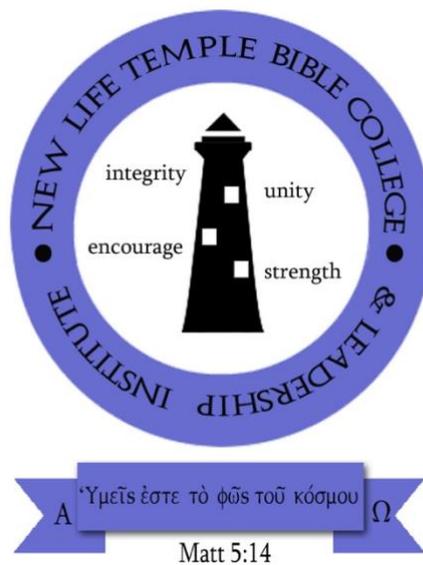


NLT BIBLE COLLEGE & LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE  
Master's Thesis & Biblical Exploratory Study



GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

## **NLT Bible College Master's Thesis & Biblical Exploratory Study Guidelines**

### **What is a Master's Thesis?**

A master's thesis is similar to a doctoral dissertation, but it is generally shorter and more narrowly focused. As a rule of thumb, a master's thesis should be publishable as a single article that attempts to answer a hypothetical thought. Although a doctoral dissertation usually takes the same approach, it is generally equivalent to at least three articles or a book. Students who chose to write a master's thesis display an interest in pursuing further research into a topic of interest that will help bring about a greater clarity to a subject in their field of study.

### **What is a Biblical Exploratory Study?**

NLT's Biblical Exploratory Study is intellectual research used to investigate either an unclear textual passage(s) or to conduct an academic inquiry into divergent Christian topics. Biblical Exploratory studies "explores" a topic in order to help both the author and audience attain better understanding. This means that the person doing the research should more likely be open to express objective knowledge for the sole purpose of informing, rather than influencing their audience.

Keep in mind that a biblical exploratory is not usually focused on a psychological or social interest of the subject, but rather a biblical or Kingdom wide interest. As such, its scope of study is poised to infer insight upon topics from a Kingdom point of view. Students who choose this path will be encouraged to select a particular biblical or Christian topic that the student may wish to research and present to the Master's Committee. Ultimately, a Biblical Exploratory Study allows the student to present a concentrated scholastic work that offers insight into a well thought out study.

### **What is the difference between a Thesis and a Biblical Exploratory Study?**

The difference between a thesis and biblical exploratory study is normally found in their aim. The thesis researches a topic in order to pursue a truth or present qualitative or quantitative results that may help establish a better understanding of a subject matter. It is normally formulated around a hypothesis established by the student with the intent to either prove or disprove its theoretic position. This body of work can develop into a publishable work piece.

The biblical exploratory creates a body of work that can eventually be used as a teachable study for its selected subject matter. Rather than ask a question, its objective is to inform the reader through a well-documented study that can be both spiritually insightful and divinely illuminating. The content formulated from this field of research may eventually become useful for future spiritual training, teaching, small group, or even collegiate purposes.

### **How Long Should the Thesis/Work-Study Be? How Long should it Take?**

A master's thesis/biblical exploratory study for NLT Bible College is 50 pages, not including the front matter and the bibliography. However, the length will vary according to the topic and the method of analysis. Students who participate in the Master's program usually take about 1.5–2 years if a NLT Graduate and about 3yrs if newly enrolled student.

## **What is the Proper Approach?**

### **1. Don't make Assumptions**

The purpose for your study is NOT to validate your agenda, but to research for truth in a matter, issue, or topic of interest. Although you may have a desired outcome, the goal is not to lean one way or the other but rather find what is the truth behind the information you seek

### **2. Prove what is True**

Truth is what every believer must desire to know. A thesis or biblical exploratory study is based on the outcome of truth. As stated above, steer away from attempting to establish your own personal agenda or belief and find what the scriptures have proven to be true.

### **3. Attempt to investigate more than one side**

Truth must endeavor to look at both sides of an issue. Meaning don't look to show one side of the argument of study. You must dare to research other opinions, other research, and other arguments that may stand against yours. Be open to discover what the other side of the coin is like. If nothing else, it helps to establish the truth you seek even more.

