumstances (sometimes).

## ***Week 4. God, the Son***

### *Administrative Details*

-Take stock of how well you're running the group. Are they nailing the memory verse? Is everyone completing the work? Is everyone participating at a reasonable level AND at about the same quantity? How is your time management? If you're not satisfied with any of the above, what's the plan? In particular, you might be tempted to "settle" for something that is good but not best. Continue to exhort, instruct, counsel, and providing accountability as useful.

-For next week, the chapters from Thomas' book are optional. (If not read in DC101, we'll get them in DC301.) But they're excellent and applicable, so strongly encourage your members to read at least chapter 1.

### *Discussion*

-Memory Verse: It may be helpful to note the context in verses 16-20.

-This may be a good week to consider doing the article and study before the reading.

-If you have Boyd and Eddy's *Across the Spectrum*, you may find chapters 7 & 8 useful.

-1a: Consider asking for "popcorn" answers here. Among other things, note both what Christ did and did not do (no sins of commission or omission).

-1b: Christ's empathy, His example, God's staggering condescension, unity and partnership in ministry (us as dust *and* the breath of God; Eph 2:10), His dependence on God through Holy Spirit, as the perfect high priest *and* perfect sacrifice (as in Hebrews)

-2b: Note the implications of Christ's claim to forgive sins.

-2c: Why didn't Christ just come here for a week—merely to get crucified & resurrected.

-3a: Justification as "just as if I'd never sinned"—in terms of relation to God.

-3b: He fulfilled it; He didn't abolish it. He praised obedience. He emphasized the letter vs. spirit of the law. He freed us from the law but "holds us" to even higher standards.

-3c: Note Romans 5:10 as the key verse in Thomas' *The Saving Life of Christ*.

-4: Consider asking for "popcorn" answers here. Rev 19's horse vs. 1<sup>st</sup> coming's donkey; whose blood is shed next time; Lord's Supper of invitation vs. Christ's Supper of judgment; baby vs. warrior; Isaiah's picture of the Suffering Servant vs. Conquering King; Peter's sword vs. Christ's; largely, serve/love vs. (final) judgment

-This is a relatively short week in terms of material—and thus, one of your best opportunities for a significant investment in group prayer. Consider having them break into pairs to close things out.

## ***Week 5. God, the Holy Spirit***

### *Administrative Details*

-Take stock of your group. Are people taking the memory verse seriously but not quaking in their boots? (Are they memorizing for the right reasons?) Are people completing their reading and study? Is everyone participating at about the same quantity? How is your time management? If you're not satisfied with the above, what's the plan? Don't settle for what is good but not best.

-The material covered in the next two weeks will vary, based on when/if you have a retreat scheduled in that time frame. (If the retreat is next week or within a day of your meeting, postpone most of the work until week 7.) Make sure that your group members understand what is expected of them over the next two weeks—on word studies, memory verses, etc.

-Assuming that you have a retreat scheduled, explain that the second half of DC101 is the heaviest workload until the DC400-level. (If you don't have a retreat, then the next two weeks are relatively light and only the last three weeks will seem heavier.)

-To prepare for the retreat, tell them not to do any of the questions/verses (p. 111-115). But they should read the articles (p. 99-110) if possible—balanced with prep for the next week's DC material. (At the least, they should read the Jerry Bridges article—p. 99-101) This is also a good week to remind them to mark up the articles as they read them.

-Because there is less material in weeks 6 and 7, you'll need to add something. 1.) These two weeks are your best op to do something with prayer during 101. 2.) By the end of 202, you'll want to hear brief versions of their "stories" about God (testimonies—not necessarily about salvation—a key way in which God has moved in their lives), family, and work/career. 3.) A quiz on DC'ers names and spouses' names.

