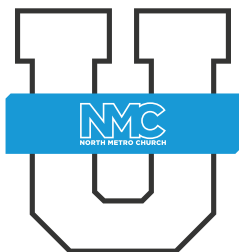


SEMESTER 1 WEEK 1

Bible Foundations 1

Laying the Groundwork



**MAKING DISCIPLES
THAT MAKE DISCIPLES.**

Opening Activity: In your group, go around and introduce yourselves.

Part 1: Preface to NMCU

House Rules & Expectations:

- I. Please be respectful and kind.
- II. The only bad question is the unasked question.
- III. Don't be afraid to interact.
- IV. What you put into this is what you will get out of it.
- V. What you put into it is what someone else will get out of it.

THESE ARE NOT SERMONS: Preaching is a particular form of communication. It is its own art form and medium with a particular goal in mind in a particular setting for a particular purpose for a particular group of people at a particular time. In NMCU, these are not collections of weekly sermons or semesters of sermon series. Each week will be a classroom setting, with teaching and group interaction in order to learn together in a group environment. And in this, we want to teach you the Bible so that you may more rightly understand, more faithfully live by it, and more clearly teach it to others.

THE PARKING LOT: Each week, you will notice signs off to the left and the right that say, "The Parking Lot." If, at any point and based on any content, you have a question you want answered, simply write it down on one of the post-it notes in your NMCU binder pencil bag and then stick that post-it note to the Parking Lot sign. We will curate all of these questions and answer them in the weeks ahead. These questions not only make our learning experience more interactive, but they also help other people feel safe in perhaps sharing similar questions with others. These questions also help us craft and revise our curriculum moving forward in order to answer these questions with the content. In fact, we had questions coming out of the pilot group that helped shape and craft our content for this public group. Also, we want everyone to be aware that, because we have so much content to cover, we will not have time to address each person's questions individually. That's why we are using The Parking Lot. It's not that we don't want to answer questions, we just won't have time to do so.

Format of our time together

- Arrive and Check in
- Lecture (40:00)
- Activity and Break (15:00)
- Lecture (40:00)
- Table Discussion (15:00)
- The Parking Lot Closes
- Next Steps and Dismissal (5:00)



Part 2: Biblical Foundations

1. We believe that the Bible is the _____, _____ Word of God. What it says is true and good and has been preserved by the LORD for the building up of His Church.

Chicago Statement on Inerrancy (On Teachable)

2. The Bible is _____. We believe that because the Bible says it is divinely inspired (literally, "God-breathed," (2 Timothy 3:16) we don't need external confirmation of the Bible's veracity and trustworthiness. Because of this, we will not spend a lot of time looking to external sources to explain the Bible, nor are we beholden to external sources to prove or validate the Bible. Many external sources do attest to and validate the Bible, but we don't need that and we're not going to focus on that. We believe what the Bible says and attests to about itself.
3. The Bible is tried and true and _____. The Bible has held up under constant historical critique and scrutiny. Nobody has been able to fully or inarguably disprove or discredit the Bible and historical discrepancies have never been able to be sufficiently proven or substantiated. What's more, no critical scholar has been able to explain or rationalize the uniqueness and seeming impossibility of the Bible's composition and preservation. There is no explanation.
4. The _____ of the Bible are inspired, not the _____. Many think that the Bible was written by, "inspired authors," and therefore the authors themselves are inspired, as if writing in some kind of trance under the influence of the Holy Spirit. It didn't work that way. Actually, the Bible was composed and compiled under the guidance and leading of the Holy Spirit. Some writers wrote direct revelation (the LORD appearing or speaking to them directly), some composed hymns and poems of worship, some retold history via oral tradition, some shared from sources of law and history that already existed, and some simply compiled eye-witness accounts. The Bible is actually incredibly diverse and eclectic in this way, but, the LORD spoke in and through all of it to make himself known, to reveal his character, nature, and purposes. And all of these words given, preserved, and compiled are what is considered, "inspired," not the authors that wrote, arranged, and compiled them.
5. The Bible was written _____ not _____. When we read the Bible, we are, essentially, reading somebody else's mail. We cannot open up any passage of Scripture and assume that it is written directly to us. We must first place its genre, its setting, its context, its audience, and its occasion and purpose. But the beautiful thing is that the mail we are reading is written for our benefit and enlightenment so that we might more know and love the LORD and know and love our neighbor; that we might more rightly understand the world around us and then more rightly live in it. And each and every single section we read is part of an ongoing and unfolding revelation of the LORD to people, expressed, fulfilled, and culminating in Jesus.
6. Sometimes the Bible is _____ and sometimes the Bible is _____. We must always remember that the Bible is often retelling history. And much of what happens is not portrayed in a positive light, even if you can't recognize that in the immediate context of a passage. Therefore, we must read every passage in context to figure out whether what is being described is being portrayed in a positive or negative light. What's more, we must always remember that the Bible has a redemptive arc and that some of the stuff at the beginning and throughout the text are not finished products. Things are not as they should be. As we read the Bible, however, we see the LORD working in and through people and events to bring about more of His good from humanity's evil. The Bible moves forward, but it is not fully finished until the end. We don't get the Kingdom of God manifest on earth until Jesus and we don't get the final restoration of all things and ultimate victory of Jesus until Revelation. So be careful not to read something violent from the OT and interpret that to think, "I should go do that." Realize where what you are reading is in the arc of redemptive history; the arc of what the LORD is doing in the world.

