



## Certificate in Theological Studies

### Summary

The Certificate in Theological Studies program is a new undergraduate program designed to enable working adults who desire to study bible and theology in structured and academic setting. Classes in this four-semester, year-round program are held one evening a week for two hours for sixteen months. Students will learn the skills and tools necessary for fruitful study of the Scriptures. Students will not only systematically study “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27), but will also come to understand the storyline of the Bible, how God progressively establishes his kingdom and subdues his enemies through the messianic mission of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The curriculum is cohort-based, meaning that the students in the program will go through all their classes together as a group. As a result, classes are only open to those accepted into BCS’ Adult Undergraduate programs. The program is also mentor-based with E. Michael Rusten, Ph.D., serving as the primary mentor.

### Program Objective

Our mission is to equip Christians in a mentored setting to spread a passion for the supremacy of God for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ. To this end the purpose of the program is to equip students with both the core understandings and values necessary for a fruitful lifetime of ministry, whether in one’s own neighborhood or on the mission field.

Specific objectives of the program are as follows:

- Students will be able to study the Bible inductively.
- Students will be able to explain the doctrines of the Bible.
- Students will be able to explain the major events of the Old and New Testaments and their significance.
- Students will be prepared for living a life for the glory of God.
- Students will be able to disciple others, explaining the gospel to them, being used by God to draw them to Christ and, in turn, equipping them to be disciplers themselves.
- Students will be able to defend the Christian faith against its opponents.

### Program’s Courses

<u>First Semester (Fall 2012)</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Second Semester (Spring 2013)</u>	<u>Credits</u>
Bible Study Methods 1	2	Bible Study Methods 2	2
Practical Theology 1	1	Practical Theology 2	1
Biblical Theology	3	Systematic Theology 2	3
Systematic Theology 1	2	Biblical Introduction	2
Total Semester Credits	8	Total Semester Credits	8
<u>Third Semester (Summer 2013)</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Fourth Semester (Fall 2013)</u>	<u>Credits</u>
Bible Study Methods 3	2	Bible Study Methods 4	2
Practical Theology 3	1	Practical Theology 4	1
Systematic Theology 3	2	Systematic Theology 5	2
Systematic Theology 4	3	Systematic Theology 6	3
Total Semester Credits	8	Total Semester Credits	8
Total Certificate Credits			32

## Admission Requirements

- Applicants must meet the Christian testimony and character standards of Bethlehem College & Seminary.
- High school graduate.
- Likelihood of academic success at BCS.
- Ability to write at a college-level (successful completion of a college-level composition course [earning a “C” or better] or demonstrate the ability to write effectively through a writing sample).
- Be willing to abide by the BCS policies as stipulated in the Bethlehem College Student Handbook and the BCS Community Declaration.

## Admissions Process

Admissions decisions for our Adult Undergraduate programs are made on a rolling cycle by the Bethlehem College & Seminary Admissions Committee. Qualified applicants are accepted as completed applications are received until the cohort is full. Completed applications (including references, transcripts, etc.) are due no later than six weeks before the program start date (application due date for the 2012-2013 cohort is July 1, 2012).

## Graduation Requirements:

- Student in good standing.
- Passing of all required certificate courses (32 credits).
- Overall BCS GPA (grade point average) of 2.0 or higher.

## Academic Calendar

New Student Orientation (mandatory): Friday, August 24, 2012, 11:00 AM-5:00 PM.

Certificate classes meet on Tuesday evenings (6:00-8:00 PM) at the downtown campus of Bethlehem Baptist Church (720 13<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Minneapolis 55415).

Fall 2012:	August 28-December 11, 2012
Spring 2013:	January 8-April 23, 2013
Summer 2013:	May 7-August 20, 2013
Fall 2013:	September 3-December 17, 2013

## Course Descriptions

### I. Bible Study Methods

#### **Bible Study Methods 1** (2 credits)

The purpose of the course is to introduce students to inductive Bible study methods and to enable them to make inductive Bible study a daily habit. Topics covered in these courses will include making detailed textual observations, comparing translations, studying a passage in light of its larger literary and historical context, discerning the usage and meaning of key words, and consulting cross-references.