### **4. Don't Plagiarize**

Plagiarism is using someone else's writing, ideas, thoughts, concepts, charts, graphs, statements, etc., in a writing and failing to acknowledge the author, but presenting it as the writer's own work. Even paraphrasing another's work must be documented.

A general rule of thumb: quoted or paraphrased material with cited references should not exceed 25% of the entire assignment or paper; 75% of an assignment should consist of the student's own words, thoughts, and ideas.

### **5. No Pictures**

Please remember that this is a collegiate or rather a scholarly study. Pictures that have nothing to do with your study are not appreciated. Keep in mind that our concern is with what is said. We do expect a neat, clean, and presentable formation of the information presented, but pictures are not needed or required to help enhance your study.

### **6. Consider the Little, Brown Handbook**

This is an awesome tool to have if you are a new writer or just need to refresh your writing skills. It is also a source for understanding the MLA formatting style. It is a book highly recommended for a successful writing encounter. It is a classroom resource designed to help students find the answers they need quickly and easily.

**7. Find a Peer Mentor (Advisor), and an Editor**

NLT Bible College will provide you a counselor that can help guide you through this challenging process, however; you may also wish to find an outside peer mentor or advisor. This person should be a buffer or help provide you an alternative view in your thinking that will challenge you in your theoretical writing approach.

Always have a second person edit your paper for clarity, grammatical correctness, and format. Even the most proficient writer overlooks errors. When reviewing our own writing, we tend to see what should be there rather than what actually is there. Be sure to provide your editor with a copy of these Formatting Guidelines. You can waste a great deal of money and create for yourself needless frustration if your editor can't point out formatting errors that need to be fixed.

If you have a great deal of difficulty with formatting, choose as your editor someone capable of doing the computer work necessary to fix the problems. This will help you present your work with confidence knowing that you had someone verify and correct any mistakes before turning it in for a grade of approval.

**8. Use the proper amount of references**

NLT Bible College requires the student to write at least 12,500 word (*approx. 50pgs dbl spaced*) and use the minimum of 12 reference sources and to properly document them in your bibliography as well as footnoted in your body of work.

## Thesis/Work-Study Preparation

There are three stages to thesis preparation. They are:

- *the planning stage,*
- *the development stage, and*
- *the presentation stage.*

Each of these stages is described in detail on the next few pages.

### 1. The Planning Stage

#### **Select Your Topic**

In selecting your thesis or biblical exploratory study topic, choose a subject that will establish the seriousness and the maturity of your study. It should be something that challenges the student to think outside of their comfort levels

#### **Determine Your Timetable**

Determine how long you will have to research and write, then set up a timetable to live by, revising it only when it appears that the original plan is unrealistic. Establish daily, weekly, or monthly goals and stay on target. The important thing is to develop a schedule you can keep all the way to the end. Aim to complete your thesis within 6 to 8 months.

#### **Prepare a Title Proposal (See Appendix A)**

Once a topic has been chosen and a timetable established, the student should prepare a written title proposal and give to the counselor with whom you previously met.

A properly planned and developed proposal can be a valuable tool in developing the actual study. It helps the student to possibly clarify the what, the why, the when, and the how of writing the thesis.

- a) Proposed to your counselor a title and topic in the form of a statement
- b) The statement usually consists of a single sentence that summarizes the main point of your writing project, giving the reader your point of view concerning your topic. It is the significant idea that ties all your information together.
- c) Include the proposed thesis or work-study objectives (goals). The objectives should be written so as to provide an overview of the project and what the student hopes to accomplish through it.

#### **Submit the Proposal for Approval**

Give your finished proposal to your counselor who will present it to the NLTCB Master's Committee for review and approval. If accepted, the counselor will let you know in a timely manner, however; if not accepted you will be instructed in how to fine-tuning

your proposal, or your topic, approach to research, etc. Whatever the issue is, the counselor will help you with preparing your proposal for acceptance.

## **2. The Development Stage**

### **Research**

Research is defined as scientific or scholarly investigation. Sophisticated and extensive research, as required by the Master's level program, means you must spend many hours searching out and reading source material and then analyzing what you have read. It requires a deep-thinking process that is more than mimicking the ideas of other authors. Research can include the analysis and comparison of scriptural texts, library study, personal interviews with knowledgeable individuals, statistical surveys, etc.

