

*What you need to know if you are
considering*

Bible College

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Notes

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As Christians, we are admonished to *"Be diligent to present yourselves to God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of Truth" (2Tim 2:15).*

The Word also states, *"Wisdom is found in those who take advice" (Pro. 13:10).* Here are a few...

Points to Consider

- ❖ God has a perfect plan for our lives.
- ❖ Prayer is vital - fervent, specific, expectant, consistent, worshipful, and abundant - to any endeavor.
- ❖ Theology does not heal, God does.
- ❖ Sick ministering to sick will not bring about healing.
- ❖ A person who has experienced recovery and healing is able to minister to others.
- ❖ Recovery should come before ministry and theological study.
- ❖ The process of personal recovery is a major and necessary first step to truly being able to helping others.
- ❖ The only way to wisdom, healing, and recovery is through rigorous honesty, authenticity, and personal integrity.
- ❖ Personal recovery is selfish in the beginning, but giving in the end.
- ❖ True and meaningful ministry will be the natural (and Supernatural!) result of personal recovery.

I received these points to consider after arrogantly denouncing 12 step programs as "secular and unnecessary". Instead, I pursued the "Big Thoughts" of theology. The result was disastrous! God has since used the recovery process to bring about great freedom and healing in my life. Now, I can say with the apostle Paul, "Forgetting those things behind, I strive forward to those things which are ahead" (Phil 3:13b) Paul makes this statement only after honestly looking at his life up to that point.

I strongly advise you to take advantage of a Christ centered recovery program. This will assist you in your own healing and recovery.

Below you will find the listings of several Christ centered 12 step organizations. They all offer material to inmates at little or no cost. If there is not a Christian Recovery group within your facility, considered starting one.

Be aware, the 12 steps require action. There is more involved than merely sitting in a room and having a discussion. The 12 steps involve work. You must put pen to paper.

I cannot stress enough the great impact that recovery has had upon my life, my relationship with the Lord and others, as well as my ministry.

Christ-Centered 12 Step Organizations

- ❖ Freedom in Christ
2801 Ocean Park Blvd. #384
Santa Monica, CA 90405
Note on Envelope: Recovery Material

- ❖ Celebrate Recovery
Saddleback Church
1 Saddle Back Pkwy
Lake Forrest, CA 92630
Note on Envelope: Celebrate Recovery

- ❖ Walking the 12 steps with Christ
Christian 12 Step ministry
P.O. Box 4311
Ocala, FL 34478
www.christian12step.org

- ❖ The 12 Steps - A spiritual Journey
Recovery Publishing Inc.
1725 Kresky Ave.
Centralia, WA 98531
(800) 873-8384

Any 12 Step recovery program is going to be beneficial. Rest assured there will be someone willing to provide you with the materials you need. You will be blessed if you make the effort.

It is now is time to ask ourselves some...

Tough Questions

Your chances of successfully reaching your educational goals will be increased by asking yourself some tough questions. Be mindful to use that rigorous honesty we spoke of earlier.

What is your primary motivation for pursuing a formal theological education?

Is formal study necessary for you to be effective in calling?

Are there ministry opportunities you wish to pursue that require this education and/or degree?

How important is this to you?

Is the pursuit of this education for personal pleasure, spiritual growth, or something else?

The reason for asking ourselves these questions is that having clear reasons for doing something will increase the probability of succeeding in our task. It will also increase the value of our investment of time and resources.

Now moving on, we have a...

Short Overview

There are many diploma and certificate programs available through distance education. These programs address many different aspects of ministry, such as Bible study methods, church ministries, and Christian counseling.

The amount of time, or units of college credit, required for these diplomas or degrees varies, but you can expect to spend a minimum of 18 months in their attainment, longer for actual degrees.

There is no limit to the heights to which you may climb up the educational ladder. It is a mighty God whom we serve! Prayerful, diligent study offers great reward for each of us. Be mindful, however, that knowledge does not "Puff Up." What seems impossible to us is as nothing to our Lord. We have a risen Saviour; He gave His life for us! That and that alone must always be central to our lives. Lives we are called to lie down on behalf of others and our ministry, a ministry to be done in His name and power.

General Guidelines

Individual courses earn on average three units of college credit or semester hours. Below is a list of the units required for degrees.

AA Degree: 60 units

Bachelor Degree: 120 units

Graduate degree: You will know when you get there.

These general guidelines are just that, generally, what you can expect. You can also expect many frustrations, delays, and administrative red tape. All of this can discourage the faint hearted so be aware and make allowances. I completed just 12 units in the first eight months of study. I encountered mail delays, my college coordinator went on vacation, turn around time for completed work, it goes on and on.

Accreditation is considered the benchmark for measuring the quality of an institution by the academic and business community. That may not be the case with your church or denomination.

I have found that there are four "ranks" of colleges out there offering Christian distance education. I have listed them here from "lowest" to "highest." The lowest being the least expensive, and going up in cost from there.

1. Non-accredited/Non-licensed: Most often offered free, at least to inmates. Rather than pursuing distance education at some obscure college, I strongly recommend one of the universally recognized organizations offering free correspondence studies listed in the end of the selection entitled "Counting the Cost."
2. Licensed by the State Board of Education/Non-Accredited: My experience is that many of the colleges offering low cost distance education are of this sort. Many are quite good and will probably be recognized by your church. Care should be given to doctrinal statements.
3. Licensed and accredited by organizations not recognized by the US Department of Education and/or CHEA: better than non-accredited colleges, but not much. The cost here may be more than whatever the accreditation may be worth, use wisdom.

