

DC301 (Last updated: March 2016)

Extra-Biblical Reading

a.) pivotal

-*Inside Out* by Larry Crabb (note: there are many editions of this book; encourage them to obtain copies of the same edition—or be prepared to translate page numbers from one edition to another)

-*Teaching to Change Lives* by Howard Hendricks

b.) supplemental

-*The Saving Life of Christ* by Ian Thomas

c.) optional

-*Inheriting Our Promised Land* by Eric Schansberg (to supplement the reading of Joshua)

Format of Meetings in first half of DC301 (at Southeast)

- I. Opening Prayer and Memory Verse (*5 minutes*)
- II. Discussion of Crabb and Hendricks (*45-75 minutes*)
- III. Discussion of Bible Reading (*0-30 minutes*)
- IV. Closing Prayer and Fellowship (*2-10 minutes*)

Format of Meetings in second half of DC301 (at Southeast)

- I. Opening Prayer and Memory Verse (*5 minutes*)
- II. Teacher I (*25-30 minutes*)
- III. Teacher II (*25-30 minutes*)
- IV. Discussion of Mini-Lessons and Bible Reading (*15-25 minutes*)
- V. Closing Prayer and Fellowship (*2-5 minutes*)

General Comments

-Read and sign the covenant again.

-In DC, we only review memory verses in DC301 (typically in the summer). If there are optional verses within the review verses, encourage your group members to add those. If there is a short/easy verse in a given week, consider doing that one together as a group and rotating the other two verses between individuals. On the weeks that you have group members teaching, cover the review of the memory verses more quickly.

-Note the two changes in format in DC301. ***Discussion of the Bible reading takes a secondary role for the rest of DC. (Make sure to communicate this to your DC'ers!!)*** Giving adequate time to talk about Crabb and Hendricks (first half of DC301), to teach (second two-thirds of DC301), or to discuss important and complicated topics (in DC401-403) becomes primary.

-As you start into the bulk of the Old Testament Bible Reading portion of DC, you may find <http://BibleTimeLine.info> helpful.

-The mini-lessons are an opportunity to read Scripture differently—in particular, from the mind of a teacher in weeks 5-12. The mini-lessons largely replace—or at least, take priority over—the random discussions we've had on the Bible reading to this point.

-Going into week 5, make sure to spend some time talking about the mini-lessons (including the example on p. 42)—and make sure to allocate enough time to it starting in week 5.

-You may run into more trouble with attendance and preparation during DC301, especially if it immediately follows DC201 and DC202 (a long stretch) and/or if DC301 is in the summer (different daily schedules if children in school, summer vacations, etc.). Some of your people may find reading difficult—and thus, struggle more with this part of DC. (It can be difficult to know whether they're struggling with reading or struggling with reading Crabb!) If you're going straight from DC202 to DC301, communicate clearly that you're only taking a one-week break. (Consider taking a second week off—but at least for groups at Southeast, this will come at the expense of the break between DC301 and DC401 in August/September.) Encourage/exhort them as necessary. Make the point that we're not typically “persevering” people—an important trait. Address all of this proactively and follow up as necessary.

-Summing up, DC301 can be great for—and/or tough on—your group and the group members. From new material like Crabb to new experiences like teaching—and with the need to persevere through what has been a long stretch for them—you may need to mix in some encouragement as you see fit.

About the books in general...

-Facilitating a discussion about a book is similar to what you've been doing, but there are some differences. First, be careful with—and spend some time thinking about—time management in the context of going through a book. (For example, how long do you plan to spend in each chapter?) Second, you can generally open up the discussion with (very) general questions (e.g., “Any comments on pages 28-33?”). But be prepared to ask some specific questions as useful.

-It's more challenging if you and/or your DC'ers have different editions of a book. Encourage them all to have one edition—or encourage them to be clear when referring to something in the book (rather than page numbers, have them refer the group to the 3rd paragraph in section X).

-Note that for your DC'ers, systematic book reading may be different as well. Encourage them to think about how to mark up their books—with underlines or brackets, stars, and so on. If they read well, DC301 will probably require less prep than previous semesters; if they don't read well/often, DC301 may seem more burdensome. You may want to proactively address this distinction in an email.

About Crabb in particular...

-We don't particularly care whether individuals like the book. Our primary goals here are to develop individuals and to develop your group chemistry. Read this section carefully and be prepared to address this in your group and/or with individuals.

