

# Announcements!

**Weekly Bible Study** We invite each of you to attend the mid-week Bible Study, held upstairs each Tuesday evening beginning at 6 pm. We encourage you to attend these vital and exciting studies!

**Children's Church** Children's Church is available upstairs on the 2nd-5th Sundays starting at 11:00 am. Ages 2-10 are welcome to attend. Please sign your children in and out. A snack is served. Please pick up your children promptly after services. ALL DONATIONS ARE WELCOMED. If you are interested in serving in Children's Church, please see Sarita Agee.

## Words of Wisdom: Perseverance...

On Nov. 18, 1995, Itzhak Perlman, the violinist, came on stage to give a concert at Avery Fisher Hall, at Lincoln Center in New York City. If you have ever been to a Perlman concert, you know that getting on stage is no small achievement for him. He was stricken with polio as a child, and so he has braces on both legs and walks with the aid of two crutches. To see him walk across the stage one step at a time, painfully and slowly, is an awesome sight.

He walks painfully, yet majestically, until he reaches his chair. Then he sits down, slowly, puts his crutches on the floor, undoes the clasps on his legs, tucks one foot back and extends the other foot forward. Then he bends down and picks up the violin, puts it under his chin, nods to the conductor and proceeds to play.

By now, the audience is used to this ritual. They sit quietly while he makes his way across the stage to his chair. They remain reverently silent while he undoes the clasps on his legs. They wait until he is ready to play. But this time, something went wrong. Just as he finished the first few bars, one of the strings on his violin broke. You could hear it snap - it went off like gunfire across the room. There was no mistaking what that sound meant.

There was no mistaking what he had to do. People who were there that night thought to themselves: "We figured that he would have to get up, put on the clasps again, pick up the crutches and limp his way off stage - to either find another violin or else find another string for this one." But he didn't. Instead, he waited a moment, closed his eyes and then signaled the conductor to begin again.

The orchestra began, and he played from where he had left off. And he played with such passion and such power and such purity as they had never heard before. Of course, anyone knows that it is impossible to play a symphonic work with just three strings. I know that, and you know that, but that night Itzhak Perlman refused to know that. You could see him modulating, changing, re-composing the piece in his head. At one point, it sounded like he was DE-tuning the strings to get new sounds from them that they had never made before.

When he finished, there was an awesome silence in the room. And then people rose and cheered. There was an extraordinary outburst of applause from every corner of the auditorium. We were all on our feet, screaming and cheering, doing everything we could to show how much we appreciated what he had done.

He smiled, wiped the sweat from this brow, raised his bow to quiet us, and then he said - not boastfully, but in a quiet, pensive, reverent tone - "You know, sometimes it is the artist's task to find out how much music you can still make with what you have left."

What a powerful line that is. It has stayed in my mind ever since I heard it. And who knows? Perhaps that is the definition of life - not just for artists but for all of us. Here is a man who has prepared all his life to make music on a violin of four strings, who, all of a sudden, in the middle of a concert, finds himself with only three strings; so he makes music with three strings, and the music he made that night with just three strings was more beautiful, more sacred, more memorable, than any that he had ever made before, when he had four strings.

So, perhaps our task in this shaky, fast-changing, bewildering world in which we live is to make music, at first with all that we have, and then, when that is no longer possible, to make music with what we have left.

--Jack Riemer, Houston Chronicle, February 10, 2001



Welcome to the

# Everlasting Covenant Church



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"The Everlasting Covenant Church", Birmingham, AL

"THE\_ECC2015"

## Eric R. Agee, Jr., Pastor

June 3, 2018

### Vision Statement:



Enhancing Our Knowledge of Jesus Christ,  
Empowering All Believers for Ministry, and  
Encouraging Continuous Dedication to the Lord.

# Order of Services

Fellowship | Refreshments — 9:30 a.m.

Sunday School — 10:00 a.m.

Morning Worship Services — 11:00 a.m.

