

@THE ORCHARD

DECEMBER 2018

OPEN THE BIBLE



KYLE GREEN

I never needed to be convinced that I was a sinner. It was clear to me that death would mean hell, because of the hellish lifestyle that I lived. As a man who was filled with the love of money, I sold almost anything I thought I could get away with to make fast bucks. To my shame, this also included various drugs and other illegal items. →

Because of how I was living and a variety of things happening around me, dreadful visions of having to endure prison life were becoming very vivid in my mind. I deserved to go to prison. And it wasn't just that I had broken the law. Even though I wasn't a Christian, I suspected that there was a God who saw who I was and all that I was doing. I couldn't escape Him. My sins were finding me out in ways that screamed, "The God who you do not know is against you."

One night, I was out to dinner with friends when one of the women asked, "Where are your morals?"

I went home that night and thought about her question. I opened the Bible that had been given to me a few years earlier. I wasn't sure where to start, but someone had told me that you can read through the book of Proverbs in a month by reading the chapter that corresponds with the day. It was July 5, so I read chapter five. Toward the end of the chapter, I read, "For a man's ways are before the eyes of the LORD, and he ponders all his paths. The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin." (Proverbs 5:21-22 ESV). I wept as I read, soaking my pillow. It was so clear. **The Bible powerfully convicted me of my sin.**

Four days later, I went to church. The pastor invited people to step forward and put their faith in Christ—and I did!

Prior to my salvation, there was an incident where my trust was betrayed. My trust was taken advantage of, men pointed guns at my face, and I was robbed. I was so angry that I was set on getting revenge, though I never got it. After being a Christian for more than 10 years, I was sitting at the airport, and one of the men who robbed me sat at a close distance from me. I was amazed that I no longer wanted him dead, but alive in Christ. I wanted to love him instead of erase him. There is only one explanation for such a heart transformation: the power of Christ.

AT THE ORCHARD, we love the Bible. We sing the Word, pray the Word, read the Word, preach the Word in our worship services each week. The Bible is central in our ministries for children, students and adults. We gather together in LIFE Groups to dig deep roots into God's Word, which is one cohesive story that points us to Jesus Christ. You read just two examples of the power of God's Word in the life of an individual. In 2019, we want to equip you to engage with the Bible more and better. **See the resources on the next page to help you do that:**

2019 SERMON SERIES

OPEN

a one-year journey through the Bible

In 2019 we'll be taking a one-year journey through the Bible. The aim of this journey is not just that we would get to know the Bible but that, through the Bible, we would come to know God. Our hope is that, by the end of the series, everyone who takes this journey will know God in a true, fresh, deep and personal way. This is a journey that could change your life. Would you come with us? Whom could you invite to join you at church?

Many **sermon-based LIFE Groups** will be meeting throughout the year to dig into God's Word together. If you're not currently in a LIFE Group, consider participating in a group for this year. Maybe you've never been part of a LIFE Group and aren't sure what to expect. Give it a try; commit to attending a group for four weeks and see how it goes. Visit theorchardefc.org to find a group.

Family devotionals will be available to help continue the conversation from Sundays throughout the week. Pick one up at church.

OPENTHEBIBLE.ORG TOOL—JANUARY 2019



Earlier this year, I came across some research on behaviors and beliefs about the Bible among adults in the United States, and it still blows my mind.

Get this—even though most Americans don't regularly engage with the Bible, they are NOT neutral, skeptical or hostile toward it—they are open! According to research from Barna and the American Bible Society, the majority of Americans have a high view of the Bible. In fact,

58 percent wish they read it more often. Furthermore, the research shows that every segment of Americans expressed a desire for more Bible reading, including one in five skeptics and one in five non-Christians!

Let me state the obvious: the Bible is the best thing we've got! If the majority of non-regular Bible readers in our country say they wish they read the Bible more often, then what are we waiting for?

Unlocking the Bible has been working feverishly since the beginning of 2018 to create content and a new tool that will equip everyday Christians like you and me to take another person through the Bible.



We are calling this new tool OPEN: openthebible.org. You will be able to sit down with a cup of coffee and a friend and work your way through a section of the Bible in less than an hour using your phone, tablet or computer. Stay tuned for details. OPEN will be up and running January 1, 2019.

Whom would you like to take through the Bible next year? You probably have at least two or three names that immediately came to mind. Write them down. And begin praying now.

Tim Augustyn, Unlocking the Bible



STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

Several of our staff celebrated significant work anniversaries in 2018. We're grateful to the Lord for the way He's gifted them and for His kindness in bringing them to and keeping them at The Orchard.

TEN YEARS



CLAIRE BECHARD
Director of Communications
and Media Services



MICHELLE BRZA
Executive Assistant



LAURA KLEINSCHMIDT
Director of Women's Ministries
Barrington



ED MARKECH
Facilities
Arlington Heights



JOSH NEWTON
Pastor of Student Ministries
Barrington



RITA THOMPSON
Accountant



MARY ZOSS
Database Administrator

FIVE YEARS



BRAD MULLET
Director of Global Ministries



TOM YOON
Pastor of Worship and
Congregational Life
Northfield





GORDY & NANCY CARLSON

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

By the time I was a sophomore in a Chicago public high school, I had been confirmed in the Lutheran church my family attended, had heard many Bible stories, sung many hymns and worshiped in a beautiful sanctuary. I seldom read my King James Version of the Bible, however, and preferred to read the sports section of the daily newspaper. That year, I took a Spanish class which was taught by an interesting man by the name of Carl Hankwitz. I have called him God's "secret agent" through the years because he told our class that, to be really well educated, one must read through the Bible cover to cover, all 1,178 chapters. (That was unusual for a public school!) For some reason I decided I wanted to be considered really well educated, so I began with Genesis Chapter 1. I was determined to complete the reading marathon by reading one chapter a day. Well, according to my math, that takes a little more than three years, so I planned my days to get my daily goal accomplished. My salvation and

decision to follow Jesus was a gradual process over the three-plus years. Reading God's Word caused my daily prayer life to also become a partner to my reading journey. While I still enjoy reading the sports section, my priority each day is to read and study God's Word, which continues to impact my life 66 years later. It never grows old!

*"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to **make you wise for salvation** through faith in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture is breathed out by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, **equipped for every good work.**" 2 Timothy 3:14-17*

UPCOMING PREACHING SCHEDULE

DECEMBER 8/9

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS - COLIN SMITH
BARRINGTON - TOM OLSON
ITASCA - BRAD WETHERELL
MARENGO - JARED HENDRICKS
NORTHFIELD - JOSH PARSONS

DECEMBER 15/16

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS - COLIN SMITH
BARRINGTON - TOM OLSON
CHICAGO - ANDRÉ BALLARD
ITASCA - BRAD WETHERELL
MARENGO - JARED HENDRICKS
NORTHFIELD - JOSH PARSONS

DECEMBER 22/23

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS - COLIN SMITH
BARRINGTON - TOM OLSON
ITASCA - BRAD WETHERELL
MARENGO - JARED HENDRICKS
NORTHFIELD - JOSH PARSONS

DECEMBER 24

CHRISTMAS EVE - SEE WEBSITE FOR SERVICE TIMES

DECEMBER 25

CHRISTMAS DAY AT MARENGO, 10 A.M.

DECEMBER 29/30

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS - BRANDON MYERS
BARRINGTON - TOM OLSON
ITASCA - BRAD WETHERELL
MARENGO - DAVID TANK
NORTHFIELD - TOM YOON

JANUARY 5/6

OPEN: A ONE-YEAR JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE
LIFE - GENESIS 2:7-9, 15-24
PASTOR COLIN SMITH