-Some may struggle with next week's start into word studies. Sell their purpose/use as a Bible study tool. Point to the resources indicated (and others of which you might know) and offer to help if they have questions. Prepare them by looking at the instructions in week 6—or beyond that, working through an example using a text concordance as a resource. Some people are comfortable, immediately, with an internet concordance. But many people will benefit from having a physical concordance in front of them. We recommend having (access to) *The NIV Exhaustive Concordance*, but we try to provide sufficient instruction to get by without it. Strongly consider bringing a text concordance to help out your DC'ers.

-Make clear that the word study on "yasa/sozo" is meant to determine the various ways in which we are "saved" according to Scripture. (In the past, DC'ers have focused on the definitions of the Greek and Hebrew terms, which are not all that different.)

## *Week 5—Discussion*

-The optional word studies are meant as (easy) practice. The study on “earring(s)”—and the other on “raven”—yield more fruit from the NIV. On “raven”, note the only (ironic) time when a raven is cast in a favorable light. In terms of Greek words, “*anthrakia*” (a term only used twice, in John 18:18 and 21:9) has very interesting and different contexts.

-Memory Verse: Ian Thomas makes the point that we often think that (and live as if) the verse is reversed—that we must not gratify the sinful nature in order to live by the Spirit—confusing means and ends.

-*Intro to Matthew*: Written by a tax collector who left his vocation to follow Christ (9:9-13). His gospel has a Jewish “flavor”—seeming to be particularly concerned with Jewish questions and perspective in trying to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. As you read, note the huge emphasis on Christ fulfilling OT prophecy. Note also that we’ll spend an entire week on “The Sermon on the Mount” at the end of DC403. In Matthew 1, the four women—and the kings and common men—are very interesting.

-As your group members get more comfortable, patterns may begin to emerge—for example, that they begin to see the reading as more technical than we would like, or certain individuals start to talk a lot more than they did in the first few weeks. Continue to reflect on what’s happening in your group.

-You might want to reverse the reading and the study this week, given the importance of the topic. (If you do so, consider covering Matthew 5-7 after 8-10.)

-Riter’s article is outstanding.

-1a: Can be (facetiously) rephrased as “if you had to get rid of one member of the Trinity, who would it be?” References to the “Holy Ghost” may be baggage in this regard for some people. Ironic that the One we’ve experienced most directly (the Spirit) is the One that most have trouble conceptualizing.

-1b: (The) Holy Spirit is a He not an It. Note the difficulty of trying to define the Trinity (as three persons but one essence) and resorting to analogies like water/ice/steam. (The Trinity gets an entire lesson in DC401.)

-2: Review “justification” (from last week)—being declared righteous, a point-in-time when one becomes a Christian. Sanctification can refer to the same thing, but is more often used to describe the process of being made righteous in trying to live the Christian life.

-3a: God’s provision and our participation are not 50/50, but 100/100.

*Week 5—Discussion (cont'd)*

-3: See: pictures of throwing logs on a fire, turning up a dimmer switch, and a leaf “making itself available” to the wind (vs. in a corner or so wet that it can’t move). See also: ability vs. availability, Schaeffer’s term “active passivity”, and “try easier” (a saying in baseball).

-4a-b: It’s interesting that Israel, early-on, had God’s presence—and the disciples had Jesus—but both struggled mightily. Note also that Jesus was not omni-present.

-4c: You may want to have your DC’ers throw out “popcorn” answers to this question—brief insights they had on the Romans 8 passage.

-6: The metaphors here lend themselves to seeing the Holy Spirit as an “it” (quench) and a “He” (grieve). See also: pollutants in a gas tank, static on a phone line.