4. Accredited by agencies recognized by the US Department of Education and /or CHEA: Primarily accredited by one of the "Big Six" regional accrediting agencies, which are geographically located within the US. There are also three specializing associations: Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, Association of Theologically Schools in the US and Canada (ATS) and the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC). Colleges and Seminaries in this category are costly.

Good Mainstream Colleges

Southwest College of Biblical Studies
P.O. Box 3366
Turlock, CA 95381

Offers a variety of certificate and diploma programs as well as degrees. Each course cost just \$45 to inmates and includes most of the reference materials and textbooks to be used. It is Pre-Trib, Dispensational Theology. It is a very good college and is licensed by the state.

Calvary Chapel Bible College – Distance Learning
39407 Murrieta Hot Springs Road
Murrieta, CA 92563
(951) 696-5944
www.distantlearning@calvarychapelbiblecollege.com

Courses to inmates offered at discount and cost approximately \$100 each. If you are not familiar with calvary chapel, ask around and you are sure to hear god things. Licensed by the state, Non-accredited.

Christ Bible College and Seminary
10106 E. Truman Road
Independence, MO 64052
(800) 543-3720
www.info@cbcs-degree.com<http://cbcs-degree.com>

I have reviewed the list of textbooks used and they appear quite sound. They offer tuition deferment for inmates until gainfully employed after parole. However, they hold the actual degree until all tuition cost is paid. In its place they issue a letter of completion. You will be expected to pay for the textbooks and/or study guides as needed. From what I saw you can expect to pay approximately \$20 per course for needed materials. They are licensed by the state and accredited through the Accrediting Commission International. They offer degrees ranging from Associate to Doctoral as well as "Board Certified Degrees in Christian Counseling and Therapist Certificates."

Moody Bible Institute
820 N. La Salle Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60610
www.studies@moody.edu

Both regional and specialized accreditation as well as licensed by the state. By far the best school listed. Cost is \$100+ per unit but they offer continuing education courses, non-credit, for around \$40.

There are many other colleges out there, but great caution should be used and statements of faith studied prior to involvement.

I have given you some information here but I highly recommend the book "Bakers Guide to Christian Distance Education" By Jason Baker. It includes a directory of hundreds of colleges, representing every denomination

It contains all the information you need to pursue your educational goals. It costs just 13.99 and can be ordered at www.bakersguide.com

Now it is time for...

Counting the Cost

Each of us will be starting from a different place depending on our educational background. Below is a sample of my own worksheets. I used this outline with the Spirits help to focus and outline my academic goals. I recommend that you use something similar after you have the information you need to complete them.

Colleges, Cost & Time

College chosen:

Diploma or degree desired:

Units needed to achieve this goal:

Cost per unit in tuition:

Cost per course in postage (figuring in cost of returning textbooks, etc.):

Cost in supplies needed per course:

Allowance for miscellaneous cost, such as copies, typewriter ribbons, etc:

Time

The time allowed for each course to be completed will directly affect the amount of money needed during any semester.

Courses needed to achieve goal:

Time allowed per course:

Estimated time to reach goal:

Means and Budget

Cost of tuition annually:

Allowance for unexpected cost annually:

Cost per year to achieve goal:

Possible sponsors or other means of financing:

Monthly Breakdown

Average amount needed for monthly tuition:

Amount needed monthly to cover all other cost:

Your cost breakdown between resources:

Immediate Plans and Goals

Sample of My Own

1. Gather all previous transcripts
2. Secure commitments from possible sponsors
3. Order "office" (typewriter & supplies)
4. Develop strong, regular study habits now
5. Work up a time management schedule
6. Maintain balance: Worship, recovery, fitness, social, recreational
7. Seek out council of others (mentor, elders, experienced students)
8. Regularly review all work sheets as a means of personal accountability and as an inventory tool

Recovery is of the utmost importance and should be our first priority. While formal study is of great value, the objective should be personal holiness. Without it, all is for naught!

It is possible during your pursuit of a diploma or degree, there will come a time when your goals may not seem viable. There can be many reasons for this and will vary depending on the individual.

It is my prayer that if you have not yet worked a 12-Step recovery program that you will postpone your enrollment until you have.

Below you will find a list of ministries, which offer free Bible studies. They also issue Certifications of Completion once a series of studies has been completed.

Free Bible Studies

Salvation Army
USA -Western Territories
180 east Ocean Blvd.
Long Beach, CA 90802

Set free Prison Ministry
P. O. Box 5440
Riverside, CA 92517

Crossroads Bible Institute
2976 Ivanrest SW #125
Grandville, MI 49418

American Bible Academy
P. O. Box 1490
Joplin, MO 64802

Prison Fellowship
P. O. Box 7500
Washington, DC 20041-0500

Your institution most likely has a state paid employee acting as a College Coordinator for secular schools. It is likely that your theological education will be facilitated through your chaplain. It will be helpful for you to find out what your institutions policies are before working up your own plan.

May our Lord bless you as you seek to bless others in His name.

Notes