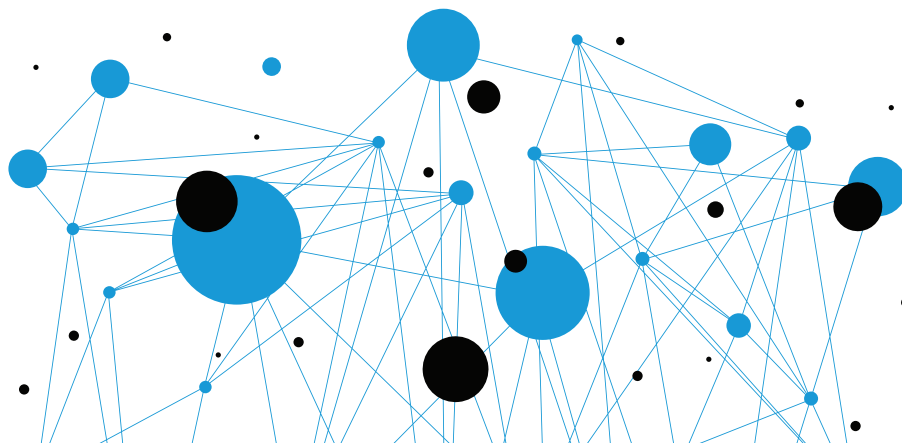
Progressive Revelation: Progressive Revelation suggests that the LORD chooses to reveal things, change things, and redeem and reconcile all things to himself over time and through process.

Example: There is polygamy in the OT, but by the NT, we see that the LORD's plan, intention, and ideal all along was one man and one woman married to each other, loving one another as Jesus loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her. In light of all of this, we will always ask, "what is the author saying here," and, "what is the author saying about what the author is saying here?" (Ex: King David and King Solomon)

7. The Bible shapes our _____. Our worldview is our collection of beliefs, values, experiences, and truth claims through which we interpret all of life. Because of this, our worldview informs our thoughts, opinions, actions, and decisions. Our entire lives flow from our worldview. It's how we derive our morality and ethics (what is wrong and right), how we view ourselves, how we view the nature of the world around us and the people therein, and how we make decisions in response to all of that.

Example: The Bible teaches that humans are created in the image of God and therefore have intrinsic worth and value. And throughout the Bible, the LORD seeks to protect and preserve human life so humanity can be who the LORD has created and called them to be. Because of this, we must allow the Bible to form our worldview in this way and we must see the world through the lens of: "all human life is important." Therefore each decision we make, each belief we form, must align with this. You can't have a Biblical worldview and not speak and act in a way that upholds and protects all human life.