## ***Week 6. Intro to Scripture***

### *Administrative Details*

- The memory verse is optional for this week vs. next—depending on whether you have had a Spiritual Disciplines retreat in the last week. If you have multiple retreats, have those who were not at the first one do the new verse and have the others read it.
- Because there is less material in weeks 6 and 7, you'll need to add something. 1.) These two weeks are your best op to do something more significant with prayer during 101. 2.) By the end of 202, you'll want to hear brief versions of their “stories” about God (testimonies—not necessarily about salvation—a key way in which God has moved in their lives), family, and work/career. 3.) A quiz on DC'ers names and spouses' names.
- Strongly consider bringing one or more text concordances to cover the word studies during the meeting. You might also have them bring computers to use on-line resources. In any case, make sure to spend enough time on at least two of the exercises and “hold their hands” as necessary. Encourage/exhort them as necessary.
- Explain why word studies can be useful—to study a particular topic (e.g., divorce), to find a verse through a keyword (e.g., “I don't remember where it is, but it's about “goodness”), or to figure how the word has been translated (as we're emphasizing here).
- Make clear to communicate that word studies are not a panacea to Biblical questions, but they often bring additional clarity and insight.
- If useful, remind them that their Bible reading in DC is still supposed to be “reading”, not study.
- We have additional word studies available on-line for DC201-202.

### *Discussion*

- From the Memory Verse, some have observed that “teaching, rebuking, correcting and training” fit Paul's epistles well—as Romans, I/II Corinthians, Galatians, and then, everything after Ephesians. Also, note that teaching and training are similar, positive references—while rebuking and correcting are similar, negative references.
- If you have Boyd and Eddy's *Across the Spectrum*, you may find chapter 1 useful this week.
- In the intro, convey basic info (66 books; OT in Hebrew and NT in Greek—with a little bit in Aramaic (6 chapters in Daniel; 3 in Ezra); development of Bible over 1500 years through numerous authors and in three continents; organized by type vs. chronology [cover broad details as intro to following lessons on [law, history, etc.]; and so on).

### *Week 6 Discussion (cont'd)*

-At some point this week, note that Jesus viewed the OT as inspired and authoritative—and the OT was accepted “as is” pre-Christ. If it comes up, it may be useful to note that the 3<sup>rd</sup> C. church recognized (rather than established) the NT Scriptures through the Spirit and an eminently reasonable “selection” process.

-A potentially useful article over the next two weeks:

<http://rickwarren.org/devotional/english/biblical-interpretation-god-doesn-t-leave-you-in-the-dark>

-1: It might be useful to imagine what it would be like for your group members to translate a French article—and to see the variety that would result.

-3: Note Mt 11:28-30's grace for non-believers (Eph 2:8-9) vs. Mt 16:24's discipleship for believers (Eph 2:10).

-4: The idea here is that Christ and Peter seemed to be purposely choosing their words—whether the unconditional love of *agape* or the seemingly less-powerful love of *phileo*. (That said, on occasion, one will find descriptions of *agape* that are more in the heart and of *phileo* that are more active.) From there, one might speculate on what Christ was trying to accomplish and Peter's decision to use *phileo* instead of *agape*. The KJV will not be as effective here since it translates these terms as “love” and “lovest”.

-5b: A word study on “earring(s)” is somewhat odd, but also a nice and tidy exercise. (There are relatively few references to find.) Eric once taught a Sunday School lesson on this word study, entitled “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly”—categorizing the references to earrings as good, bad and ugly.

-5d: Again, a word study on “raven(s)” is a nice and tidy exercise. Given their Biblical history and biological reputation, Matthew Henry notes that Elijah's "caterers were very unlikely".

-6: Emphasize the richness of the words often translated “save” (see also: Hebrew term “*shalom*” for “peace”). A term like “save” begs the question of how the term is being used: saved from what? saved to what? Note various definitions and a key verse for some or all of those definitions. For example, verse A illustrates being saved from physical death while verse B illustrated being saved from spiritual death. (Lk 23:35-39 is interesting since it features two different uses of the same term.) See also: Mt 8:25, Acts 27:20,31—as well as Mt 9:22, Acts 4:9, 14:9, and Jude 23. Putting it another way: grace = salvation = transformation.

