

An Introduction to the Survey Curriculum

For many years Christians have come to appreciate the value of Bible-centered classes for all ages in the local congregation. In more recent times churches have sought for a unified Bible curriculum that enables the student to become familiar with all the text of Scripture and to know the message of that text. To that end a number of people have written study guides with this ultimate goal in mind, namely, to take the student through all parts of the Scripture in some logical fashion. This curriculum with its study guides and notes was created with that same objective.

The curriculum plan

Here are some of the goals I had in mind in planning the balance and scheduling of material to be studied.

- My goal in designing the curriculum was to enable the student to cover all of the Bible over a period of several years. It is important that the student have the opportunity to study all the word of God and not just a condensed form of it.
- However, one of the challenges of this approach is that, typically, survey curriculum are very heavy on the OT because of the relative proportion of the OT text to the NT. Students often become weary of long periods of study in the OT with little time in the NT. Consequently I wanted the dominant emphasis of the course of study to be on the NT, since disciples today are accountable to its teaching. In order to accomplish this we have studied the material in this sequence:
 - Complete NT Survey (9 quarters with 26 lesson per quarter)
 - One-year Survey of the OT in the historical section (4 quarters with 26 lessons per quarter). I am still working on these lessons; so they are not included on this cd.
 - Complete NT Survey (9 quarters with 26 lesson per quarter)
 - One-year Survey of the OT in the prophecy section (4 quarters with 26 lessons per quarter).
 - Complete NT Survey (9 quarters with 26 lesson per quarter)
 - One-year Survey of the OT in the poetry section (4 quarters with 26 lessons per quarter).

With the approach the student will cover all of the NT 3 times and all of the OT 1 time over a period of about ten years. I think this is a good overall balance.

- The academic pacing of one chapter per lesson prevents the class from spending so much time on one book that other texts are not given their own proper study. Being able to continue through the program repeatedly provides some spaced repetition which will enable the student to increase his knowledge of the text. The relative constant exposure to all of the NT teaching will help the student to see the overall message and the contribution that each book makes to that overall message.
- The curriculum was designed to continue on the course of study consecutively from Sunday to Wednesday. I believe that there is much to commend this approach.

- First, it is helpful for the student to stay on one train of thought from study to study. This also encourages more regular attendance.
- If younger classes are encouraged to study the same material, it provides a wonderful opportunity for parents and children to study together and discuss together the material being studied. In many cases, I have written lesson guides designed especially for younger students; but I have found that usually students from the teenage years onward can use and profit from the study guides.
- There are several approaches to the study of the life of Christ. I have written this curriculum with two approaches from which you may choose. Since there would be significant repetition of material in studying the four gospels in order, I've written two "harmony type" studies of the gospels. One of them arranges material from several chapters in a single lesson. The second approach chooses fifty two "representative" chapters from the gospels and studies one chapter per lesson. Both are written with a view to a chronological approach (as best that can be determined). I've used both with good results.

About the Study Guides

I have found it helpful to give the students a study guide to help them as they read through the text and prepare for class. This serves two purposes:

- People tend to do a better job of preparing for a class that requires them to read the text and look for information in advance. It helps orient the student to the main themes and helps prepare them for the class discussion which will center on the ideas prompted by the questions.
- It assists the teacher by providing some leading questions to facilitate the discussion.

After a brief introduction that connects the lesson together, there is a lesson aim that seeks to bring out the main or an important lesson taught in the chapter. The chapters are divided into paragraphs and titled so that the change in subject matter or the various ideas within a chapter might be seen more clearly. One of the things I hope you will find about the questions is that they are designed to help the student think through the logic of the writer as he develops his themes and not just busy him looking for information arbitrarily.

Many of the older class books and study guides have relied upon the KJV text. However, I have found that fewer and fewer people are using it in their personal Bible study. Since I have used the NASV (New American Standard Bible) for many years, the wording of this version has influenced the way the questions are expressed. However, the student, in general, should be able to answer the questions with whatever version he is using.

Copyright

Hopefully the material will adapt to your intended use in your class program. You may want to vary my approach and study the books in another order or on another schedule.

I am happy to share this material with you without cost to use in your classes. You are permitted to print and copy the lessons as they are. However, I would ask you not to alter or change the material or to provide a copy of this cd to others without my permission. If you find mistakes or have problems with the availability of a lesson please let me know and I'll try to send a corrected copy or a replacement lesson if available.

--Johnny Felker
1139 Woodridge Place
Mount Juliet, TN 37122
jdfelker@att.net