Announcements & Recognition of Visitors

Call to Worship: Scripture Reading & Prayer

Tithes and Offerings; Prayer of Thanksgiving

Praise and Worship Selections

Sermon

Invitation to Christ

The Lord's Supper

## Reading the Bible...

Taken from <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/bible-study/the-beginner-s-guide-to-reading-the-bible.html>

These are my top suggestions for beginners to the Bible:

1. **Choose a Bible version that's understandable and easy to read.** - Here's the flat out truth: If we don't understand it, we won't read it. The Bible was originally written in Hebrew and Greek. One of the earliest translations to English was the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible, but today we have a variety of versions to choose from. Some translations focus on being more precise and are best for Bible study, while others focus on readability and are great for devotions. If you're a beginner, I recommend the New Living Translation (NLT), or a study Bible in the English Standard Version (ESV) or New International Version (NIV). The NLT version of the Bible is most readable while still being literal in its translation; the Study Bibles contain footnotes that explain difficult to understand passages of Scripture. You can also download a Bible app or read the Bible at [biblestudytools.com](http://biblestudytools.com). These are great tools for beginners and veterans alike.

2. **You don't have to start at the beginning.** - The Bible contains 66 separate books compiled into one book. The 39 books of the Old Testament are the story of God and his people before the coming of the Messiah—Jesus. The 27 books of the New Testament pick up the story beginning with the birth of Jesus. If you're new to the Bible, the best place to start is the Gospel of John. This book (the fourth book in the New Testament) is John's eyewitness account of the life of Jesus. As one of Jesus' closest disciples, John's account is both riveting and informative. John's purpose in writing is to help us believe, making it the ideal place to start. "These things were written to help you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

3. **Pick a book of the Bible and work your way through it.** - If you're anything like me, you need a Bible reading plan or you'll waste precious minutes thumbing through the Bible, never quite landing. So pick one book of the Bible and read a little each day, one chapter, perhaps. If you read one chapter of John a day, (which will take no more than 5-10 minutes) you'll read John in its entirety in 21 days. After reading John, move on to the other gospels - Matthew, Mark or Luke. Next read Philipians, Ephesians and Colossians, which provide practical encouragement and instruction for living the Christian life. Romans is jam-packed with essential doctrine. Genesis explains how everything began. Psalms is filled with heartfelt prayers that offer encouragement for every season of life. Work your way through one book at a time, and you'll never find yourself fumbling for where to read again.

4. **Read a little every day.** - Getting God's Word into your life doesn't have to take long. Start small—five or 10 minutes is better than none. Sometimes less is more, especially when reading less means you'll actually remember more. Chose a time and place that's convenient for you. Many people read their Bible first thing in the morning, choosing to spend time with God before daily distractions get in the way. But if mornings aren't your thing, don't sweat it. That you read God's Word is more important than when you read God's Word. Personally, I love to read my Bible at a local coffee shop, but I once read through the entire Bible while waiting in carpool lines.

5. **Pray before you begin.** - Pause before you open your Bible and ask God to speak to you. Remember, the Bible is God's Word; it is God's love letter written to His people, which includes you. Ask God to help you understand His Word. Ask God use His Word to teach you, to direct you and even to re-direct you, when necessary. Ask Him to use His Word to help you know Him and love Him. Jeremiah 29:13 says, "You will seek me and find Me, if you seek Me with all your heart." God loves to reveal himself to those who seek Him.

6. **Write it down.** - As you read the Bible ask two questions: What does this teach me about God? What does this teach me about how I should live? No doubt, as you read you'll find one or two verses that seem to leap off the page. Maybe they speak to an issue you've been grappling with; maybe they answer a long held question; maybe they give you comfort or encouragement; maybe they provide an example to follow or avoid. When a verse resonates with you, stop and write it down, word for word. Pause to let the message sink in because these words are God's words to you. This practice has cemented God's Word into my thoughts in countless ways. Sometimes I keep the verse with me throughout the day. Sometimes I ask God to help me remember it when I need it. Sometimes I memorize it. Be intentional about getting God's Word into your thoughts and you'll soon see your relationship with God thrive and your life change. The Bible was never meant to merely inform us; the Bible was meant to transform us. It's been years since I encountered the gal at Barnes and Noble but when I think of her, I smile. Her story is our story. We all begin somewhere in our relationship with God. And we all need someone to show us how.

# Sermon Notes

Scripture: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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