## ***Week 7. Overview of Scripture***

### *Administrative Details*

- Warn them about next week's heavier load; send an encouraging email early this week.
- The study questions for Jeremiah (the Bible reading for the "semester break") are in the back of DC101. But you'll probably want to order DC201-202 soon.
- With less material again this week, you'll need to add: 1.) something more significant with prayer; 2.) brief versions of their "stories" about God (testimonies—not necessarily about salvation—a key way in which God has moved in their lives), family, or work/career; or 3.) a quiz on DC'ers names and spouses' names.

### *Discussion*

-2: Note the reliability of Scripture, incl. "inerrancy"—but only insofar as correctly translated, interpreted, and to the extent that it speaks. In addition, you might make brief references to the strength of Jewish oral tradition, impressive manuscript availability, internal consistency, fulfilled/detailed prophecy (see: Matthew), the changed lives of the disciples, confirmatory archaeological evidences, early church fathers quote virtually every verse, literature indicates that legend does not develop that quickly, corroboration of extra-Biblical sources, and subjective evidences. All that said, this ultimately remains a matter of faith—as with all history (or to Lewis' quote, 99% of things we believe on authority). You might recommend Josh McDowell's *More than a Carpenter*—and Lee Strobel's books, *Case for Faith* and *Case for Christ*—on this and other basic issues in apologetics.

-2: This is one of many areas that we cover for DC'ers and those with whom they will come in contact (both Christian and non-Christian). We want DC'ers to have their faith strengthened and to be "thoroughly equipped" to minister and evangelize, in part, by having stronger answers to the legitimate questions they will face in sharing their faith.

-3c: Note Eph 6:17's sword as the only offensive weapon in the "armor of God"

-3d: Note how the OT points to Christ (Gen 22's substitutionary ram, Ex's Passover Lamb, Leviticus' sacrifices, Josh 20's cities of refuge, Ruth's kinsman-redeemer, Isaiah's suffering servant, etc.) See also: lyrics to "Name Above All Names".

-3e: legalism, pride, listen vs. do (Jas 1:22-25), knowledge vs. love (I Cor 8:1b)

*Week 7 Discussion (cont'd)*

-5: Emphasize the richness of the words often translated “save” (see also: Hebrew term “*shalom*” for “peace”). A term like “save” begs the question of how the term is being used: saved from what? saved to what? Note various definitions and a key verse for some or all of those definitions. For example, verse A illustrates being saved from physical death while verse B illustrated being saved from spiritual death. (Lk 23:35-39 is interesting since it features two different uses of the same term.) See also: Mt 8:25, Acts 27:20,31—as well as Mt 9:22, Acts 4:9, 14:9, and Jude 23. Putting it another way: grace = salvation = transformation.

## ***Week 8. OT law and history/prose***

### *Administrative Details* (if you haven't done these yet)

-Begin to organize your marriage retreat. Ideally, it would be an overnight weekend getaway during the weekend between the end of DC201 and the start of DC202—from Friday evening through early afternoon on Saturday. Spouses should be included and, of course, made to feel as welcome as possible. Be conscious of cost, providing scholarships as possible and as needed.

-Especially if you're at a larger church and/or developing new leaders, think of service opportunities to include sometime within the curriculum—at least during the “semester breaks”. Beyond helping others, these projects build community within the group, inform discussions of stewardship, and promote the Christian model of servant-leadership. In addition, look to set up social opportunities, adding spouses and children as appropriate.

### *Discussion*

-Discuss the two conditions in II Timothy 2:15 for being an effective workman—both integrity and doctrine.

-This might be a good week to start with the article and study. In any case, make sure to leave enough time for them. The topic on the law in Joshua is riveting and the story in I Samuel is compelling. For many people, this will be an eye-opening look into the power and usefulness of the Old Testament. In DC, we're aiming to help people put their Bibles to more profitable use—how to read devotionally, tools to study, and a vision for its beauty and what it offers for daily living. The memory verses and the passages we'll study in the last half of DC101 are a key to this growth.

