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Why a Bible Minor?

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Why a BIBLE MINOR?

by Jason K. Lee

Christian higher education is most relevant to life when it is biblically and theologically grounded. Cedarville University has set the high goal of developing an atmosphere and programs that are, as stated in Cedarville's mission statement, "grounded in biblical truth." Our daily chapels, our Student Life and Christian Ministry programs, and our emphasis on biblical integration in every course demonstrate the rule of Christ over every area of life, including our personal character, behavior patterns, life choices, and areas of knowledge.

Since Cedarville University is committed to do things "For the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ," the Bible minor just makes sense. Cedarville's Bible minor provides the means for all students to develop biblical and theological competence. These courses give Cedarville graduates the building blocks to engage their academic disciplines and professional fields with a theological framework that distinguishes them from their co-workers in integrity and ingenuity.

Cedarville's Bible minor consists of five core courses: Spiritual Formation, Old Testament Literature, New Testament Literature, Theology 1, and Theology 2. Spiritual Formation, the first course in the Bible minor, deals with three big questions that every Christian student faces: "How is the Gospel good news (still)?," "What is my calling?," and "What role does the Bible play in my life?"

Having clarity on the Gospel can help settle a student's questions about whether he or she is in Christ and what relevance that has for daily life. "Calling" is often misunderstood in Christian communities, but it is necessary for every Christian to recognize the call of God to glorify Him in all things, at all times, forever, including in our occupations. The Bible serves as the Christian's guide for life. To access the wisdom of the biblical texts, students learn helpful tools for interpreting the biblical authors' theological purposes in order to develop spiritual maturity.

One important tool learned in Spiritual Formation is the discipline of meditating on God's Word through a consistent habit of Bible reading, memorizing Scripture, and searching for the textual meaning of the Bible. This Bible-centeredness guides the Christian disciple's interactions with others as a friend, family member, church member, colleague, or citizen. The result of being grounded in the Word is a desire to serve others by sharing biblical truth with those in the church and with those who have yet to believe.

The trajectories from Spiritual Formation are then developed in the remaining four courses. Old Testament

Literature and New Testament Literature focus on the biblical texts themselves and their intended meaning. These survey courses demonstrate how the biblical canon establishes the "big picture" message about Christ through various textual features, including historical narratives such as 1 and 2 Samuel and Matthew and poetic wisdom like that of Genesis 49 or Psalm 8.

Through descriptive texts and prescriptive commands, prophecies, and letters, the Bible speaks to today's disciples with clarity and authority. Cedarville's approach is that studying the biblical texts (Old Testament and New Testament) should deepen our love for God, stoke a passion for His purposes, and grow our certain and true knowledge of our Creator as believers who are in Christ (Col. 3:10–11).

Knowing and loving God through our study of the Scripture is central to the Bible's theological purpose. The last two courses in the Bible minor are guided by the Bible's theological core. To complement the biblical canon's own presentation of theology, attempts have been made throughout church history to gather the biblical data under doctrinal headings (i.e., theology proper, Christology, ecclesiology). At Cedarville, the core matters of our Christian faith are addressed in Theology 1 and Theology 2. These courses feature the rich tradition of the church's teaching on essential doctrines like the triune nature of God (as Father, Son, Spirit), the person and work of Christ, and the exclusive nature of salvation for sinful humanity found in the union with Christ.

Additionally, these courses demonstrate the significant value of a specific confessional tradition that is identified by its high view of Scripture and its understanding of biblical teachings on church government, the ordinances (communion and baptism), and the end times. In each of these courses, professors expose students to a broader Christian tradition, but also delineate the strengths of Cedarville's theological positions expressed in our doctrinal statement.

The goal of the Bible minor at Cedarville University is to equip every student, regardless of his or her major,



with the biblical and theological foundation that they need to Be Bold ambassadors for Christ in a secular culture and in their local churches. From the Bible minor, students receive the biblical and theological data they need to join professors in their majors in engaging their specific fields through integration and Gospel witness. Every disciple is a theologian (and, hopefully, a good one).

Cedarville's Bible minor helps produce engineer-theologians, nurse-theologians, musician-theologians, educator-theologians, CEO-theologians, scientist-theologians, and so on. The churches and new church plants that receive Cedarville

graduates have gained church members who are producers, not just consumers, who want to contribute to the church's work in making God's name great in our neighborhoods and to the nations.

As an educator, I am excited about the scope and sequence of Cedarville's Bible minor. It provides rich perspective and academic challenges. As a theologian, I am excited that our approach is biblically grounded. It takes the biblical heritage of our students and plunges them to new depth and understanding of biblical faithfulness.

However, I am most excited about Cedarville's Bible minor as a dad. With my own six children, I recognize the pivotal role

that college will play in taking the truths that my wife and I have imparted to our kids and either sharpening those truths or undoing them. Parents and churches have labored for years to train children and youth in the faith. The Bible minor at Cedarville University is designed to help those students make that biblical faith their own, for life. 

Jason K. Lee is Dean of the School of Biblical and Theological Studies and Professor of Theological Studies at Cedarville University. He earned his Ph.D. in historical theology from the University of Aberdeen. Follow him:  @DrJasonKLee