

# Advanced Leadership Training

## 2025–2026



**Course description:** A powerful 10-month training course designed to help learners make disciples and lead others to do the same (Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Tim. 2:2). The course tests and purifies the theological beliefs of our church's developing leaders and equips them with critical leadership skills necessary to fish for men and build up the church (Matt. 4:19/Mark 1:17; Eph. 4:11-16).

**Cost:** \$300 (*all books/materials and all meals are included in the cost*)

**Prerequisites:**

- Church membership
  - (*If not currently a member of Grace Polaris, would need to commit to becoming a member within the 10 months of Advanced Leadership Training*)
- Application, with references
- Entrance exam

**Leaders:**

- Pastor Zac Hess
- Pastor Gary Webb

**Course objectives:** By the end of the course, students will be able to

1. Articulate and support biblically the main tenets and themes of the Christian faith
2. Distill and pursue actionable goals from Bible passages in various genres
3. Perform and train others to perform critical disciple-making functions such as sharing their faith, praying, and leading individuals and groups toward Christlikeness
4. Answer a host of general and specific objections to biblical truth
5. Summarize and explain the essentials of Grace Brethren history and practice
6. Relate with familiarity to various leaders of Grace Polaris Church
7. Develop the pattern of yielding, humbling our will in obedience to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit

**Course format:** There are three primary elements to the Advanced Leadership Training course format:

- *Individual monthly reading and theological topics.* Most months learners will complete readings covering systematic theology and biblical theology. One month the focus will be on Grace Brethren history and ordinances. The reading material, as well as other resources that mentors and learners marshal, will assist learners in writing answers to questions assigned each month related to four theological topics.
- *Mentoring meetings.* Learners will arrange to meet with their assigned mentors at least three times per month. These mentoring meetings will follow the three-thirds disciple-making process<sup>1</sup> and focus on learners' 1) understanding of and obedience to the theological truths covered in the reading, and 2) faithfulness in Christian witness. Mentoring meetings will typically last between sixty and ninety minutes.
- *Monthly class meetings.* At the end of each month of study, learners, mentors, and other church leaders will gather on a Saturday for in-depth focus on theological truths and ministry skills. Monthly meetings will also follow the three-thirds disciple-making process.<sup>2</sup> Significant components of the Saturday time include a 20-minute question-and-answer section for each learner on the month's theological topics, formal teaching by learner, as well as training in and practice of specific ministry skills, as outlined on the schedule below. Saturday meetings are significant time investments, lasting from 7 a.m. until dismissal between 12 p.m.

**New group requirement:** In order to multiply devoted followers of Jesus and provide a context for applying the principles of the course, each learner will be required to begin a new group by May 17, 2025. The group may consist of believers, non-believers, or some combination of the two, and may conduct itself according to any format (e.g., sermon-based, discovery Bible study, training group) so long as it centers itself on multiplying itself through study of and obedience to Scripture.

**Required resources (all books included with registration fee):**

- The Bible
- Advanced Leadership Training course packet
- Carson, D. A. *The God Who Is There: Finding Your Place in God's Story*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2010.
- DeArney, Dick. *Call for the Elders*. Rev. ed. Columbus, Ohio: Grace Brethren Church, 1991.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology Second edition*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2020.
- Hodge, Timothy Mark. *Could It Be Three? Investigating Baptism by Trine Immersion*. Winona Lake, Ind.: CE National, 1999.
- Plaster, David. *Ordinances: What Are They?* Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH, 1985.
- Ryrie, Charles. *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*. Chicago: Moody, 1999.
- Allison, Gregg.: *50 Core Truths of the Christian Faith*. Grand Rapids.: Baker Books, 2018.
- Scoles, Todd. *Restoring the Household: The Quest of the Grace Brethren Church*. Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH, 2008.
- Blackaby, Henry. *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God, Revised and Expanded*. Nashville, Tenn.: B&H, 2008.
- Harmon, Matthew. *Asking the right questions*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2017

**Additional resources:**

- Audio and video files accompanying Carson's [The God Who Is There](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/the-god-who-is-there/) are available online at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/the-god-who-is-there/>
- <http://www.waynegrudem.com/category/audio/systematic-theology> Theology Lectures by Wayne Grudem
- [Experiencing God](#) are available in audio form. Audible audiobooks on Amazon.com.

<sup>1</sup> For more on the three-thirds disciple-making process, see the article entitled "Three-Thirds Disciple-making" in this packet. For an in-depth breakdown of the structure of mentoring meetings, see "Mentoring Meeting Format."

