

# CHAFER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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## SURVIVING FIRST-YEAR GREEK

By Timothy R. Nichols

The key with Greek study is to *keep moving*, especially in the first 2 years. Spend 30 minutes on it every day, 6 days a week, in addition to the time you devote to Greek worksheets and other homework assignments. Not just 3 hours a week—30 minutes a day. Spend the time drilling vocabulary and reading what you can from simple passages (try John, 1 John). Do your translation exercises in the workbook on a separate sheet of paper so you can use the same exercises for review later.

Do no less than one chapter a week in Mounce's *The Basics of Biblical Greek* and do not wait to move on to the next lesson until you fully understand the current one. You will almost certainly feel lost; this is normal. The check for your progress is not whether you have command of the material you are working on now—it is whether you find the material 3 chapters back relatively easy. In other words, when you get to chapter 10, you may feel lost, but if you can go back and do the exercises for chapter 7 with relative ease, you're doing fine.

We take students through Mounce in two 15-week semesters. If you're working on your own, you should not take much more time than that. Again, the key is to keep moving, and to spend the time, *faithfully*. Genius and plod are much touted as the two (human) forces that move history. In this particular case, it is plod that will get you there. Some incredibly bright students have failed Greek because they failed to understand this simple truth.

That said, everyone needs a break now and again. We strongly suggest that you *not* continue your 30-minutes-per-day study routine straight through the Christmas holidays, for example. Rather, take two weeks off—hide the textbooks in a corner, don't take the Greek New Testament to church, have nothing at all to do with Greek—but before taking this break, mark a date on the calendar when the break is over. When that date arrives, jump right back into your routine.

Upon completing Mounce, you should move, rather quickly, into second-year studies, or you'll lose what you've gained. Take a few weeks off if you care to—in fact, it may be a good idea—but not too long. When you resume, the 30-minutes-a-day rule still applies. If you want to spend some time in the text, I suggest *A Graded Reader of Biblical Greek*, also by Mounce. That takes you through a series of progressively more difficult passages from the Greek New Testament. From there, you will want to start working with an intermediate grammar. Congratulate yourself—you're ready for second-year Greek.