8. The Bible is a _____. Unlike almost any other religious text, the Bible was not written by just one person who received one revelation at one time and revealed it to one group of people. The Scriptures have been assembled and preserved over thousands of years. They are comprised of writings from many, many authors, living in many, many countries over many, many centuries. They have survived conquest, slavery, exile, plague, persecution, abandonment, various cultural and political movements, and the wear, tear, and attrition of time. And the LORD has preserved these Scriptures to be composed, compiled, and codified as they are today in the Bible we hold. This is nothing short of a miracle. In fact, because of this, the Bible is actually less of a book and more of a library. But it is a library in which every book on the shelf tells the same cohesive story and puts forward the same unified ideas to reveal the character and nature of the LORD. No other book can boast this kind of origin, composition, arrangement, or preservation. No other book can pull from so many different authors from so many different places over so many years and still pull it all together in beautiful unity; all to tell a seamless and unified story and provide one cohesive revelation with such a beautiful arc of redemption. No other book is as brilliantly interconnected and interwoven, with key themes and symbols and strategic words connecting texts spaced centuries apart. And in NMCU, we want to celebrate the miracle of the Bible and that the LORD has preserved his Word and his divine revelation in the Bible we have today. Throughout these semesters, we will look at the big picture of the Bible and how all of these parts work together so perfectly to show us who the LORD is and who we are and how we live in light of all of it as we follow Jesus and become more faithful disciples who make disciples.



Part 3: Our Approach, Progression, and Strategy

We seek to build our foundation of belief and basis of our worldview upon the Bible (Sola Scriptura) first. Then we will construct our theology and craft our worldview that informs our thoughts, opinions, actions, and decisions from there.

Bible - Theology - Worldview - Thoughts, Opinions, Actions, & Decisions

NMCU By Semester

Semester 1: Old Testament 1: The Torah

Semester 2: Old Testament 2: History, Poetry, Wisdom, and Prophets

Semester 3: New Testament 1: The Gospels and The Acts of the Early Apostles

Semester 4: New Testament 2: The Letters

Semester 5: Theology and Worldview

Semester 6: Inward Life

Semester 7: Outward Living

In reading the Bible, we know that all Scripture leads to and culminates in Jesus, so, in knowing the Word and living the Word, we will more faithfully follow the Word made flesh (John 1) and, in confidence, draw others to the same. We can become disciples that make disciples. And this is why we built NMCU.

Vision for After NMCU

We are hoping that, after NMCU, we will all additionally be able to share a common language and operate from a shared foundation of the Bible. We want to combat Church division and quell conflict and strife both within the Church and outside the Church by speaking and thinking about things Biblically. If we can share a love for Jesus, a love for His Church, a love for one another, and a trust in the Bible; we will be more able to address conflict and talk through issues in a more healthy and godly way. We also hope that participants will be able to take what they've learned in NMCU and then teach it to others, so that they may share their faith with more confidence and clarity and so that they can more fervently and effectively make disciples. We hope that, once people go through the core (Semesters 1-5), they will go through the final two semesters (Semesters 6-7). Then, after those semesters, we hope that people can a.) launch out in Bible studies b.) keep going on to new semesters and new material we will write, or c.) go back through and help facilitate other groups going through NMCU.

Raffles & Giveaways + Activity (15:00)



Question of the Day

You're stranded on a desert island but you get one book, one movie, and one album with you on the island. What are you bringing?



Part 4: A Trinitarian Lens

Throughout the Bible, while the Trinity is not explicitly stated and explained it is clearly present, pronounced, and exemplified. We see, time and again, throughout Scripture that God is Father, Son, and Spirit. Three persons in one. All of the same substance, and of the same will, and unified in being and purpose. In NMCU, we will always look to see what each text tells us about the character and nature of God the Father, how that character and nature is consistent with and perfectly imaged and embodied in Jesus the Son, and how we might live in light of that through the revelation, power, and leading of the Holy Spirit.

Part 5: Science and Theology

What role does science play when it comes to the Bible? When it comes to science, The Bible is not seeking to prove things empirically (It's an ancient text) or through the scientific method, so we don't try to force it to do so. This will be particularly important in Genesis.

