



First Hand Truth

Equipping People to
Study God's Word



What is First Hand Truth?

As a pastor of many years I know what a struggle it is to do everything. In the last few years I was youth pastor, family pastor, worship pastor, and children's pastor in charge of seeing that some 7 weekly lesson preps would occur and be worth people's time. You probably wear many hats too. In the middle of all that output it is easy to miss things – **even important things.**

That being said, I was also a pastor who desired to see people move from being **spectators** in the realm of Bible study to **participants**. Much of what I did in either youth groups or in worship services was designed to get people and their Bibles to spend time together. In that – I know I could have done better. Thus, my new endeavor and my life ministry.

First Hand Truth aims to equip individuals to study God's Word for themselves. Its mission is twofold: to foster greater desire to study the Word and to provide education and training that builds confidence in personal study.

We achieve this through weekly, local opportunities and workshops in Battle Creek, Michigan, as well as through speaking engagements or workshops with **individuals, families, churches, and schools**, both locally and distant.

Secondarily, First Hand Truth exists to encourage churches and their leaders to likewise promote, encourage, and equip people to study scripture for themselves. How can we help your church make disciples of Jesus? We are seeking to partner with churches to make this a reality. I would appreciate some discussion with interested pastors like yourselves on how we can be an encouragement in this way.

They received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Acts 17:11

*His delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates
day and night. He is like a tree
planted by streams of water...
Psalm 1:2-3a*

In the spring of 2025 I was assessing my ministry and my life goal and felt the nudge to focus on equipping people to study the Bible for themselves. I spent the summer of 2025 studying and dreaming about the “how” and the “why” and the “where” – beginning to think through the theology and the methodology of such a ministry

In the fall of 2025 and the early part of 2026 we held eight workshops (primarily in the Battle Creek area) and I believe we have seen great success. The comments that I have received from participants are overwhelmingly positive and these encourage my heart to continue down this same path and see what the Lord makes of it.

I believe that God desires and has enabled every believer in this world to be able to read and study the Bible for themselves. It is how they know God on a personal level, it is how they learn truth, it is how they are discipled most efficiently, it is how they are empowered and encouraged, it is

beautiful and powerful in ways that words cannot fully describe. People need to be encouraged and engaged to go to the river and drink fully for themselves.

I strongly believe in the ministry of connecting people to the Word of God and motivating and enabling them to do so. Uniting people with Jesus and letting Jesus disciple them is a noble goal – and it is part of God’s great commission.



Rick McNally has a BA in Bible Theology from Moody Bible Institute (1989) and has been in church ministry since 1992. He has served in two churches over those 33 years since. He is married to his wife, Katherine, and has five adult children.

The Origins of First Hand Truth

Some Ways to Get Involved

- **Learn more about First Hand Truth**
I'd love to connect and talk more or meet in person to discuss this ministry. You can reach me at 269.275.2415 – text or voice / or mcnally.rick@gmail.com).
- **Attend one of the scheduled workshops personally**
By doing so you can see firsthand (pun intended) if these things are something you want to promote or host at your organization. I think the vision for this ministry is clearest when you witness it in action at one of these sessions for yourself.
- **Schedule a workshop for your leadership team**
I realize that churches should vet what they promote, and first hand experience can help you see the validity or the helpfulness of a ministry. If you can't make it to a scheduled workshop, I'd be more than happy to put one together for you and your team to participate in.
- **Organize a session for your church or organization**
*After talking to me or experiencing the ministry of **First Hand Truth** I would love to help you host an event at your church!*
- **Whole church encouragement to study Scripture**
I can come and speak in short form (5-10 minutes) or long form (a message or a lesson) to encourage first-hand study of Scripture at your organization or church. I would love to share my vision with others!
- **Publicize Educational Opportunities**
Inform and encourage people in your circles of the existence and benefits of firsthand Bible study and First Hand Truth workshops locally.

Potential Workshops You Can Host

How to Study the Bible for Yourself, Part 1

Learn and participate in a workshop demonstrating the basic aspects of Bible Study.

How to Study the Bible for Yourself, Part 2

Move beyond the basics into word studies, Greek grammar helps, etc. / also a little more on interpretation

How to Study the Bible for Yourself / For Kids

Let's take the basics for adults and make it accessible for elementary aged students -- they need to learn to study the Word too!

How to Study the Bible for Spiritual Growth

Be proactive about your growth in Christ through strategies of study with the intention of growing in Christ.

How to Study the Psalms for Yourself

Learn the basic qualities and attributes of the Psalms; learn how to study them deeper for yourself.

Motivation for Study: A Team study of Psalm 119

Consider the many benefits and aspects of paying attention to the Word of God; see through the Psalmist's eyes the grandiose nature of Scripture and the God who spoke the words.

How to Use Technology to Deepen your Study

Learn how to utilize Logos Bible Software to make your study even better.

How to Do a Great Topical Bible Study

Find out how to look at an aspect of faith or theology is presented in a wider selection of scripture so as to shed more light on your understanding.

How to Study the Bible for Personal Restoration

For those who are burned out, dry, discouraged, hurt or just need a bit of a spark in their spiritual life. God's word promises it can help restore people! (Note: this class is not a substitution for mental health professionals – it is meant to be an assisting factor in personal recovery).