-*Intro to Galatians*: Paul's letter to the churches in the region of Galatia. A crucial book on “legalism”—depending on one's own efforts with respect to justification or sanctification. In particular, Paul deals with the teachings of the Judaizers, who taught that one must observe the Law in order to be a Christian—that a Gentile had to become a Jew (including circumcision!) to become a Christian.

-In Galatians 1:4, it may be useful to point out the broad use of the term “rescue” as in “save”—our word study a few weeks ago.

*Week 8 Discussion (cont'd)*

-*Intro to I Corinthians*: Paul's letter to the church at Corinth. Where Galatians focuses on dismissing grace, the issue here is "libertine" or carnal behavior—accepting the grace of God but then taking it too lightly. I Corinthians includes important discussion of a variety of subjects, including the Christian response to immorality in the church, "the love chapter", spiritual gifts, and the resurrection of the saints. A prominent theme in the middle of the book is doing the best we can within the circumstances we find ourselves—rather than seeking to change those circumstances.

-Although there is narrative and a bit of prophecy within the first five books of the Bible (the Pentateuch)—and there are "laws" elsewhere in the OT, "the books of the Law" are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. And although there is certainly history elsewhere in the OT, the "books of history" range from Joshua through Esther.

-1a and 2a (combine as appropriate): The Law provides many objective standards (Mt 22:36-40), convicts us (Rom 3:20b), and drives us to trust in Christ's sufficiency (Rom 6:23).

-2a: Note ceremonial vs. civil and moral law.

-1b and 2b: Note the power of story in communicating truths (e.g., Nathan with David). As an aside, this is a strength of a "post-modern" (vs. "modern") approach.

-3: On the study of "cities of refuge", note:

-God's justice *and* mercy underlined here and elsewhere throughout OT—as opposed to the idea of the God of the OT vs. the NT

-“avenger of blood” as another responsibility of Ruth 2:20's "kinsman-redeemer" [see also: Dt 25:5-6, Lev 25:25,47-49]

-cities of refuge were easily entered [Dt 19:3; tradition tells us that they were cleared every spring, the bridges were repaired, and the gates were always open], available to all [Josh 20:9's "any", I Tim 2:5-6's "gave himself as a ransom for *all* men", Mt 11:28's "come to me, *all* you who are weary..."] and more-than-adequately furnished with supplies [Ps 142:4-5, Is 40:28-31; Jn 6:51's J & 57's S, Phil 4:19]

-Christ as the ultimate high priest foreshadowed by this passage

-see: chapter 16 out of Eric's book, *Inheriting the Promised Land* (a book for supplemental reading in DC301; also available as a sample chapter on <http://homepages.ius.edu/dschansb>)

-4: Saul commits sins within three big categories in these three chapters: rushing God's timing, legalism, and living out of the flesh

*Week 8 Discussion (cont'd)*

-4a: a violation of God's timing and using God's ordinances for his own purposes and as a mere ritual

-4b on Saul vs. Jonathan: dependent on God for timing, trying to discern God's specific will vs. following own will

-4b on Saul's legalism: unnecessarily weakened God's people/soldiers, more focused on food than Philistines/enemies, led to 32's over-kill, promoted division over a non-essential, 37's part of what kept God from answering him, 46's stopped the battle

-4c: note the irony of building his first altar as it's all slipping away

-4d: total destruction vs. saving the best of what God had condemned—to give it to God!

-5: Ian Thomas talks about the Amalekites, at length, in *The Saving Life of Christ*. Hopefully, at least a few people will have read Thomas, casting vision for its usefulness for making the OT even more applicable and its vision-casting for Spirit-filled living.