What do we do about theological differences? When it comes to theology, we must realize that there are numerous schools and strands of theology, and, in a group this size, we want to be able to honor them all well but also point to the fact that they all should be built on a fundamental adherence to the Bible. We want to remain generous, open, humble, and kind in all of our interactions with the text and with others, maintaining a spirit of brotherly and sisterly love. We also want to be sure that we differentiate between Tier 1 and Tier 2 and Tier 12 issues. Not every issue or disagreement theologically or biblically merits splitting a Church over. But some do. So we have to operate in wisdom and discern what the most important issues are and what issues are less clear from the Bible that we must struggle through together.

Part 6: Languages and Translation

Greek & Hebrew

The Bible is written in two primary languages, Greek and Hebrew, and one secondary language, Aramaic (Sections of the OT and a few quotations in the NT). The Old Testament is written primarily in Hebrew and the New Testament is written in Greek. We will look at some specific and strategic Hebrew and Greek words in NMCU, but only because they are central to the Bible and mean something very specific and strategic. You don't need to know Hebrew or Greek to go through NMCU and the point of NMCU is not to create Biblical scholars in Biblical languages. Rather, we will GET to learn specific and strategic words that will help us better understand and articulate the Bible.

The ESV Translation

You will notice, as we go through NMCU, that all of the verses referenced and provided will be from the ESV translation of the Bible. This **DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE ESV IS THE BEST TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE!** The ESV is just an easily accessible version of the Bible that is a bit more wooden, literal, and 1:1. From this, we can unpack the text further.



Question: So which translation should I use in NMCU?

If you want to use the ESV, that will most align with our materials, but, we would recommend you use whatever you are most comfortable with. However, here is something you might want to keep in mind:

Translation vs Paraphrase

Translations are based on the same original manuscripts, the same original Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic scrolls of the text that have been preserved. Those never change. Some people think there is a telephone effect from translation to translation and that, obviously, much will get lost in translation. That's not how it works. Each translation (NIV, ESV, KJV) is based on the same Greek and Hebrew texts. There is consistency in that. But some translations have different goals. The ESV and similar translations are more, "wooden," or word-for-word. These are sometimes more awkward to interpret into English because Hebrew and Greek sentences are structured differently. In other translations, like the NIV and others, they are more trying to get at the idea of a sentence, rather than translating it word-for-word. They are more thought-for-thought. And these are called dynamic translations.

ESV: "There will be to me great joy on the day of my birth for I will be the son of thirty and five years." (Word-for-word more wooden Hebrew sentence)

NIV: "I will be very joyful on my birthday because I will be thirty-five years old." (Dynamic translation of what the sentence intends to communicate).

A paraphrase of the Bible, like The Message, is different from a translation in that a translation attempts (to varying degrees) to communicate as "word-for-word" or as "thought-for-thought" as possible. A paraphrase takes the meaning of a verse or passage of Scripture and attempts to express the meaning in "plain language." The benefit of these is that they make certain passages very easy to understand and more palatable and relatable. But the authors of paraphrases take a lot of liberty and make a lot more bold decisions in their paraphrasing. A paraphrase is more of a commentary on the text of Scripture than it is an accurate rendering of what the text actually says. I would not recommend The Message or other paraphrases for NMCU. And I would only recommend it for additional use in your Bible study; not primary use.

Headings, Verse Numbers, and Superscriptions

In NMCU, depending on what Bible translation you use, you will see different headings above each section of Scripture. At one point, what we will teach may not match the heading in your Bible, which makes the following very important to know: The headings, titles, and verses in your Bible are not part of the inspired text. They have simply been later additions to be helpful and resourceful. There are no verse marks in the original Hebrew and Greek. And there are only official canonized headings in the Psalms.

So just keep this in mind, if one Bible translation has the heading, “The Burning Bush,” but another has, “The Call of Moses,” neither is wrong or right. Those headings are not part of the original text. They are just intended to be helpful.

Part 7: Genre and Context

Genre helps control and communicate the message of any part of the Bible. And because of this, it is imperative that we try to rightly identify genre. In order to do this well, we need to first be aware of the various genres that exist within the Bible.

1. **Narrative: 43%** - Retelling events in a creative but straightforward way, written in prose, like you would read in any book or textbook today.
2. **Poetry: 33%** - Highly figurative, symbolic, and imaginative language using word picture, metaphor, simile, illustration, hyperbole, rhythm, and sometimes even rhyme. Poetry is creative language intended to communicate in a different way than narrative.
3. **Discourse: 24%** - Written instruction and teaching from one party to another.