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the structure of monthly Saturday meetings, see "Saturday Meeting Format."

***Class schedule/assignments 2025-2026***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting Discussion</b>	<b>Finish This Work Before Meeting</b>
Thursday, July 24, 2025	Kick-Off meeting for Advanced Leadership Training <b>Worship Center Room 10</b> from 6:30 – 8:00 pm	
Saturday, August 23, 2025	Systematic theology: Bibliology Biblical theology: Creation Ministry skill: Being a witness, pt. 1 Experiencing God	<i>Ryrie</i> , 9–16; <i>Grudem</i> , 2–8 <i>Carson</i> , preface, 1 <i>Blackaby</i> , Intro, 1-5 <i>Genesis 1-3</i>
Saturday September 20, 2025	Systematic theology: Theology proper Biblical theology: Fall Ministry skill: Being a witness, pt. 2 Experiencing God	<i>Ryrie</i> , 4–8; <i>Grudem</i> , 9-14, 16; <i>Carson</i> , 2 <i>Blackaby</i> , 6-9
Saturday October 18, 2025	Systematic theology: Christology Biblical theology: Abrahamic covenant Ministry skill: Being a witness, pt. 3 Experiencing God	<i>Ryrie</i> , 40–47; <i>Grudem</i> , 26-29; <i>Carson</i> , 3 <i>Blackaby</i> , 10-15 <i>Mark</i>
Saturday November 15, 2025	Systematic theology: Pneumatology Biblical theology: Mosaic covenant/law Ministry skill: Prayer	<i>Ryrie</i> , 59–68; <i>Grudem</i> , 30,38-39,52-53 <i>Carson</i> , 4 <i>Harmon 1-5</i> <i>John 14, 16</i>
Saturday December 13, 2025	Systematic theology: Angelology & anthropology (part 1) Biblical theology: Kingdom / Intertestamental period Ministry skill: Hearing and Obeying God’s Word, pt. 1 Experiencing God	<i>Ryrie</i> , 17–28, 29–33; <i>Grudem</i> , 19-23; <i>Carson</i> , 5-6 <i>Blackaby</i> , 16-19
Saturday January 17, 2026 (learner led)	Systematic theology: Anthropology (pt. 2) & soteriology (pt. 1) Biblical theology: The birth and life of Jesus Ministry skill: Hearing and obeying God’s word, pt. 2	<i>Ryrie</i> , 34-39, 48–56; <i>Grudem</i> , 24-25; 31 <i>Carson</i> , 7-8 <i>Harmon (pages 77-132)</i> <i>Romans</i>
Saturday February 14, 2026 (learner led)	Systematic theology: Soteriology (pt. 2) Biblical theology: The death and resurrection of Jesus Ministry skill: Preparing a message	<i>Ryrie</i> , 57–58; <i>Grudem</i> , 32-38,40,42-43 <i>Carson</i> , 9-10
Saturday March 14, 2026 (learner led)	Systematic theology: Ecclesiology Biblical theology: Church age  <i>Learner teaching</i> : from assigned biblical text	<i>Ryrie</i> , 69–76; <i>Grudem</i> , 44-48,51; <i>Carson</i> , 12 <i>Ephesians; 1&amp;2 Timothy;</i> <i>Titus</i>
Saturday April 11, 2026 (learner led)	Systematic theology: Brethren history and ordinances  <i>Learner teaching</i> : from assigned biblical text	<i>Call for the Elders;</i> <i>Could it Be Three?;</i> <i>Restoring the Household;</i> <i>Ordinances;</i> <i>Grudem</i> , 49-50
Saturday May 16, 2026 MC 2	Systematic: Eschatology Biblical theology: The final restoration <i>Graduation Luncheon MC 1 (11:30 am – 2:00 pm)</i> <i>Learner teaching</i> : from assigned biblical text	<i>Ryrie</i> , 77–92; <i>Grudem</i> , 41, 54–57 <i>Carson</i> , 13–14 <i>Matthew 24-25; Revelation</i>
May 17, 2026	Graduation in services	

