

Course Handbook



Welcome to the Devotional Studies Course!

This is a brief course of 10 lessons – what we call a “mini-course.” Upon the successful completion of the course you will receive a Certificate of Completion, and will accrue 2 credits toward other courses at OBC.

This handbook is your starting point. It will provide a brief orientation on how the Devotional Studies Course is conducted and what you can expect as you progress through the course content.

Course Objectives

The primary objectives of the Devotional Studies Course are as follows:

- To ground you in a clear understanding of how your relationship with God works.
- To address the critical issues that might hinder you developing a close and regular time of fellowship with the Lord.
- To help you develop an enjoyable and rewarding time of regular fellowship with the Lord.

These are important goals, for the condition of your daily fellowship with Christ is the foundation upon which Christian growth takes place.

Course Emphasis

All Online Bible College materials are life-oriented. That is, we do not emphasize an academic approach, which focuses on the accumulation and testing of knowledge. Rather we emphasize life application on the basis of a three-fold process in God’s Word:

- **Revelation** – the *enlightening* of God’s Word by the Holy Spirit.
- **Repentance** – the *aligning* of your thinking and behavior with God’s Word.
- **Reality** – the *empowering* by the Holy Spirit to live in line with God’s Word.

Note the strong emphasis on the work of God’s Spirit in this process. Revelation comes by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. We then respond to that revelation by repenting (re-aligning the direction of our lives). On the basis of our response, God’s Spirit continues his unique work of grace to conform our lives to the pattern of Christ and make his Word a daily reality for us.

Learning with the Online Bible College is much more than just developing a mental repository of biblical information. As long as you are responding to this work of God's Spirit, you will not just *learn* the Word of God; you will be *shaped* by the Word of God.

There is no other course in OBC which emphasizes this more than the Devotional Studies Course. This is because your success in the Devotional Studies Course is not based on "getting the answers right," but on applying the truth of the lessons to your life on a daily basis.

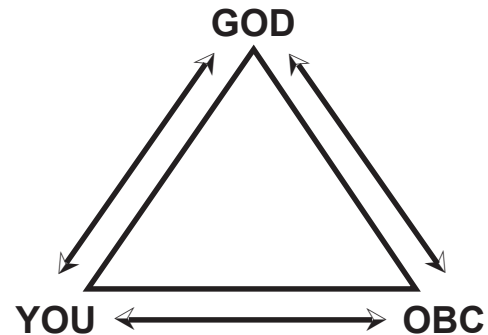
A Three-Way Partnership

The Online Bible College study program is a three-way partnership between OBC, yourself and the Lord. Each of the three has a vital role in the training and equipping process. And for your study program with OBC to be a success, the lines of communication and interaction between these three partners should be cultivated and reinforced on a daily basis.

At the Online Bible College, those responsible for both the writing of course material and the daily communication with students are committed to waiting on God each day. In the same way, throughout the course, we will be encouraging you to maintain two points of daily communication:

- **With the Lord** - through prayer
- **With OBC** - through email and feedback forms

Your study at the Online Bible College will only be as effective as the strength of this daily communication.



A three-way partnership

Permission to Distribute

The Online Bible College gives you full permission to teach what you learn to others. You can copy and distribute your OBC lessons to others, with only three conditions:

- If you excerpt part of the lessons, or include lesson material in any other publication, acknowledgement should be given to the Online Bible College.
- If you plan to distribute OBC materials on a large scale, you should coordinate this with OBC by writing to president@online-bible-college.com.
- You may not distribute OBC lessons in any form for profit.

If you have anything you're not sure about, just write to us at registrar@online-bible-college.com, and we'll answer any questions you have.

Course Content

The Devotional Studies Course is made up of 10 lessons, as follows:

Lesson 1	The Amazing Secret
Lesson 2	The Bond of Covenant
Lesson 3	Abiding in the Vine
Lesson 4	Intimacy in Prayer
Lesson 5	Intimacy in Worship
Lesson 6	Intimacy in God's Word
Lesson 7	Intimacy in Obedience
Lesson 8	Deep Calls to Deep
Lesson 9	The Mirror Effect
Lesson 10	A Day Called Today

Each lesson builds on the previous one, and our aim, at the end of the course, is that you are experiencing what God has intended for your life – a daily experience of walking with him in close fellowship.