### **NLTBC Research Recommendations & Standards**

Please keep the following recommendations and standards in mind:

- a) Research work is to be completed by the student only. A part of the discipline of graduate work is researching, reading, analyzing, and writing. No project will be accepted if the work is not 100% of the student's work. Academic honesty is vital.
- b) All sources of research materials should be noted with an in-text citation within the body of the work and included in the bibliography. The bibliography should contain a minimum of 12 different resources from which you have gathered information. The Bible or various versions can be noted, but they are NOT part of the 12 resources.
- c) All quotations from a resource should accurately reflect the context from which the quote was taken. Misrepresentation of any position is unacceptable to NLTBC. Be sure you understand the writer's viewpoint clearly. Please quote your author or resource accurately.
- d) Your work should NOT consist of mostly quoted material. NLTBC desires to engage with the work and skills of the student and their thoughts rather than the opinions of others. Use your research to support your position or project your thoughts. Let your work be the results of your own conclusions. Originality and creativity are supported and encouraged!

## **3. The Presentation Stage**

**Once you are ready to turn in your project please make 3 copies of the manuscript for the Master's Committee.**

### **Spacing**

Double-space the text of your work, as well as the abstract, preface and any appendices. Indent the first line of each paragraph. Single-space footnotes, bibliographical entries

and block quotations. In the table of contents and the lists of tables and figures, single-space entries and double-space between them.

### **Print Style & Font**

The font to use is either Times Roman or Garamond. Use the same model of font for your entire thesis/work-study. Font size should be 12-points. If printing the final output with a dot-matrix printer, use the high-quality print mode and a typeface that produces consistently clear and dense characters, such as 12-point Geneva.

### **Margins**

The left (binding edge) margin must be at least one and one-half inches. All other margins which include the top, bottom and right margins must be one inch. This requirement applies to every page in the document. Other rules for margins are as follows:

- All headings should start two inches from the top of the page.
- Tables, figures, and graphs, whether one or several per page, must also be contained within the 1-inch margins. Exotic symbols may be neatly hand-executed in black ink.
- Oversize materials must be photographically reduced to meet margin requirements. Photographs, prints, etc., should follow margin regulations.
- These margins are necessary to facilitate proper binding.
- Page numbers are to be included *within* these margins.
- When adjusting pagination, double-check subheadings to be sure that when they are at the top of the page, they go all the way to the top where the first line of text is to be, and have not dropped down a double-space as a result of the pagination.

### **Body of the Text**

Indent each paragraph .5 inch. Set indent from paragraph or tab menu. Do not use the spacebar as this will make the indent inconsistent. Double-space the text (exactly!—check the default setting to be sure it is correct).

### **Page Numbering**

All typed pages must bear a number except for the title page (counted but not numbered) and the copyright page (neither counted nor numbered). Other things to remember:

- Page numbers are to be the same 12-point font size as the rest of the text.
- The preliminary pages (those before your first chapter/introduction) must be numbered in lower case Roman numerals (*ii, iii, iv*). The body and the remainder of the paper, including appendices, bibliography must be numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals (*1, 2, 3*).
- The title page is considered Roman numeral i (but not written on the page).
- On all preliminary pages and on all pages from the body of the text, the page number should appear at the bottom center one inch above the edge.

### **Bible Quotations**

When quoting or referring to the Bible, the parenthetical reference should only cite the book, chapter, and when appropriate, verses (Gen 12:1-3; Leviticus 14). Also, remember to always place scripture references in parentheses following quotations. (Mt 11:5). Other rules for bible quotations are as follows:

- If you consistently use one version (such as the New International Version or the King James), give that information on your copyright page. If you occasionally quote from a different version, cite the version in your parenthetical reference (Ex 21:10, NIV).
- Include any abbreviations (NIV, NASB) in your list of abbreviations.
- Books of the Bible are to be abbreviated when referring to specific verses.
- When referring to entire chapters or entire books of the Bible, spell out the name of the book entirely without abbreviation.
- For Bible chapters and verse references, whatever style you decide to use be consistent in style, such as: Ch. 11 v.5 or 11,5 or XI, 5 or 11:5

### **Page Order of Student's Manuscript – (Appendix B)**

Below is the Order in which the sections of your Thesis/ Biblical Exploratory Study document should be presented:

- Title Page
- Committee Approval Page (with 3 dedicated lines for signatures)
- Copyright Notice
- Abstract
- Dedication (optional)
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables (if necessary)

