

Introduction to Spiritual Formation (Spring 2008)

I. Purpose of the Course

This course is designed to give students an introductory overview of the dynamics involved in the formation of mature character in the life of the Christian leader. The thesis of the course is that a Christian leader must lead from character before skill. This course will help students: 1) Develop a theological approach to spiritual growth and renewal (Sanctification); and, 2) Experience the transforming power of the gospel through applying theological truths related to the Gospel of God's grace to their lives and ministries. Special focus will be placed on the application of the practical theology of English Puritans (1550–1700) such as John Owen and Richard Baxter.

II. Course Objectives

A Mind for Truth: Deepening Your Understanding

- To understand and articulate a biblical theology of personal, spiritual growth and renewal, especially as it relates to the centrality of the Gospel.
- To understand the biblical imperative for personal holiness and the priority of ongoing spiritual growth and renewal in the life of the church leader today.
- To understand the biblical nature of the Gospel's transforming power, especially as it relates to the fulfillment of the Great Commission to "make disciples of all nations".
- To understand, evaluate critically and appreciate various principles, methods and models used today to help people grow spiritually.
- To be acquainted with the extensive literature relating to personal, spiritual growth and renewal and to be able to think biblically and critically about how it can be used properly and effectively in the student's life and ministry.

A Heart for God: Transforming Your Affections

- To experience personal, spiritual growth and renewal through the transforming power of the Gospel.
- To diagnose and repent from the core idols (sin beneath the sin) that draw the student's heart affections away from Christ.
- To appropriate the transforming pardon and power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through setting the student's heart affections on Him alone by faith.
- To show love for God and others by loving God's Law, obeying it by God's grace and allowing it to lead the student to Jesus Christ for transformation into His image.
- To practice spiritual disciplines (such as meditating on Scripture, prayer, journaling, fasting, witnessing, etc.) as a means of setting the student's heart affection on Christ.
- To have a heartfelt burden and lifelong commitment to pray and work for a local, national and global spiritual awakening through multiplying churches that are multiplying disciples through the power of the Gospel.
- To be used by God as an agent of personal, spiritual growth and renewal in the lives of others.

A Life for Ministry: Developing Your Behaviors

- To lay a strong foundation for future studies in the dynamics of how the Gospel brings spiritual growth and renewal both personally and corporately.
- To lay a strong foundation for the practical development of church based ministries of spiritual growth and renewal, especially for those planning to be church planters, pastors and missionaries.
- To obtain a set of criteria for evaluating spiritual growth and renewal principles, methods, materials, programs and trends.

III. Course Format

This course is scheduled to be taught in 13 three-hour classroom sessions beginning Thursday, February 7, 2008, and ending Thursday, May 8, 2008. Class will NOT meet on March 27th for Spring Break. Classroom sessions may include: lecture (including guest lecturers), class interaction, student reports and presentations, video presentations, self-study exercises, motivation activities, and small group sharing. Occasionally, individual and small group work sessions may be conducted during the class time. Group study outside of class is strongly encouraged, including preparation for the final exam.

Office Hours: You can schedule an appointment with me through my administrative assistant, Joyce Sisler, at 407-366-9493 x219 or jsisler@rts.edu. Appointments are scheduled by Joyce on Thursday from 1:15 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. My teaching assistant, Clay Nettles, can be reached at 321-277-4765 claynettl7@yahoo.com

IV. Course Texts

Required:

Childers, Steven L., ed., *Introduction to Spiritual Formation: A Reader*, 2005.

Articles for this reader will be handed out during class throughout the semester.

Packer, James I., *Rediscovering Holiness*, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Vine Books, 1992. (276 pp).

_____, *The Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian* 1990
Life. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990. (Selected Chapters)

_____, *Knowing God*, Downers Grove, IL InterVarsity Press. Chapters 15, 18, 19. (55pp)

Prior, Kenneth, *The Way of Holiness: A Study in Christian Growth*, 1982. Christian Focus Publications (166 pp)

Lovelace, Richard, *Renewal as a Way of Life, A Guidebook for Spiritual Growth*, 1985. (206 pp)

For other spiritual formation resources, please see the Course Bibliography which is attached near the end of this document.

V. Course Requirements

A. Attendance and Class Participation

This course requires attendance and participation. Class lectures and discussions will be based on the assumption that you have completed all of the assigned readings.

Note: Class will begin promptly at 9:00 AM. Tardiness, unexcused absence and/or lack of class participation will significantly impact the final grade.

B. Spiritual Formation Reading & Reports

You are required to read thoughtfully (not simply skim) the following books and articles in their entirety, and submit a report on each book by the date indicated:

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|--|-------------------------|
| (1) <i>Renewal as a Way of Life</i> by Richard Lovelace (206 pp) | February 28, 2008 |
| (2) <i>The Way of Holiness</i> by Kenneth Prior (166 pp) | March 14, 2008 |
| (3) Excerpts from <i>Knowing God</i> by J. I. Packer
(Chapters 15, 18 and 19) | April 24, 2008 |
| (4) Excerpts from <i>The Quest for Godliness</i> by J. I. Packer
(Chapters 2-4, 7, 10-16, and 19) | April 24, 2008 |
| (5) <i>Rediscovering Holiness</i> by J. I. Packer (276 pp)*** | May 8, 2008 |
| (6) <i>Spiritual Formation Reader: Miscellaneous Articles</i> | Accountability Question |

For each book above, students are required to write a one-page reading report in the style and format of the *Reading Report Form* in this syllabus. The excerpted readings from Packer's *Knowing God* and *The Quest for Godliness* should be treated as one (1) book report.