How the Course Works

Receiving your lessons

When you first enroll in the Devotional Studies Course, you can immediately access your first lesson via your Download Page. All you need to do is login to your Student Page at <http://obc.ipera.com.au/student/>, using your student number and password. If you can't remember your student number or password, you can contact the OBC helpdesk by emailing helpdesk@online-bible-college.com.

On your Student Page you will see a link called "Download Lessons." Click on this link and you will be taken to the Download Page, where you will see your first lesson waiting for you. Click on the link called [dsc-01.pdf](#), and this will download your first lesson in Acrobat format. Alternatively, if you click on the link called [dsc-01.htm](#), this will download your first lesson in HTML format.

The lesson file will either open up directly in your browser, or it will be saved to your hard disk drive. Either way, you can study your lesson directly on your computer screen, or print out your lesson for study later.

Submitting your tests

There are three types of tests or assignments that you will need to complete as you move through the Devotional Studies Course.

- **Lesson Tests** – These tests have 10 multiple-choice questions, which are automatically graded for you. There is also an area where you can provide personal feedback to OBC on what you are learning, and a place you can ask questions. Members of the OBC team will follow up on your feedback.

- **Final Test** – This test is taken upon completion of the Devotional Studies Course module, and has 20 multiple-choice questions, which are automatically graded for you. Upon successful completion of the Final Test (a passing grade is 70% correct), you will be awarded a Certification of Completion. If you do not achieve a passing grade, you will be allowed to retake the Final Test as many times as necessary, until the 70% grade is achieved. This is part of the “minimum competency” approach we take at the Online Bible College.
- **Course Feedback Form** – At the end of the course, there is a feedback form which asks you a series of questions about the content of the course. The questions are designed to draw out from you what you have learned, your own personal revelation in the Word of God, and to see if you are grasping and applying the most important truths of the course. Although Course Feedback Form is not graded (there is no pass or fail), members of the OBC team will follow up on your feedback.
- **Essay Assignment** – For those who are wanting to receive credits for their study of the Devotional Studies Course, we will set you an essay assignment at the end of the course. This essay will be graded and will comprise 30% of your total grade.

Terms to Know

At this point it would be helpful to know a few computer terms as used in the OBC courseware:

Online: To be connected to the Internet, and specifically to the OBC website.

Upload: To transfer data from your computer to the OBC.

Download: a) To transfer data from the OBC website to your computer; b) To collect your email.

ADS: This is an OBC term, which stands for Automated Download System (the system by which your lessons are automatically listed for you to download).

VCS: This is another OBC term, which stands for Virtual College System (the system through which you receive your lessons and take your tests).

All tests and assignments play an important part in the OBC assessment process. Your grade point average (GPA) will be based upon the grades you receive for each lesson test, the final test and the essay assignment.

Doing Your Tests

After completing each lesson, we recommend that you connect to the Internet and login to your Student Page at <http://obc.ipera.com.au>, where you can complete the online test for that lesson. All you need to do is login with your OBC student number and password, then click on the link called “Take Next Test.” As soon as you have completed your test, the next lesson will be available at the Download Page.

OBC tests and assignments perform three very important functions:

- **A teaching tool:** The questions reinforce the content of the lesson, helping you to remember and absorb the principles of God’s Word. You will note that

there is nothing stopping you from looking back over the lesson to find the answer. If you don't remember the answer to the question, then looking back over the lesson is an important reinforcement to your learning experience.

- **A mentoring tool:** Your answers provide us at OBC with a window on how you are progressing. If we see points of difficulty or gaps in your understanding, we can follow these up specifically with you. In this way, we are able to assist you to leap the hurdles of understanding so vital to a comprehensive understanding of God's Word.

All OBC tests are "open book" tests. This means that you are allowed to read your Bible and your lesson to answer questions in the test. When it comes to providing us feedback in the Course Feedback Form, however, straight copy-and-paste from your lesson is not allowed. Everything should be in your own words, unless you are quoting from the Bible. If you do quote from someone else, you must put quotation marks around the quotation and provide us with the source of the quotation.