- List of Figures (if necessary)
- List of Symbols (if necessary)
- Preface or Acknowledgments (optional)
- Body of Text (Thesis/Work-Study)
- Appendix or Appendices (optional)
- Bibliography

## Appendix A – Thesis Title

### **Thesis Title:**

#### *A Biblical Study into the Fundamental Elements and Effectiveness of a Marriage Team*

The primary concentration of this study will attempt to answer the following question:

*Could the adaption of a marriage team’s concepts, principles, and practices serve as a model for Kingdom (Christian) marriages?*

For a few years now, my wife and I have formulated the notion from scripture that God has always delighted in the expression of “teamwork”. In Genesis, we are allowed a glimpse into this Kingdom idea during creation. The Spirit hovered in anticipation of God speaking, while the Word created all things once the Father spoke His desired objective. It was a team effort that created the world.

As God made man in his image, the team concept was to play an essential part into the marital formation of man and woman; thus, why the two become one. The oneness of the Godhead is their unique feature and they do not operate apart from it. We are discovering from various workshops on marriage that we have conducted, many couples have never understood the importance of working as a team. Through our various interactions we have noticed that many individuals in marriage seem to work from a selfish interest. We have also noticed that even a couple’s perception of sex and children are viewed as separate parts of the marriage equation and not part of a team effort. Many couples have never discovered or even considered 3 of the most essential elements to marriage which consist of *vision, mission and purpose* of their marriage team.

In a marriage, vision answers the question “where”. Where are we going as a married couple, a family or even as a ministry, together? Vision gives insight to the reason God put the two together as one. Mission points to the “how” individual couples will tackle the vision given them by God. The mission requires a couple to understand just what God has called them to do, who He’s called them to be and where He’s called them to serve. Lastly, purpose is the main emphasis to our “why”. Why did God call us to this area of ministry? Why were we joined together for this Kingdom service? Every couple has purpose. If purpose is never discovered or developed many times a couple will become occupied with mundane things or with distracting people.

The attempted goal of my thesis is to:

- Define the meaning and significance of discovering *vision, mission, & purpose*
- Reveal the reason men are given vision for their marriage team & the role of the wife bringing value to the vision of the team
- Offer examples from scripture of couples who operated in the confines of *vision, mission, & purpose*
- Expose why marriages that lack in implementing these 3 imposing elements are usually doomed to fail in either marital bliss, marital goals or even in team ministry.
- Statistically assess the underlying motive to many divorces which may be contingent on a couple's failure to recognize or operate as a marriage team.

Appendix B – Example of Title Page

New Life Temple Bible College & Leadership Institute

**A Biblical Study into the Fundamental Concepts,  
Principles, and Practices of the Marriage Team Concept**

A Thesis Submitted to  
the Faculty of New Life Temple Bible College & Leadership Institute  
In Candidacy for the Degree of

Masters of Christian Counseling

By

**Ralph Godfrey Jr**

Student I.D. ET459

Cincinnati, OH

April 2017

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## MLA 8th Edition: Guiding Principles

In the 7th edition of the Handbook, a separate set of citation instructions were given for each format type. The problem with this approach is that there is no way to anticipate all format types a student may encounter.

To solve this problem, this new edition of the MLA Handbook provides a "universal set of guidelines" for citing sources across all format types.

These guidelines state that, if given, these major elements should be included in the citation:

1. Author.
2. Title of Source
3. Title of Container
4. Other Contributors
5. Version
6. Number
7. Publisher
8. Publication date
9. Location

Sometimes, elements 3-9 will repeat again, if say, your journal was inside a database.

### Putting it all together (example):

Goldman, Anne. "Questions of Transport: Reading Primo Levi Reading Dante."

*The Georgia Review*, vol.64, no. 1, 2010, pp.69-88. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/41403188](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41403188).

## Works Cited entries: Format Examples

The discipline of English, as well as many other disciplines in the humanities, use MLA citation format. Below are some examples for formatting the Works Cited page. Look in the drop-down menu for examples of in-text citations.

**NOTE:** Your Works Cited entries should have **hanging indents** like the example above (under "Putting It All Together"). I did not do that below because of how this guide displays across different browsers.