-Anticipate and pre-empt some grumbling about Crabb's book. If you've already read it, and weren't a big fan of his book, don't give in to the temptation to trash the book! If you set a poor tone, you will rob those who might otherwise benefit much more so. And you will undermine whatever good conversations—even ones critical of the book—that might result. Likewise, if there are elements of Crabb's book that you find bothersome, think of yourself as more facilitator and devil's advocate—more than the person who needs to let everyone know his view. When going through Crabb, keep the bigger picture in mind—for your group and the members of your group.

-In discussing Crabb, you need to make sure that the environment is conducive for everyone to talk. In other words, if your group is mostly “pro-Crabb” (or “anti-Crabb”), make sure to sufficiently support those who are in the minority.

About Crabb in particular (cont'd)...

-From our perspective, Crabb's book is quite useful for a number of reasons.

-Crabb refuses to put God or Christianity in a tidy, little box—a principle that will bear *much* fruit in the material that follows in DC401-403. If group members require (single, specific) “answers” to most of the doctrinal issues we'll cover over the next year, they will be frustrated with us as well!

-Although Crabb doesn't give a lot of “answers”, his book excels at describing problems and pointing out bad answers—at least half the battle.

-Merely wrestling with a book that tries to convey big ideas is useful—the process of discerning wheat and chaff, seeing how one's theology can affect their worldview, and so on. On top of that, Crabb and this book have been influential within the Christian community—and is worth knowing about and considering its merits. (For example, Crabb's work is an important part of the training within the lay-counseling ministry at Southeast.)

-Crabb's book attempts to engage the heart whereas much of our material is aimed at the head. Crabb also challenges us to pursue authentic relationships. (Ask your DC'ers how they're doing with that.) At an individual level, this book has the power to change lives—and has done so.

-In terms of Crabb and its impact on building leaders: It is desirable (perhaps even necessary) for Christians to meaningfully change “from the inside out” in order to more effectively represent Jesus to others and to lead others. And in order to be effective disciples and leaders, individuals must learn to tangle with big ideas, different paradigms, the lack of single answers to some doctrinal issues, handling disagreements and conflict with other Christians, being transparent with other Christians, etc. The book will greatly assist in facilitating these goals.

-Crabb's book is also helpful because it can dramatically increase the intimacy of the group and the depth of its discussions. In that sense, we really don't care if *any given individual* enjoys or thinks that he profits significantly from the book. Although that will happen quite often, Crabb is quite useful for “the group”—promoting a more rigorous dynamic in the groups, stirring up some tougher conversations, getting people in the mode of being ok with disagreeing, creating a “rite of passage” within DC (it's a key thing many of them will “share” afterwards), etc. So, don't feel like you need to “convert” them to liking Crabb, etc. Push/prod them as useful, continue to develop an environment where it's ok to wrestle with stuff, enjoy the ride, and look forward to what it will help you do in your groups going forward.

About Crabb in particular (cont'd)...

-Crabb's book will provoke insights for your group members that can range from merely provocative to life-changing. (In fact, it can be so provocative, that members of the group might benefit from informal "counseling" or even formal counseling afterwards!)

-An interesting testimony from a DC graduate at Southeast: "Like many in my DC Group, I was a bit frustrated that *Inside Out* pointed out sins but stopped short of providing any 'answers'. Crabb made us aware of the sin of self-protection and the sin of demandingness, but he didn't show us how to 'fix' them. Fortunately for me, by God's grace, I attended the Faces of Christ retreat shortly after reading Crabb's book. The retreat was truly a work of God, helping take Crabb's concepts to a deeper level. Faces has given me hope for lasting change by helping me trust Christ more and rely on His grace rather than my own efforts. I would highly recommend this retreat to anyone."

-It is providential that we read Crabb and Genesis at the same time. The OT contains a number of wonderful character studies where one is much more likely to run into Crabb-like insights and applications.

-Reading the foreword will help them or at least you to motivate the book.

-Crabb's material is perhaps inherently frustrating in varying degrees for everybody. And the book is arguably redundant in places. (The other side of that coin is that he is trying to be careful in trying to communicate stuff that runs counter to "conventional wisdom" and/or requires a paradigm shift.) At Southeast, we are already familiar with Crabb's ideas to some extent—within the Church (compared to when he wrote it, illustrating his impact) and within our church in particular (given the influence of Crabb in some key teachers and things like Faces of Christ). In any case, encourage your group members to pray about how the book will help them, others, and the group.

-The movie "Inside Out" has some correlation with Crabb's book, from the perspective of wondering why it's necessary to go through all that stuff. For a review, check out:

<http://www.pluggedin.com/movie-reviews/inside-out/>

About Thomas in particular...

