

Principles of Sanctification (ST526)
Winter 2010

Reformed Theological Seminary
Instructor: Geoff Sackett
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Class meets at Church of the Apostles, 8:30am-4:00pm, on the following two days:

Monday, January 18
Tuesday, January 19

Attendance

You are required to attend both days of class in their entirety. If you are considering taking the course but are uncertain whether you can attend in its entirety, please contact the instructor **before** you register.

Description (from RTS catalogue)

“This course emphasizes methodology, responsibility for personal growth in Christ, and a concern for the spiritual well being of others. This involves the study of Scripture for personal nurture and the exercise of certain disciplines necessary for spiritual growth.”

Course Objectives

1. To deepen our appreciation for the work of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the work of sanctification
2. To grasp something of the importance of the means of grace to Christian growth
3. To grow in the knowledge and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

Required Texts

John Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (volumes 1 and 2)

Donald Alexander. *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*

Walter Marshall. *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification* (ed. Bruce McRae)

643 total pages of required reading. See “Assignments” for details.

Lecture Topics

- Overview of the main Christian views of sanctification
- Eschatology and sanctification
- Indicative and imperative

- Union with Christ
- Justification and sanctification
- Faith and repentance
- The means of grace: Word, sacraments, prayer
- Suffering and sanctification

Assignments

1. Read, in order:
 - a. *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification* in its entirety (195 total pp)
 - b. *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (178 total pp)
 - i. Book III, Chapter I-II
 - ii. Book III, Chapter VI-IX
 - iii. Book III, Chapter XI-XIV
 - iv. Book IV, Chapter XIV, sections 1-12
 - v. Book IV, Chapter XVII, sections 1-11
 - c. *Gospel Mystery of Sanctification* in its entirety (270 pp)
2. Reflection papers (2 @ 15% each).
 - a. Write two reflection papers on two different sections of the required reading in the *Institutes*. Focus your thoughts on how an idea in the section may be helpful (a) to your personal growth with Christ and (b) in your (current or future) ministry. Two pages each. These papers should demonstrate a solid understanding of the text and thoughtfulness in its application.
3. *Christian Spirituality* Review (25%). Write a 5-page review of *Christian Spirituality*, comparing and contrasting each of the five views on sanctification. Describe the main points, distinctive emphases, and the respective strengths and weaknesses of each view. Include equal parts description and evaluation. Feel free to appreciate and criticize.
4. Calvin Questions (25%). See last page.
5. *Gospel Mystery* reflections (20%). Read *The Gospel Mystery* devotionally and reflect on what the knowledge of your union with Christ means to the way you live the Christian life. You will turn in your reflections. Three pages.

Evaluation

- Reflection papers (2 @ 15% each = 30%)
- *Christian Spirituality* Review (25%)
- Calvin questions (25%)
- *Gospel Mystery* reflections (20%)

Due Dates

Christian Spirituality Review is due February 2.

Gospel Mystery reflections are due February 12.

Reflection papers are due March 1.

Calvin Questions are due March 1.

All assignments should be emailed as a MS Word attachment to the instructor at gsackett@rts.edu.

Grading Scale

The standard RTS grading scale found in the catalogue will be used.

Questions related to the Calvin Readings

Each answer should be no less than one paragraph and no more than three in length.

1. Calvin begins Book III Chapter 1 by asking, “How do we receive those benefits which the Father bestowed on his only-begotten Son—not for Christ’s own private use, but that he might enrich poor and needy men?”. How does he answer this question? In your answer, be sure to discuss Calvin’s view of the role of the Holy Spirit and the role of faith.
2. Calvin writes (in III.2.7): “Now we shall possess a right definition of faith if we call it a firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence toward us, founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit.” Explain what he means and how he arrives at this definition.
3. Calvin writes (in IV.14.1): “We have in the sacraments another aid to our faith related to the preaching of the Gospel.” Explain.
4. What does Calvin mean when he asserts (in IV.17.4) that the “chief function” of the Lord’s Supper “is to seal and confirm that promise by which he [Christ] testifies that his flesh is food indeed and his blood is drink, which feed us unto eternal life”? Be sure to discuss Calvin’s view of the manner in which Christ is present in the supper.