## ***Week 9. OT prophets and poetry***

*Administrative Details* (repeated/finalized next week)

- Ask for future commitment for DC201.
- Determine celebration details—e.g., a breakfast at a local restaurant.
- Establish a mid-break meeting to discuss the first half of Jeremiah. This will help with accountability and to break up a lot of material into two discussions.
- Next week or at the mid-break meeting to discuss the first half of Jeremiah, hand out DC201/202 book. If you're at Southeast, you'll be encouraged to have them get their 201/202 books in early December.
- Consider organizing breakfast groups of 2-4 people to meet a few times over the break—for fellowship and for accountability in reading Jeremiah. (See: last page of DC101 Leader's Guide for more detail.)
- Get them to start thinking about the Spring marriage retreat.
- Going into the last few weeks, again, take stock of how well you're running the group. How are they doing with memory verses, the reading and the study questions? Is everyone participating at a reasonable level? How is your time management? If you're not satisfied with any of the above, what's the plan?

## *Discussion*

- Memory Verse: This verse, as with all of the Old Testament, was relevant to the Israel of that time. But, as part of Scripture, it has application for His people today, as well. Note the importance of this idea for our theology—believing that God always wants the very best for us. To quote a past co-leader, the verse is easy to memorize, but tough to remember! It's also interesting that “prosper” is the Hebrew term, *shalom*.
- The “wisdom literature” of the OT runs from Job through Song of Songs. The prophets start with Isaiah and run through the rest of the OT.
- The first article is good, but may not lead to much discussion.
- 1a: If you haven't done so in discussing I Corinthians 14 (the primary NT discussion of the gift of prophecy and the office of prophet), define prophecy as “truth-telling”—with “fore-telling” (as predicting future events) and “forth-telling” (talking about truth in the present). The distinction is important because most people focus on the predictive elements of prophecy, but most prophecy is simply forth-telling. (For example, God did a lot more reminding than revealing through the prophet Isaiah.) This is also important in informing the discussion of 2b.

*Week 9 Discussion (cont'd)*

-1b: On why God didn't lay out *fore-telling* prophecy more clearly...

-some cannot be put into words

-develops faith, growth, etc.; vs. duty, resignation, etc.

-keeps the focus on broader principles, rather than narrower details

-promotes humility and dependence-- here and in general

-for us vs. them (see: Mt 13:10-13 on parables)

-to stimulate our curiosity: Matthew Henry's "but they are foretold more darkly, to beget in us a veneration for the scripture, and to engage our attention and excite our enquiry." (see: increasing difficulty of Rev, esp. post-chapter 5, to draw one into the book)

-"more and clearer" as more than we could handle (see: food/sin over a lifetime, circumstances entering trials; things we never knew about when in danger)

-might prevent it from occurring: MH's "Had they been as clearly foretold in all their circumstances as God could have revealed them, the prediction might have prevented the accomplishment" (the movie *Minority Report* plays with this theme)

-1c: The "wisdom literature" is timeless, translating well across time and to different sorts of people.

-2a: deliver God's word; reveal His will; revelation and reminder; wisdom and warnings; convict and convert, especially within the community; at times, a "hardening ministry" (Is 6:9-13)

-2b: standards of justice and righteousness, temporal vs. eternal perspective; helpful on internal consistency of the Scriptures through validity of prophecies; bolsters faith in His word and its promises

-3a: God is dead serious about sin and willing to do "anything" to reach His people.

-3b: Note the beauty/poignancy of 2:14 and 11:8-9.

-4: Ask them if they have any thoughts on the exercise &/or if they're willing to share what they've written. This can be a very cool moment if people are willing to share.

-5: Solomon is critical of human effort if outside of relationship with God and not grounded in His will, glory, purpose, and so on

-5a: Meaningless implies *no* value; vanity implies limited value and substance—something one might reasonably but incorrectly rely upon

*Week 9 Discussion (cont'd)*

-5b: See: 1:16-18's learning; 2:1-2's laughter; 2:3's liquor/libations/lush; 2:4-11's labor, legacy, landscaping (nothing grows under the sun), luxury, livestock/land/loot, lust; 2:17-23's labor; in a word, lost vs. 2:24-26's loving God and others

-6: You may want to recommend Beam's book and Tommy Nelson's terrific conference on Song of Solomon. The response to this question may be interesting, especially if they're overly sensitive or leery to talk about it. In any case, it may be useful to have theological discussions about God wanting us to enjoy legitimate pleasures and how this models the intimacy and joy we are to have in our relationship with our groom, Christ.