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting Discussion</b>	<b>Finish This Work Before Meeting</b>
Thursday, July 24, 2025		
Saturday August 23, 2025	<b><i>Extra reading:</i></b> Bibliology	<i>Allison, 1-7</i>
Saturday September 20, 2025	<b><i>Extra reading:</i></b> Theology proper	<i>Allison, 8-13</i>
Saturday October 18, 2025	<b><i>Extra reading:</i></b> Christology	<i>Allison, 18-21</i>
Saturday November 15, 2025	<b><i>Extra reading:</i></b> Pneumatology	<i>Allison, 22-24, 32</i>
Saturday December 13, 2025	<b><i>Extra reading:</i></b> Angelology & anthropology (part 1)	<i>Allison, 14-16</i>
Saturday January 17, 2026	<b><i>Extra reading:</i></b> Anthropology (pt. 2) & soteriology (pt. 1)	<i>Allison, 17, 25</i>
Saturday February 14, 2026	<b><i>Extra reading:</i></b> Soteriology (pt. 2)	<i>Allison, 26-31, 33-34</i>
Saturday March 14, 2026 (learner led)	<b><i>Extra reading:</i></b> Ecclesiology	<i>Allison, 35-43</i>
Saturday April 11, 2026		
Saturday May 16, 2026	<b><i>Extra reading:</i></b> Eschatology	<i>Allison, 44-50</i>
May 17, 2026	Graduation in services	

# Saturday Meeting Format

## Advanced Leadership Training



Looking Back	Looking Up	Looking Forward
<p><b>1. Pastoral care</b> <i>How are the learners doing? What praises or requests can we lift before the Lord? (Group prays according to these praises and requests.)</i></p> <p><b>2. Worship</b> <i>Trainer offers a brief word or psalm to meditate on. Time of prayer.</i></p> <p><b>3. Loving accountability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How did the learners do on this month's obedience goals / application questions?</i></li> <li>• <i>What have the learners done this month to be verbal witnesses?</i></li> <li>• <i>Learners answer questions about their assigned theological topics (20 minutes per learner).</i></li> <li>• <i>Each learner teaches once formally in either month 8, 9 or 10</i></li> </ul> <p><b>4. Vision casting</b> <i>Trainer offers a scriptural word of inspiration related to the learners' disciple-making call and potential.</i></p>	<p><b>5. New lesson</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>First seven months (1-7): Trainers instruct learners in that month's ministry skill (see syllabus).</i></li> <li>• <i>Last four months a learner will facilitate the meeting</i></li> <li>• <i>Last three months (8-10): Two learners per month will teach formally from a biblical text that addresses their assigned topic.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>*Looking Up may be adjusted depending upon the number of learners in ALT</i></p>	<p><b>6. Practice</b> <i>Learners practice the ministry skill</i></p> <p><b>7. Set goals and pray</b> <i>Learners determine actionable obedience goals related to this week's ministry skill. Learners and mentors together pray for the Spirit's help in accomplishing these goals and in sharing God's truth with others.</i></p>

# Mentoring Meeting Format

## Advanced Leadership Training



Looking Back	Looking Up	Looking Forward
<p><b>1. Pastoral care</b> <i>How are the learners doing? What were the highlights of their weeks? What has them stressed? (Offer any praises and requests that arise to the Lord.)</i></p> <p><b>2. Worship</b> <i>Offer a brief word or song of praise to the Lord.</i></p> <p><b>3. Loving accountability<sup>3</sup></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>What reading did the learners complete?</i></li> <li><i>Did the learners accomplish last week's "Looking Forward" obedience goals?</i></li> <li><i>Did the learners engage in verbal witness since the last meeting?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>4. Vision casting</b> <i>Mentor offers a scriptural word of inspiration related to the learners' disciple-making call and potential.</i></p>	<p><b>5. New lesson</b> <i>What material from the theological reading struck the learners as most important or impactful? What questions do they have about the topics covered? In what ways can they obey the biblical principles under discussion or the implications of those biblical principles?</i></p>	<p><b>6. Practice</b> <i>Take time to practice</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1) a ministry skill that arises from the "Looking Up" discussion, or</i></li> <li><i>2) a ministry skill covered in one of the previous Saturday meetings, or</i></li> <li><i>3) distilling an obedience goal from a passage that came up in the "Looking Up" section.</i></li> </ol> <p><b>7. Set goals and pray</b> <i>Learners determine actionable obedience goals related to this week's discussion. Learners and mentor together pray for the Spirit's help in accomplishing these goals and in sharing God's truth with others.</i></p>

<sup>3</sup> Numbered items in bold are most critical to cover during the meeting.

# Guidelines for Written Work



The monthly written work for Advanced Leadership Training is an important component of the course for three reasons:

1. It provides the learner with an opportunity to synthesize and articulate his or her theological learning.
2. It forms the basis upon which the learners receive questions during our monthly Saturday morning gatherings.
3. It provides a reference and resource for the learners' future ministry.

