Professor of Bible at Union, the project came about because of the alarming biblical illiteracy he has seen among both Christians and non-Christians alike.

“For several years I have been conducting brief biblical literacy exams at the beginning of my New Testament Survey course,” Guthrie writes in the book’s introduction. “The questions on the exam are straightforward, multiple-choice queries such as: Which of these books is from the New Testament? Whom did Pontius Pilate release during Jesus’ trial? How many temptations did Jesus experience in the wilderness? Where would you look in the Bible to find the Sermon on the Mount?”

The results were startling, with the average score coming in at 37 percent.

“The averages from the classes over the past few years have ranged between 50 percent and 70 percent, but most of the time the average is closer to 50 percent,” Guthrie writes. “This is not unique to my students but is consistent with what other professors are finding at top Christian universities all over the United States. Our students, even those coming out of universities all over the United States. Our students, even those coming out of

Union University’s R.C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies will hold a “Read the Bible for Life” conference April 15-16 with Guthrie, David Platt and Michael Card. More information about the conference is available at www.uu.edu/events/ReadTheBibleForLife.

The Read The Bible For Life book is available for purchase at LifeWay and Amazon.com.

More information about the book, as well as other resources about the Read The Bible For Life project, including links to videos, podcasts and Guthrie’s blog, is available at www.readthebibleforlife.com.

George Guthrie poses the question that will serve as the topic for the final classroom discussion of the semester. “What have you gotten out of this class?” Guthrie asks.

The students in his “Bible Study and Interpretation” class munch on potato chips, cookies and other snacks in their final meeting together as they ponder Guthrie’s question.

One student tells about how she grew up in a Christian home with parents who estabilished her on a firm biblical footing.

Though her family read the Bible, she wasn’t really taught how to study it. “This course has laid a foundation for the rest of my life in Bible study,” Samantha Adams says.

Other students tell similar stories. About how the class reminded them of the beauty of God’s Word. About how they learned that every text primarily is about God, not about themselves. About how they can now appreciate and understand the Bible’s different kinds of literature. Classes such as this served as the catalyst for Guthrie’s latest project, Read the Bible for Life: Your Guide to Understanding and Living God’s Word, published by B&H Publishing Group. The book, now available, contains 16 conversations based on interviews Guthrie did with other experts on the Bible. The interviews focus on how to read the Bible well.

Guthrie’s Read the Bible for Life book is part of a national-level biblical literacy initiative (also called Read the Bible for Life) being conducted by LifeWay Christian Resources in partnership with Union’s R.C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies. In addition to the book, the initiative will include other resources, including a nine-session, small-group video curriculum, to be used by churches and churches in training their people to read the Bible more effectively.

For Guthrie, the Benjamin W. Perry

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READ THE BIBLE FOR LIFE

Union’s Guthrie launches BIBLICAL LITERACY PROJECT

by Tim Ellsworth

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