Ian Thomas' book does two big things for us: 1.) It aptly describes the Spirit-filled life—a vitally important topic that is difficult to describe well. Related to this, Thomas (and Crabb) help us address "the heart" within DC. 2.) Other books accomplish the first goal (e.g., Watchman Nee's *Normal Christian Life* and Francis Chan's *Forgotten God*. Thomas is different in his ability to make the OT come alive—and to inspire interest in the entire Bible. ***Make sure to address both of these points!***

About Hendricks in particular...

- Anticipate the ease of Hendricks' book; much of it is self-explanatory. You probably won't find anyone who doesn't enjoy the book and profit from it, but it does not typically engender much discussion. Either pursue tangents more aggressively or plan to spend more time discussing the Bible reading.
- That said, you may need to motivate the importance of teaching for "non-teachers". Make the case for emphasizing teaching in a curriculum like this: we're all teachers at some level, whether in our homes, the workplace, the church, and so on.

On the teaching...

- Eric's detailed notes on the Ten Commandments (about 60 pages worth) are available to co-leaders upon request. Contact him at dschansb@ius.edu. You can use them to help you prepare &/or to send group members a copy of their commandment *afterwards* to show them how much more is possible.
- Group members can use a commentary or two in their preparation, but it is not at all necessary. (See: p. 42 in DC301 for assistance.) In any case, they should start by meditating on the Word (at length) without such aids. If they get stuck on what to talk about, encourage them to explore other relevant passages, find what Jesus said about it, look for applications, etc.
- On occasion, you may have an individual who is very nervous, going into this opportunity. Encourage them, work with them behind the scenes, etc.
- Given the difficulty inherent in teaching the first two commandments and the desire to get off to a good start, try to get relatively experienced teachers to go first. Given the potential for overlap between the first two commandments, try to choose two people who will easily be able to talk with each other and iron out the details of their presentations.
- Beyond the first two commandments, you can either assign them ("randomly" or purposefully)—or allow them to choose.
- Week 12 provides two more opportunities to teach—beyond the Ten Commandments—in Judges and Ruth.
- If your group is relatively small, get some members to teach an additional time (or two). Likely candidates should be given an earlier commandment, making it easier for them to pick up a second teaching opportunity later in DC301. If your group has more than 12 people in it, you'll need to choose those who will not teach, find other outlets for them to have a teaching experience, or have additional meetings.

On the teaching (cont'd)...

-Note differences in style but encourage methods that will allow for class discussion, as well as experimentation with style and creativity within whatever style is chosen.

-Allow for flexibility in presentation style—sit vs. stand, PowerPoint vs. not, and so on. If someone brings a lot of bells & whistles in the first week, make sure that others don't feel inappropriate pressure to emulate.

-To help them organize, you might talk with them about Ken Davis' SCORRE: Subject; Central theme (narrowing it down); Objective (given audience); Rationale (is this a why or how lesson?); Resources; Evaluate (is this working?)

-Stick (*very firmly*) to a maximum of 30 minutes. *This does not mean 30 minutes plus 5-10 minutes of discussion afterwards—but 30 minutes total!* And don't let them go below 20-25 minutes. Encourage teachers to keep track of time, but also provide hand gestures to signal when they have a few minutes to go. A time constraint is important for them (in most settings, one only has a set amount of time in which to teach) and for others (given the other things you're suppose to do in the meeting that day). In your comments and feedback to them, make sure to focus on the details of their time management—where they “lost” a few minutes, and so on.

-It may be tempting for you to intervene too much, especially with respect to providing answers. Short of correcting a heresy, fixing a complete train wreck, or redirecting a staggeringly long and unfruitful tangent, you should resist the temptation. Beyond that, group members (and even the teacher) might reflexively look to you for answers. You should do so reluctantly, keeping the focus on the one who is teaching for the moment. In general, you should aim to be “just another class member” or only an observant spectator.

On providing feedback about the teaching...

-After class is over—in person &/or perhaps better, by email—ask the teacher what he thought about the experience (what went well or not, what surprised, and so on) and then give specific feedback on matters of style, substance, and administration. Start with positive comments before moving to constructive criticism. Make sure your comments are detailed, including observations on other potential topics/angles. Although you should encourage them, your comments should be more than a vague and brief rah-rah.

-The website provides two formats for recording notes to provide feedback. Some other, potential questions: How well did the teacher hold the group's attention? Was the purpose/thesis clear? Did the material relate to the thesis? Were other relevant Scriptures brought in appropriately? Were there sufficient and relevant applications?

On providing feedback about the teaching (cont'd)...