Because of the importance of this written work, learners should be aware of the following expectations.

- Written work is due by noon on the Wednesday preceding the Saturday meeting at which it is discussed. This gives our mentors and other attendees of the course the opportunity to review your work and ask more helpful, direct questions about it.
- Each answer to the monthly theological questions should be replete with Scripture references. When in doubt, include the Scripture reference(s) upon which your points are based. You may include only a reference rather than the text of a particular Scripture, but feel free to include the text when including it would be important to illustrate a theological point you are making. For example, citing John 3:16 is fine, but there are some instances in which you may actually want to write out, "For God so loved the world . . ." When you are quoting a text of Scripture, please indicate the version from which you are quoting, or make a general note indicating the version you are using if all quotes are from the same translation.
- Approximately equal attention should be given to all assigned questions. In most cases, each of the four sections will require six to eight pages for an adequate response.
- We are looking primarily for your thoughts, opinions, and musings, not those of the authors you are reading. You may include quotes from the required books or other material, but please indicate your source when you do so. In cases where you are quoting the text of several Scriptures to substantiate an answer, make sure to offer at least a brief comment as to why the verse(s) in question validate your point.
- **Personal Application questions:** Please write 250-500 words on how you have / will apply the truths you have learned from your theological/biblical studies. Chose at least 1 grouping (answering all questions in that grouping). Be specific as possible. Pray that the Holy Spirit would reveal areas in which conformity to Christ is needed.
  - ✓ *Personal Purity:* In my Thought Process, In my Speech, In my Actions
  - ✓ *Private Devotion:* In my Prayer life, Study of God's Word, In my Obedience
  - ✓ *Relationships at Home:* Husband/Wife, Parent/Child, Boss/Employee
  - ✓ *Kingdom Expansion:* In my Witness, In my Disciple making
  - ✓ *Worship:* In Praise, In Preaching, In Ordinances
  - ✓ *Leadership:* In Visionizing, In Strategic Planning, In Mobilizing a team for ministry
  - ✓ *Fellowship* with other believers: One Another's, Spiritual Gifts, Fun
  - ✓ *Stewardship:* Of my Time, Of my Talents, Of my Treasures

# Three-Thirds Disciple-making



Those who spend a significant amount of time investing in others eventually run into a practical question: “What should I cover when I meet with those I’m training?” Without some kind of plan, meeting times with learners can easily dissolve into directionless conversation or teaching that never works itself out in real life.

The three-thirds disciple-making process\* is a simple model for conducting training sessions that many mentors around the world are using with noteworthy results. In essence the three-thirds process divides a training session into three equal parts called “Looking Back,” “Looking Up,” and “Looking Forward.” Together the three thirds establish a framework not only for biblical learning, but also for obedience and accountability for that learning.

*Looking Back*, the first third, primarily reviews what has happened in between the current meeting and the prior one. Mentor and learners discuss how the learners’ weeks went and may engage in a brief time of worship. Next they turn their attention to how the learners did in biblical obedience and witness, with particular focus on whatever goals they set last week. This is a time of loving accountability, a time when the mentor comes alongside the learners to help them see their triumphs and where they could have done better. Finally, the mentor casts vision to the group to make sure they all keep their eyes on the mission Christ has given them.

In *Looking Up*, the second third, the mentor or one of the learners leads the group in investigating a passage of Scripture or a specific discipleship principle. This is the portion of a three-thirds disciple-making meeting that most resembles the Bible studies evangelicals are used to experiencing. The *Looking Up* third showcases the versatility of the three-thirds disciple-making model, as the group can study any passage of the Bible, or any series of passages and principles over time, which they believe the Spirit is leading them to study and obey. The leader of the group may be more or less directive in selecting passages and principles depending on the needs of the group.

*Looking Forward*, the third third of the meeting, contains two primary elements: 1) practicing any skills necessary at that point of the group’s training (which usually corresponds to the material covered in the *Looking Up* third); and 2) setting goals to be accomplished before the next meeting. This is the portion of the meeting in which all involved work hard to distill any noteworthy information, commands, or examples from Scripture into concrete, actionable items. The expectation is that in the next meeting’s *Looking Back* third, the group will be able to assess whether or not they obeyed the passage or principle they covered.

\*This model of disciple-making was developed by Ying Kai, a missionary in Asia, and is described in detail in Ying Kai and Steve Smith, *T4T: A Discipleship ReRevolution* (Monument, Colo.: WIGTake Resources, 2011), 125-141.