## ***Week 10. Apocrypha, Apocalyptic, NT Gospels/Acts, Epistles***

### *Administrative Details*

- Ask for future commitment for DC201.
- Determine celebration details—e.g., a breakfast at a local restaurant (perhaps for an hour vs. 1.5 hours) or a party at a co-leader's house.
- Get them to start thinking about the Spring marriage retreat.
- Discuss the DC “semester break” material to help with reading Jeremiah (at the end of the DC101 book; provide an intro as you see fit), as you go into DC201. Make sure to remind them that this is meant to be reading not study within DC; encourage them not to get bogged down in their reading. Note also that Jeremiah will not be as easy to read as Matthew or Ephesians!
- If you're not at Southeast, hand out DC201-202 now (and collect money) or at the beginning of DC201. If you're at Southeast, you'll get an email about the book becoming available in early December.
- Establish a mid-break meeting (standard day and time) to discuss the first half of Jeremiah. This will help with accountability.
- Consider organizing breakfast groups of 2-4 people to meet a few times over the break—for fellowship and for accountability in reading Jeremiah.

### *Discussion*

*-Intro to I & II Timothy:* Paul's two other pastoral letters—written to his young friend, Timothy. Paul was a mentor to Timothy, as they initially ministered together, and later, as Paul encouraged and instructed Timothy as the leader of the local church. Given the goals of DC, it makes for a very nice ending to the reading in DC101.

*Week 10 Discussion (cont'd)*

-The Apocrypha is 14 books of “inspired religious writings” that are not included in the Canon of Scripture for a variety of reasons: it was not accepted then or now within Judaism as inspired on par with the rest of the Torah; never quoted by Jesus or the apostles [although alluded to twice, but not as authoritative]; and no Hebrew versions of the books were available in Hebrew when Jerome translated the Bible into Latin around 450 AD. That said, the Apocrypha was widely available within the early Church and has been used by Christians through the ages (even though they agreed that it did not have the same authority as Scripture). It is good literature that fills in an important historical gap. And to understand Jesus more fully, it is useful to understand the “deutero-canonical” literature. See also: Maccabees and the historical events celebrated with Hanukkah. It is also the sole Biblical support for some Catholic and Mormon doctrines and practice.

-On the Stafford article, it’s important to note that the Jewish people were looking for a political/military Messiah. In discussing the Hartman article and the list of references about Jesus’ teaching, it may be helpful to point out that “love your enemies” cannot be taken in a fully literal manner. They’re not your enemy if you’re loving them!

-1a: “Because Dad/God said so” is a good first answer. Beyond that, the four gospels provide different angles on the same story, appeal to different audiences, and provide one more than the required “two or three witnesses”!

-1b: To generalize, for the past (to relate history—the ministry of Christ and the origins of the Early Church), present (to relate counsel to individuals and churches [see: I Corinthians vs. Galatians]), and future (to reveal the person of Christ in His Second Coming and God’s work through history and in final judgment).

-2a: For individuals, did one need to become Jewish in order to become Christian? For the Church, would it be a sect of Judaism or a free-standing religion? This has clear implications for the spread of the Gospel; the role of culture and traditions vs. Truth; and defining primary vs. secondary issues and justification in Christ vs. legalism (see: Galatians). Legalism is such an important topic that we’ll use it to kick off DC401.