All tests and assignments will be graded in order to provide an assessment of how you are progressing. But remember: This is not designed just as an academic grading. The emphasis of tests and assignments is on feedback and mentoring.

Adjusting Your Study Schedule

As you study at the Online Bible College, you are in complete control of the pace of your study. Your next lesson is made available the moment you complete the test for the previous lesson. This means that you can slow down or speed up your pace of study, simply by choosing how quickly you take your tests.

Reference Tools

Two things go hand in hand while you study with the Online Bible College – the OBC lessons and a good study Bible. There is no steadfast rule as to which Bible is the best for you, but we would recommend one of the following:

- New International Version
- New King James Version, or King James Version
- New American Standard Bible

The default version used in your Biblical Studies Course lessons is the New International Version (NIV), but you are encouraged to use your own Bible version during study at the Online Bible College.

If you want to buy a new study Bible, it would preferably have a good cross-reference system (where the verse you are reading is linked to others of similar topic or meaning in the rest of the Bible). Many study Bibles also have concordances (where you can search for occurrences of a particular word throughout the Bible) and other study helps in the back. There is also excellent Bible search software available at most Christian bookstores.

If you already have a study Bible with which you are familiar, then obviously this is the best Bible for you to use. However, we do recommend that you get access to a few other translations and paraphrases for the purpose of comparison and deeper insight into the meaning of God's Word. These may include, as an example, these excellent auxiliary Bibles:

- The Amplified Bible
- The Good News Bible
- The New Living Translation
- Eugene Paterson's *The Message*

The purpose of these Bibles is to provide you with as broad a spectrum of insight into the original meaning of the Scriptures as possible. They are good supplementary Bibles to be used in parallel with your study Bible.

Other reference tools that we recommend for the serious Bible student are items such as:

- A good concordance – preferably one that explains the original language meanings. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* is a good choice, with *Young's* a close second. If you have the Bible on CD-ROM, this usually comes with a computer-based concordance or word-search function.
- A Bible dictionary – such as *Unger's Bible Dictionary*.
- *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*
- A Bible handbook – providing historic background, maps, etc.

Remember: None of these are absolutely vital to Bible study and are not required for study at the Online Bible College. In fact, none of them can substitute for an open heart to God's Word and to the Holy Spirit. But they can be wonderful aids to discovering the deep riches of Scripture often found just beneath the surface.

Understanding Graceware

All OBC courses are completely free of charge. There are no course fees, which means there is absolutely no financial obligation to you as you study at the Online Bible College. This is based on the ministry principle of **Matthew 10:8**, which states:

“...Freely you have received, freely give.”

We call this “graceware.” God's grace is free – without charge or costs – since it was paid 100% by Jesus upon the Cross. In ministry, we also have the privilege of offering teaching in God's Word on the same basis – totally free of charge.

In the computer programming world, there is a term called “shareware.” Unlike ordinary computer programs, shareware programs are distributed free of charge. However, if a person finds the program useful, he can send a payment to the writer of the program, to encourage the programmer to continue producing new software.

Graceware works in a similar way. As you study at OBC, you do not need to worry about course fees. In fact, you can study every course without any financial obli-

gation. But if you are blessed by the course, and would like others to experience the same life-changing training, then there are two ways you can be more actively involved in the missionary vision of OBC.

Volunteer as an Online Missionary

The operations of the Online Bible College are run through the volunteer participation of many students, just like you. If you would like to become an “online missionary” and member of the OBC student team, let us know by filling out the form at:

https://cronus.turboweb.net.au/churchlink/volunteer_form.htm

Send a Missionary Gift

Even though you can study at OBC without financial obligation, we encourage you to give a missionary gift (either a one-time gift or regular support) to the Online Bible College. By doing this, you will help the Online Bible College reach into new countries and regions with free teaching and training for God’s people. You can send a missionary gift anytime by filling out the online form at:

https://cronus.turboweb.net.au/churchlink/partner_form.htm

Getting Started

You are now ready to embark on an incredible journey of discovery in God’s Word. Your first lesson is waiting for you. All you need to do is click on the “Download Lesson” link on your Student Page.

We look forward to partnering with you in an exciting and rewarding time of study. Once again, welcome to the Devotional Studies Course!



David A Collins
President