#### **Bible Study Methods 2** (2 credits)

Students learn how to study a book of the Bible utilizing the methods learned in Bible Study Methods I. Students will study the book of Colossians: its author, his purpose in writing it, and the book's recipients. They will go through the book paragraph by paragraph, applying a variety of methods in order to understand the book's message and its application to their lives.

#### **Bible Study Methods 3** (2 credits)

The course introduces students to phrasing, diagramming, bracketing and arcing as well as identifying chiasms in verses, paragraphs and whole books of the Bible. Students also are given an introduction to the Hebrew alphabet, enabling them to use Hebrew lexicons.

#### **Bible Study Methods 4** (2 credits)

In this course students are taught how to learn from parallel passages, how to use the Septuagint in the study of the New Testament, and how to use lexicons, concordances, and other exegetical tools. By the end of the course students have learned how to prepare and deliver a devotional message or a sermon.

### II. Bible

#### **Biblical Introduction** (2 credits)

This course will survey the books of the biblical canon in order to better acquaint students with the nature and

themes of the inspired text. Topics for study will include authorship, date of writing, historical context, purpose, and governing motifs. Through a greater familiarity with the background of the texts of Scripture, students will be equipped to situate a given passage within its revelatory setting and thus handle the Bible with greater fidelity.

### III. Theology

#### **Biblical Theology** (3 credits)

In this course students will develop a framework for understanding the unity of the Bible. More precisely, students will be equipped with the tools needed to trace the development of the major themes of the Bible. Attention will be given to understanding God's purposes and how each era of redemptive history relates to the divine goal.

#### **Systematic Theology 1: Bibliology** (2 credits)

This course introduces students to the study Systematic Theology, giving them a firm foundation for their dependence upon God's Word. Topics covered include canon and inerrancy, the authority of the Bible, its clarity, its necessity, and its sufficiency.

#### **Systematic Theology 2: Theology Proper** (3 credits)

This course continues the study of Systematic Theology by focusing on the doctrine of God. Topics covered include the existence and attributes of God, his knowability, his role in creation and providence, and the doctrine of the Trinity.

#### **Systematic Theology 3: Anthropology and Angelology** (2 credits)

This course continues the study of Systematic Theology by focusing on the doctrine of man and the doctrine of angels and demons. Topics covered include the Bible's teaching regarding angels and demons, Satan, the image of God in man, and the role of men and women in God's design.

#### **Systematic Theology 4: Soteriology** (3 credits)

This course continues the study of Systematic Theology by focusing on the doctrine of salvation. Topics covered include the election, the atonement, calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, adoption, baptism of the Spirit, sanctification, perseverance, glorification, and union with Christ.

#### **Systematic Theology 5: Ecclesiology** (2 credits)

This course continues the study of Systematic Theology by focusing on the doctrine of the church. Topics covered include the Bible's teaching regarding the definition, aspects, marks, ordinances, ministry, government, and officers of the Christian church..

#### **Systematic Theology 6: Eschatology** (3 credits)

This course continues the study of Systematic Theology by focusing on the doctrine of the last things. Topics covered include individual eschatology, the intermediate state, final judgment, heaven and hell, as well as the interpretive questions regarding the end times on which the Christians differ.

#### **Practical Theology 1-4** (1 credit each)

These four courses are designed to acquaint the student with the practical application of Christian doctrine to a wide variety of issues. These courses address such issues as fighting personal sin, prayer and fasting, roles of men and women, suffering, worship, God's sovereignty, inspiration of Scripture, and motivation for life and ministry. The student will be urged not only to consider the biblical underpinnings for these issues, but how to apply them to every-day life. These courses are offered in a seminar format with one or two weekend seminars being offered each semester. The seminars are offered in a four-year cycle so each semester students take the particular seminars offered that semester, in addition they will read and react to an assigned book written by John Piper.

#### **Seminars include:**

##### *Desiring God: The Pursuit of Joy in Life and Ministry*

If God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him, then how should we live and minister? How should we be motivated and motivate others in the manifold forms of ministry? This seminar is designed to summarize, reinforce, and further explain the life and ministry implications of Christian Hedonism and the underlying vision of God as put forth in Pastor John Piper's book, *Desiring God: The Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*.