-2a: The regulations that remain do not compromise a gospel of grace but speak to the need to deal with a huge issue for the Gentiles (sexual immorality) and issues that make it difficult for Gentiles and Jews to be in community with each other (food/idols, blood/meat). The letter does not spell this out in detail, but we can presume that this was the subject of much discussion after Paul and Barnabas read the letter to the Gentiles.

-2b: All of the big church leaders, including Peter’s credible role as a former skeptic.

-2c: The reading in I Cor 7-11 can be tied in here.

### *Week 10 Discussion (cont'd)*

-3d: See: the importance of style issues (tact, etc.); a picture of Paul's ministry and personality; a representation of Christ's ministry (us as O; Christ as Paul); the importance of making things right; response to slavery (etc.) as more about character than circumstance (I Cor 7-11); a story of an amazing life change (incl. possibility that this is the Onesimus who later become bishop!). In a word, Paul is trying to be as persuasive as possible (convinced that he is right and worried about the outcome) while still respecting the dignity and free will of Philemon. Imagine a similar situation with friends or children—where you're trying to convince/persuade them.

-4a: You could read these as literal beasts—or beasts representing literal individuals—or beasts representing groups or power/ideology.

-4b: 13:1's horns/crowns and blasphemy—as political and religious power opposed to God—most likely, the power of the State allied with subtleties of false religion (given 11's lamb, 13's miracles and 14's deception)

-4c: The power and persecution of contemporary Rome vs. a general focus on the “end times” (i.e., tribulations/difficulties in the Church Age) vs. specific focus on a still-future End Times

### **Semester Breaks, Service Opportunities, and Breakfast Groups**

#### *The goals:*

- to continue to pursue the goals of DC over natural calendar breaks (most likely, Thanksgiving through New Years Day and early August through Labor Day)
  - to most conveniently cover three of the longer books in the Bible (Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah) and to provide discussion material for the first week of three semesters
  - to promote service and to have an additional experiential component within DC (especially if you're at a larger church and/or developing new leaders)
  - perhaps, to have smaller groups that will build relationships further and encourage discussion about the Bible reading
  - social opportunities, adding spouses and children as appropriate, to build up relationships, camaraderie, and community
- At minimum, we would recommend at least one mid-break meeting—about half-way through the break and planning to cover about half of the material.

## **Semester Breaks, Service Opportunities, and Breakfast Groups (cont'd)**

-You may want to add a second mid-break meeting that would combine a discussion of the reading with each member telling part of their “story”—work/career (if not done earlier); family; or spiritual (not necessarily relating to salvation, but how God has moved in their lives; this has a nice spot in the evangelism discussion in DC202).

-If you want to promote smaller groups that would meet more frequently during the break, it may be helpful for you to gather and disseminate geographic information (where the group members live and work) to help them determine convenient meeting places.

***-As leader, you may want to provide some level of accountability by email &/or personal contact. Some may struggle with reading a large book over a long period of time on their own.*** Consider meeting with each breakfast group at least once, to provide some accountability and to foster your relationships with them.

-Likewise, prepare for the possibility of some grumbling about the length and difficulty of the reading. Emphasize that it is the only assignment during these breaks and reiterate that they are only supposed to read, rather than study, the material.

-We read Jeremiah over the first break; it is the longest book in the Bible (aside from Psalms), but it is the most accessible of these three. Second, we read Ezekiel; although it is slightly longer than Isaiah, it does not require nearly as much historical context for adequate understanding. We save Isaiah for last, because it will be read after the historical portion of the OT has been read. If you begin DC in the Fall of year 1, you would read Jeremiah over Christmas of year 1, Ezekiel in August of year 2, and Isaiah over Christmas of year 2. (This also has the added benefit of putting the longest book [Jeremiah] and the heavily Messianic book of Isaiah over the longer Christmas break.)

-In the discussions of the major prophets, we would recommend that you stick closely to verses that moved them and discussion over the questions we’ve provided, leaving difficult questions for outside study—as with our typical approach to the weekly Bible Reading, but even more important if you have less knowledge about these books!