A Further Breakdown of Genre:

1. **Historical Narrative:** Genesis, Kings, Luke, & Acts
2. **Poetry:** Psalms, Song of Solomon, Parts of the The Prophets, and throughout various other sections of the Bible
3. **Law:** Parts of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
4. **Wisdom Literature:** Job, Proverbs, & Ecclesiastes
5. **Prophecy:** The Prophets and throughout various other sections of the Bible
6. **Letters (Didactic/Discourse):** Romans, Ephesians, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter
7. **Apocalyptic:** Parts of Daniel, & Parts of Revelation

If you try to literally interpret poetry, you are going to take the passage way out of context or come to some absurd conclusions. You will also significantly miss much of the author’s intent. Similarly, if you read Law and don’t properly contextualize it to the OT, you will wrongly apply it to today. Context and genre are everything. Even in Paul’s letters, we must realize his audience, setting, and how he is communicating with them. In Revelation, we are also reading letters to churches, but the language is apocalyptic and hyperbolic and exaggerative. Trying to literally apply it to circumstances today fails to interpret it in its proper context and

genre. For this semester, we will emphasize, again and again, that in the Torah (first five books of the OT) historical narrative is done in a creative and purposeful way. It's not stenography of events or eye witness account. There is creativity and composition and artistry in retelling the history in a certain way with a certain purpose in mind to communicate a specific message to a specific group of people. We must keep all of this in mind.

Part 8: Reading the Bible in Balance

The Bible is not univocal, but in concert (it's a symphony, not a solo).

We must always read the OT in light of the NT and the NT in reference to the OT. We must also allow different parts of Scripture to speak to different parts of Scripture (ie: The Law and Romans; Peter and Paul; The Law and Jesus; Jesus and Paul). And in this, we must always be sure to hold every part of Scripture equally. We can't just dismiss something in the OT because, "it's Old Testament." Similarly, we can't ONLY read Paul and base all of our theology off of him and not the words of Jesus or any of the other New Testament letters. And likewise, we can't say, "Jesus never talked about that," and then dismiss things that Paul writes about. We must hold the Bible in balance.

Biblical Threads

As we progress through each semester and each book of the Bible, we will begin to see key themes emerge and key words used throughout the Bible. And each time, we will emphasize them. As we do this, you will begin to see these key themes and key words again and again, so, after a few weeks, you will already be really familiar with many them. We will then track all of these key themes and key words that we are calling, "Biblical Threads," each week in your Participant's Guide and then will see all of them reflected on one big chart at the end of each semester. And in this, you will begin to see the aforementioned, "big picture of the Bible," and begin to observe all of the brilliant interconnections and continuities.

Part 9: Roadmap for Semester 1

Week 1: Bible Foundations 1: Laying the Groundwork

Week 2: Bible Foundations 2: Genesis-Revelation Storyline

Week 3: Genesis 1 & 2: Creation, The Garden, & Humanity

Week 4: Genesis 3 & 4: The Fall & The Fallout

Week 5: Genesis 6-11: The Flood & the Tower of Babel

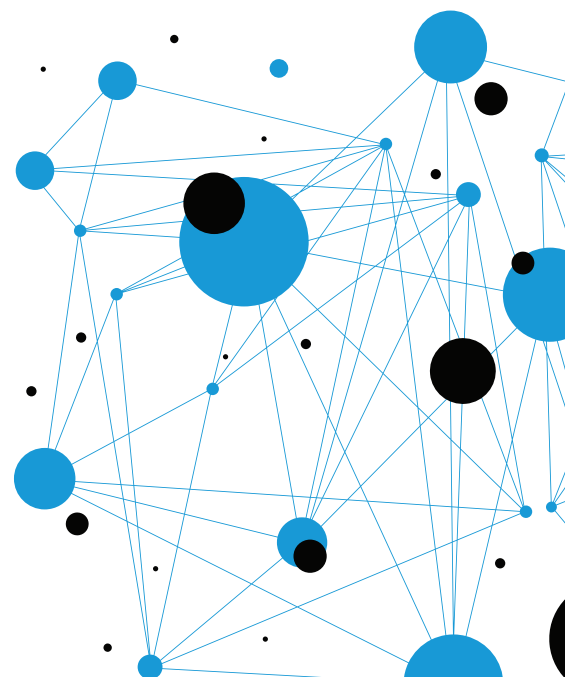
Week 6: Genesis 12-50: The Covenant & The Promise