##### *Gravity and Gladness on Sunday Morning: The Pursuit of God in Corporate Worship*

All of life is to be understood as worship (Romans 12:1-2). But there is a special place in Scripture for corporate worship. What can be done so that people who walk into our worship services will "fall on [their faces] and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you" (1 Corinthians 14:25)? To enjoy the tangible presence of God is the longing of every human heart. But it's not a flippant joy. It is a trembling joy, a serious joy, full of gravity and gladness. This seminar is designed to communicate a biblical vision of the supremacy of God in corporate worship, not only for us, but also for our neighbors and for the nations.

##### *Let the Nations Be Glad: The Pursuit of God's Glory in the Joy of the Nations*

This seminar draws on key biblical texts to demonstrate that worship is the ultimate goal of the church and that proper worship fuels missionary outreach. Building on a biblical defense of God's supremacy in all things and seeking to provide a sound theological foundation for missions, we will examine whether Jesus is the only way to salvation and issue a passionate plea for God-centeredness in the missionary enterprise, defining the scope of the task and the means for reaching "all nations." Topical focuses (in relation to missions) include prayer, suffering, unreached peoples, motivation, and the prosperity gospel.

*Living by Faith in Future Grace: The Pursuit of Holiness in Life and Ministry*

This seminar explores in depth the relationship between faith and "the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14). How does "faith work through love" (Galatians 5:6)? What is the nature of saving faith? How does faith in future grace overcome the sins of regret, lust, covetousness, anger, etc.? What is wrong with the "gratitude ethic?" The seminar is designed to summarize, reinforce, and further explain the life and ministry implications of Christian Hedonism and the underlying vision of God as put forth in *The Purifying Power of Living by Faith in Future Grace*.

*The Pleasures of God: God's Delight in Being God*

Knowing someone well means knowing what makes them happy. Likewise with God. This seminar is designed to unfold a vision of God through the lens of his happiness as put forward in the book *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God's Delight in Being God*. What most delights the happiest Being in the universe? God's gladness in being God. If God's excellencies can be admired in his pleasures, and if we tend to become like what we admire and enjoy, then focusing on these pleasures can help us to be gradually conformed to his likeness. In other words, we will be most satisfied in God when we know why God is most satisfied in God.

*Prayer, Meditation, and Fasting: The Pursuit of Communion with God*

This seminar is designed to teach on the biblical disciplines of prayer, meditation and fasting from the radically God-centered, Christian hedonistic point of view taught in the Scriptures. The life-transforming power unleashed by the faith-motivated, grace-filled pursuit of these disciplines will be celebrated and – God willing – the roots of legalism will be severed.

*Sexual Complementarity: The Pursuit of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*

What does God have to do with sexuality? What is His purpose for creating us male and female? This seminar is designed to explore the biblical teachings regarding maleness and femaleness and the implications of sexuality for leadership in the church and home. The complementarian view, which understands there to be distinct but equally valuable roles for men and women in the church and home, will be explained and defended as biblical and therefore good for us. We will endeavor to treat the egalitarian alternative with fairness, and not avoid difficult texts or questions.

*Suffering for the Sake of the Body: The Pursuit of People through Pain*

What does Paul mean when he says, "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions?" Is your vision of God and your understanding of the biblical theology of suffering sufficient to sustain you if (when!) God calls you to suffer for the sake of His Name both here on the home front or perhaps on the mission field? This seminar is designed to prepare you for such suffering and to help you "count it all joy."

*T.U.L.I.P.: The Pursuit of God's Glory in Salvation*

This seminar is designed to communicate in a sensitive and pastoral way the essence of the Calvinistic view of the doctrine of salvation and to show how the Reformed understanding of this precious doctrine is rooted in the careful study of Scripture and is valuable in the life and ministry of the church. Our interest is not so much in what John Calvin thought about predestination, but first and foremost what Jesus, Paul, Moses, Isaiah, Peter, Luke and the rest of the Biblical writers taught in Scripture. We will try not to avoid difficult texts. We will aim to represent fairly the Arminian side of the argument which stresses the free will of man.

*Why We Believe the Bible: The Pursuit of Truth*

Why is the doctrine of the authority and inerrancy of Scripture both biblical and crucial for our understanding of Christian life and mission? How does one argue for the authority of Scripture without falling into the circular argument of merely quoting 2 Timothy 3:16? This seminar is designed to explore the multi-layered evidences for the absolute trustworthiness of the Bible and to secure its appropriate place in the devotional, study, and ministry life of the Christian.

*Practical Theology New Seminar (TBD)*