What's the Deal with the Old Testament?

A flyover of the books, the themes, and the message of the Old Testament. Genesis to Malachi in two-hours flat.

What's the Deal with the New Testament?

A flyover of the books, the themes and the message of the New Testament. "We've got a long way to go and a short time to get there" moving from Matthew through Revelation.

Bringing the Testaments Together: The Messiah

A look at how the Messiah is/was predicted and how Jesus is the message of the Old Testament.

Testimonials

What kind of feedback have we been given? Very positive. Some people said that the workshops should be longer, most have found the materials helpful and the discussion and bible studies we do together as we demonstrate the steps to be refreshing. Here are some individual responses...

“Very impressive and useful information... Group sessions follow a relaxed atmosphere of give and take, question and answer, at the end of the session, people feel that they can go home and put into action what has been discussed. Participants are encouraged to get spiritual nourishment First Hand!”

– **Pastor Dale**, Battle Creek, MI

“I would highly recommend you attend at least one of Pastor Rick’s First Hand Truth seminars. As a former Sunday school student of his, I know that meeting with Pastor Rick means you will be learning practical Bible study methods that you can use to grow in your relationship with Christ. It is well worth your time!” –

Miriam, Battle Creek, MI

“Reinvigorating! Rick’s message is that each of us NEED to study the Bible for ourselves, and each of us CAN! We have the Holy Spirit within us and a lot of tools at our disposal. Come to this seminar and learn something new and get excited to practice.” – **John**, Battle Creek, MI

“My wife and I both benefited greatly from attending the seminar. While we have studied the Bible for many years, this was a helpful reset to get refocused and evaluate new tools/ideas to study and enhance our understanding of the Psalms and scripture as a whole. Thank you for your clear, solid efforts to make a quality seminar.”

– **Tim and Stephanie**, Battle Creek, MI

“Very excited about this!” – **Heather**, Battle Creek, MI

“I highly recommend participation in Pastor Rick’s First Hand Truth seminars. There isn’t a more worthwhile endeavor than learning to study the Bible for yourself, and you won’t find a teacher that is more encouraging in your pursuit of this invaluable skill.” – **Nicole**, Battle Creek, MI

Q: “What can we do to improve the workshop? A: Maybe the time? It seems we didn’t get enough [time] or maybe it was that good that time flew by fast. :)” – **Jonjon**, Stockholm, Sweden

FAQ ~

What church or denominational affiliation are you aligned with? None. I am a person who grew up in the Baptist and Bible church arena, served as a pastor in local church settings, and am now trying to encourage and equip people to study the Word for themselves. This ministry is not underwritten by a denomination or a particular church.

Is First Hand Truth trying to begin its own church? No, we are not a church but a help to the church specializing in encouraging individual study. First Hand Truth exists to bring people individually closer to the Word and to God, not closer to an organization – Jesus is the Mediator between man and God.

Do I need to sign up to attend the Bible Study Cafe? No, It is a drop-in kind of ministry. If you want to make sure to have a few minutes to talk to someone about a specific question it might be beneficial to let Pastor Rick know you are coming and a bit of what your question might be.

What manner of Scriptural Study do you espouse? We would encourage people to read and study scripture seeking to determine the original intent of the author of scripture when the pen touched the paper – with a literal interpretive hermeneutic. We would encourage literal interpretation of scripture rather than symbolic — recognizing that some portions of scripture are less literal and do use symbolism – poetry, prophetic, apocalyptic – examining those passages as their given genre demands.

What about the Finances of First Hand Truth? I am not supported or paid through the organization, rather I am volunteering my time to do these things so that people can learn and attend at no charge. People have given gifts to First Hand Truth to help cover some of the material costs involved in doing what we are doing — there is a list for transparency and you can access a list of donations (donors being held confidential) and how some of those finances have been spent.

What is the atmosphere of the Bible Study Cafe? We desire an atmosphere of Biblical curiosity, personal respect and Christlike love. We can and will have theological differences but the point of the Cafe is to study scripture for ourselves and find others to be respectful and kind to each other in the places we have differences. Paul met people in various places and engaged in conversation with them in a respectful manner. So should we.

Why do many workshops take place at JPG Resources? Not having a facility of its own, First Hand Truth is beginning at JPG because the owners of JPG believe in the ministry and want to provide a place to house these events. Churches are encouraged to host events!

-- Thursday Night -- Bible Institute

These workshops are held at **JPG Resources*** – their offices are beautiful, spacious and inviting. These workshops are tailored for the individual to gain practical experience and knowledge of Bible Study techniques that are (1) academic, (2) devotional, and (3) practical. They are designed to be informative but highly participatory as well (to your comfort level).

May 21, 6-8pm

**How to Study the Bible for
Personal Recovery**

May 28, 6-8pm

How to Do a Great Topical Bible Study

June 4, 6-8pm

How to Study the Bible (basics)

June 11, 6-8pm

How to Study the Bible (advanced)

June 18, 6-8pm

Introduction to the Study of Messiah

June 25, 6-8pm

Old Testament Survey and Overview

*** Workshops held at JPG Resources / 62 East Michigan Ave**

*Downtown Battle Creek / use rear entrance to Cafe Rica /
access the upstairs offices via stairs or elevator*