- Ideally, both co-leaders will provide input—perhaps after conferring with each other. Some groups have used feedback from those in the group. This can be helpful, but might also be a distraction during the presentation and present some difficulties (e.g., should you edit the comments?).
- Things to avoid: the “halo effect” (allowing one positive factor to dominate your comments), the “reverse halo effect” (allowing one negative factor to dominate), and leniency (merely to avoid controversy/conflict).
- Ask them to respond to your comments as appropriate. Of course, all of this should be done as soon as possible!

Administrative and Teaching Details throughout DC301

- Ask group members to consider *Inheriting Our Promised Land: Lessons in Victorious Christian Living from the Book of Joshua* by Eric Schansberg (\$10) as supplemental reading for their Bible reading in Joshua (weeks 9-10). The book will be available to those in Louisville at the Living Word or you can email Eric at dschansb@ius.edu to get copies.
- Relatively early within DC301, you'll want to make plans to obtain the books by Boyd & Eddy and especially Gomes for DC401ff. (The books will run \$42-46.) The former is available from the publisher at a smaller discount, but if you want to go with Amazon, you may encounter delays with a larger order. The latter can be obtained from Zondervan (800-727-3480), but is “print-on-demand”, so it may take some additional time.
- In weeks 1-4, there is flexibility in how/when they read chapters 1-3 from Thomas. Communicate this and encourage them to complete the reading ASAP. It's easy to procrastinate and push this to week 4, but consider other/earlier ways to complete this.
- In week 4, consider having them right down their summary thoughts on Crabb (in 20 words or less)—and then for fun, having people guess who wrote what.
- In week 4, talk at length about the “mini-lessons” in weeks 5-12 (see: p. 42)—and provide some examples from this week's reading. With the emphasis on teaching in DC301, we want to move beyond sporadic observations on the Bible to thinking about teaching lessons from the Bible. The mini-lessons are an opportunity to read Scripture differently—in particular, from the mind of a teacher. The mini-lessons largely replace—or at least, take priority over—the random discussions we've had on the Bible reading to this point. In weeks 5 and 6, when there's usually a lot more time, it's a good goal (to have and to communicate)—to have everybody do one each week.

Administrative and Teaching Details throughout DC301 (cont'd)

- In week 5, re-clarify the idea of the mini-lessons as necessary.
- In week 5 and beyond, make sure to continue practicing time management—so that there is an ideal amount of time for mini-lessons.
- In week 5 or 6, determine teaching assignments and discuss the format change in weeks 7-12.
- To hear Howard Hendricks on-line, see: http://www.discipleshiplibrary.com/howard_hendricks.php.
- In week 5, tell them to take the Ten Commandments quiz (p. 46-47) ***as part of their preparation for*** week 6, ***before*** looking over the material that introduces the Commandments (p. 48-53) or reading Exodus 20 (p. 64).
- Don't expect your group members to do particularly well on the quiz. That's one of the points: we don't know nearly as much as we think (or one would expect) about this popular topic. With respect to the 10 Commandments Quiz, question #2 is God vs. family vs. neighbors; Q#3 is thought, word and deed (or attitudes vs. speech vs. actions); Q#4 has 7 "shalt nots" and 3 "shalts"; Q#5 is Commandment #2 and #5; #6 is writing and speaking; Q#10 can be extend, fulfill, applied as spirit vs. letter of the law, and so on.
- In week 6, John Leo's essay, "Thou shalt not command" (*U. S. News and World Report*, 11/18/96; <http://community.seattletimes.nwsources.com/archive/?date=19961112&slug=2359263>), is an interesting and amusing introduction to the Commandments.
- In week 6, explain to them that the Mills article in week 7 is meant to set the table for fielding feedback on their teaching!
- In week 7ff, it's good to mention "Way of the Master" as an effective use of the Ten C's in evangelism, especially in one-time encounters: <http://www.wayofthemaster.com/>.
- In weeks 9-12, it's interesting that the angle in the readings in Joshua and Judges parallel the angle/viewpoint of Crabb and Thomas. J&J describe the same historical realities—while C&T describe the same spiritual life—from far different angles.
- In week 11, a little trivia: in the KJV, the 46th word of Psalm 46 is "shake", the 46th word from the end is "spear", and Shakespeare was 46 years old in the year that the KJV was released.
- In weeks 11 and 12, as before, set up a mid-break meeting time and encourage them to meet in smaller groups on occasion during the break.
- If you have new groups starting soon (or if you decide to re-offer the Fall retreat), encourage those who were unable to make the first retreat last year to make plans to join this year's group at their retreat.