Week 7: Exodus: Freedom from Egypt

Week 8: Leviticus: Holiness & Atonement

Week 9: Numbers: In the Wilderness

Week 10: Deuteronomy: The Song of Moses



Attendance, Binders, Participant's Guide, and Teachable

Each week, everyone needs to bring their participant's guide because you will be receiving new content each week to add to your guide. And you will need that material to follow along in the class. Then, between classes, you will want to consult Teachable, so that you can access any additional materials and resources or participate in one of the learning exercises. Here, you can also find answers to questions from The Parking Lot. Concerning attendance, our hope is that, for the ten week duration of each semester, you would make it a priority to be in-person if possible. However, if you need to miss a week or have any kind of health complication that would preclude you from attending, we would ask that you download the participant's guide and slides for the week on Teachable and then watch the video posted and answer the subsequent questions. Ultimately, our concern is less about attendance and more about completion. We want to make sure you listen to all the lectures and access all of the materials. But we also want all of you to be able to interact at your tables each week and have community engagement and interaction. That is a non-negotiable for us with NMCU. There is a reason you all are at tables rather than in rows or desks. We want community.

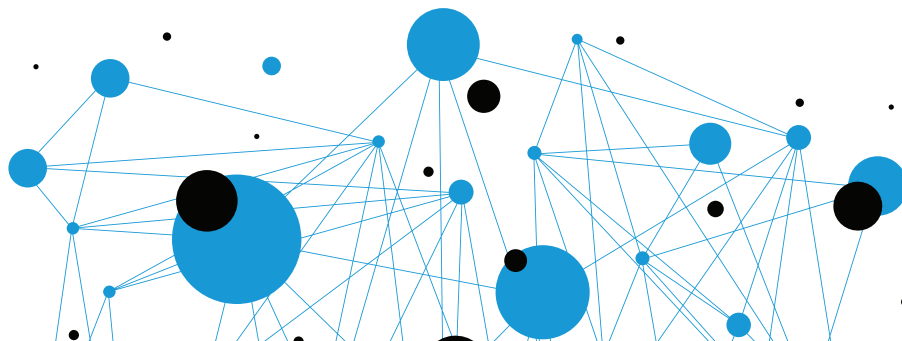
A Word of Encouragement

In the Pilot Group, a few people felt overwhelmed the first three weeks. They felt a bit overly inundated and like they were struggling to keep up. Everything you will experience in this public group is a direct response to that. We cut and tweaked and developed more helpful teaching tools and established a more manageable pace so that everyone can enjoy learning and being challenged in NMCU, not defeated by NMCU.

All of this is to say that, if you feel a little overwhelmed the first few weeks, stay the course. Just like with anything else, it will all start to feel familiar, and, the more reps you get, the more competent you will feel.

Get Excited

In NMCU, we are going to show you, perhaps in a way you have never seen before or put together, how the Bible fits together as one masterful work that reveals the character and nature of the Father, the culminating and fulfilling redemptive actions of the Son, and the ongoing leading and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. We want you to finish NMCU with a profound sense of awe at who the LORD is and what He has done. And we want you to be able to hold your Bible confidently so that you can form your worldview clearly that we may all more faithfully follow Jesus and become disciples that make disciples. And in this, we will see that the Bible is all about moving from the Garden, back to the Garden, from places where the LORD's presence dwelled temporarily, to a place where the LORD's presence will dwell permanently, and from the once for all sacrifice of Jesus to the forever enthronement of Jesus to rule and reign over His kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And in this, we want you to see the Bible as a story about Heaven and Earth, as the LORD is restoring the old heavens and old earth to a glorious new heavens and a new earth and we get to be participants in that for His glory.



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