

“A GOOD SUMMARY” SEPTEMBER 2007

My oldest son Ryan is beginning his first year of studies at the University of Florida's law school. He is interested in the area of international law and is looking forward to exploring this rapidly growing field. Recently, Ryan and I were sitting around the kitchen table and I asked him to tell me about what he will be studying in his first semester. I could tell by his reaction that I was asking a great deal. How could he summarize in a few words all of the new subjects he was about to explore? Ryan thought for a moment and then gave me a good overview of his first semester of law studies. He even did it in words that I could understand and follow.

It's not easy to give a summary of something. A number of people asked me about my trip to Michigan in June to visit with family. I had to pause in order to give them a good summary of what happened. I didn't want to overwhelm them with details, but I also did not want to miss anything important.

Have you ever tried to summarize your Christian faith? Just what is the message of the Bible? That's not an easy question. The Bible is made up of sixty-six separate books. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bibles that are in our pews total 1,077 pages each. In about 100 words, could we give a good overview or summary?

Paul also had to face this challenge. As he traveled around the Roman Empire, his goal was to communicate the essentials of the Gospel. One of his summaries is found in a letter to the church in Corinth,

“I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day ...” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

Paul continues with more of what is the core of the Gospel. He wants his readers to be clear about the important points in God's revelation.

For centuries, believers have used The Apostles' Creed as a summary of the Christian faith. The 110 words of this creed clearly present the Bible's core teachings about God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We recite this creed on a regular basis as part of our worship service. How well do you know this summary statement of what we profess to believe? Maybe you have been reciting the creed since childhood and never have closely examined it. I invite you to a ten-week class on The Apostles' Creed that will begin on Sunday, September 16 at 9:30 a.m. in Smead Hall. Each week, we will look at the biblical teachings that form the basis of this historic creed. Our goal is that these 110 words will take on a deeper meaning for you.

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