<b>Book, Single Author</b>	Garcia Marquez, Gabriel. <i>Love in the Time of Cholera</i> . Vintage, 1988.
<b>Book, Two Authors</b>	Casell, Kay Ann, and Uma Hiremath. <i>Reference and Information Services in the 21st Century: An Introduction</i> . Neal-Schuman, 2004.  (NOTE: Authors should be listed in the order they are listed on the title page.)

<b>Book, Three or More Authors</b>	Robbins, Chandler S., et al. <i>Birds of North America: A Guide to Field Identification</i> . Golden, 1966.
<b>Book, with Translator or other contributors</b>	Homer. <i>The Odyssey</i> . Translated by Robert Fagles, Viking, 1996. Here are other common descriptions: Adapted by, Directed by, Edited by, Illustrated by, Introduction by, Narrated by, Performance by.
<b>A work (e.g., essay, short story) in an anthology or compilation.</b>	Kimball, Jean. "Growing Up Together: Joyce and Psychoanalysis, 1900-1922." <i>Joyce through the Ages: A Nonlinear View</i> , edited by Michael Patrick Gillespie, UP of Florida, 1999, pp. 25-45.
<b>Book, Later Edition</b>	Blamires, Harry. <i>The New Bloomsday Book: A Guide through Ulysses</i> . 3rd ed., Routledge, 1996.
<b>Article in an Online Database</b>	Hannah, Daniel K. "The Private Life, the Public Stage: Henry James in Recent Fiction." <i>Journal of Modern Literature</i> , vol.30, no. 3, 2007, pp. 70-94. <i>JSTOR</i> , <a href="http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.uwf.edu/stable/30053134">www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.uwf.edu/stable/30053134</a> . <b>Note: When including a URL, omit the http:// and https://</b>
<b>Article in Print Journal</b>	Hannah, Daniel K. "The Private Life, the Public Stage: Henry James in Recent Fiction." <i>Journal of Modern Literature</i> , vol.30, no.3, 2007, pp. 70-94.
<b>Article (Web Page) on a Web Site</b>	Farkas, Meredith. "Tips for Being a Great Blogger (and a Good Person)." <i>Information Wants to Be Free</i> , 19 July 2011, <a href="http://meredith.wolfwater.com/wordpress/2011/07/19/tips-for-being-a-great-blogger-and-good-person/">meredith.wolfwater.com/wordpress/2011/07/19/tips-for-being-a-great-blogger-and-good-person/</a> . <b>Note: When including a URL, omit the http:// and https://</b>
<b>Website (Whole site)</b>	Farkas, Meredith. <i>Information Wants to Be Free</i> . Jun. 2015, <a href="http://meredith.wolfwater.com">meredith.wolfwater.com</a> .
<b>YouTube Video</b>	"Dog Turns Roomba Off." <i>YouTube</i> , uploaded by ilovetobamom, 28 Dec. 2016, <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ei5H-wd3BIU">www.youtube.com/watch?v=ei5H-wd3BIU</a> .
<b>Podcast</b>	"Chapter I: If You Keep Your Mouth Shut, You'll Be Surprised What You Can Learn." <i>S-Town</i> from <i>Serial</i> and <i>This American Life</i> . <a href="http://stownpodcast.org/chapter/1">stownpodcast.org/chapter/1</a> . Accessed 8 May 2017. <b>Note:</b> Date of access is <i>optional</i> in MLA 8th edition. I decided to include it here because I could find no publication date for the podcast. If I had, I would have included it after <i>This American Life</i> and probably would have omitted the date I accessed it. like so: <i>This American Life</i> , 2 April 2017. <a href="http://stownpodcast.org/chapter/1">stownpodcast.org/chapter/1</a> Also, <i>Serial</i> and <i>This American Life</i> are the organizations that publish S-Town. So, you may have NPR here, for example, or an individual's name.
<b>Tweet</b>	@realDonaldTrump. "Wow, the Fake News media did everything in its power to make Republican Healthcare victory look as bad as possible. Far better than Ocare!" <i>Twitter</i> , 5 May 2017, 4:22 p.m., <a href="https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/860635815277453313">https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/860635815277453313</a> .
<b>Television Show on Streaming Platform</b>	"A Fish Out of Water." <i>Family Guy</i> , season 3, episode 10, Fox Broadcasting Company, 19 September 2001. <i>Hulu</i> , <a href="http://www.hulu.com/watch/171063">www.hulu.com/watch/171063</a> .