For the *Spiritual Formation Reader Articles* (#6 above), there will be an "Accountability Question" students will be asked to answer in writing at the end of class. These articles will be passed out in class. They will be referenced throughout the lectures and are critical for a complete understanding of the course content.

Reports not dated (in the students portfolio) on the due dates will be considered late.

Particular articles will be assigned each week in preparation for the following week's in-class discussion. These articles are designed to help the student interact with the major course theses. Each week the students are to be prepared to share a summary of their deepened understanding, heart reaction and behavioral application resulting from careful interaction with the article topic. These summaries will not be collected; however, individual responses may be included in the "Miscellanies" Journal (described below).

***One copy of Packer's *Rediscovering Holiness* is on reserve in the RTS Orlando library. Additional copies may be borrowed (or purchased) from the teaching assistant.

C. Spiritual Formation Groups and Gospel Promise Presentations

Each student will participate in the development and presentation of two "Gospel Promise" Presentations. These presentations will include the topics below (15- 20 minutes):

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| April 10, 2008 | <u>Election</u> |
| April 10, 2008 | <u>Propitiation</u> |
| April 17, 2008 | <u>Justification</u> |
| April 17, 2008 | <u>Adoption</u> |
| April 24, 2008 | <u>Regeneration</u> |
| April 24, 2008 | <u>Redemption</u> |
| May 1, 2008 | <u>Sanctification</u> |
| May 1, 2008 | <u>Glorification</u> |

D. “Miscellanies” Journal and Spiritual Retreat Report

Miscellanies Journal – Each student will record their ideas/thoughts about spiritual growth/formation as a result of the in-class discussions/presentations, the course readings, and ones own devotions and meditations. This journal must include at least one “Sabbath” entry per week but may include additional entries if the student wishes. These “Miscellanies” will be turned in at the end of the course (as part of the student’s course portfolio) and will be graded based on thoughtful integration of all course lectures, discussions and materials. It should include tri-perspectival (head, heart and behavior) application.

Spiritual Retreat and Spiritual Retreat Report – The student will set aside a minimum of 4 hours (one morning, afternoon or evening), following class #8 (April 3) and before class #13 (May 8), to be alone with God for the purpose of focused spiritual reflection, evaluation, scripture meditation and prayer in light of the biblical concepts studied in the course regarding the transforming power of the Gospel. The student is encouraged to see this time as an example of how a Christian leader makes time for ordering his/her private world in the face of many competing time demands. A minimum one page, typed *Spiritual Retreat Report*, recording a) how the retreat was conducted and b) key insights gained, is due on the last day of class (added to the student portfolio), May 8. Students will be encouraged to share their retreat insights with the class during the course.

E. Integration Paper

Integration Paper: Students are required to write a 15-20 page (double-spaced, 12 point font) course integration paper. This paper must reflect new work done by the student as a result of this course. The paper must demonstrate the student’s theology of Christian growth and show how the concepts learned in the class lectures AND course readings can be applied to the student’s personal life and ministry to others today. The paper must also include a specific plan for the student’s continued growth (spiritual formation plan) and application of the course concepts to his/her personal life and ministry to others in the future. The integration paper is due no later than May 16—the due date for the submission of the student’s completed course portfolio (with all assignments).

VI. Grading

Grades will be assigned according to the RTS grading system: 100-97=A, 96-94=A-, 93-91=B+, 90-88=B, 87-86=B-, 85-83=C+, 82-80=C, 79-78=C-, 77-75=D+, 74-72=D, 71-70=D-, below 70=F.

Late Assignments and Class Attendance Policy

Please do not ask my teaching assistant or me for permission to complete an assignment late. All late assignments will automatically be penalized. If you have truly been providentially hindered from completing an assignment on time (such as a death in the immediate family), turn in a written request (to my teaching assistant) asking to wave the late penalty with the assignment. Please discuss any such special circumstances with my teaching assistant. Under any circumstances, no assignments will be received after May 16.

This course affirms that community growth and learning are fundamental components of Spiritual Formation. Therefore, class attendance and group participation is essential for the completion of this course. Lack of attendance and/or participation will significantly impact the final grade.

Course Grades will be determined as follows:

- Spiritual Formation Reading and Reports (20%)
- Gospel Promise Presentations (20%)
- Miscellanies Journal and Spiritual Retreat Report (20%)
- Course Integration Paper (40%)

READING REPORT GUIDELINES

Your Name
Course Title & Number
Professor
Date

Please limit your report to one typed, single-spaced page, and one paragraph per topic (*Overview, Critique, Application*).

Title of Book
Complete Bibliographic Reference

Overview—Give a brief overview of the book, including its theme, perspective and approach.

Critique—Offer a brief critique of the book, including elements of strength and weakness.

Application—Offer some specific application to your own ministry— demonstrating the value and relevance of the material in this book.

Best Quote—Be sure to include the page number where the quote can be found.

Did you read the entire book thoughtfully (not merely skimmed)? Yes ___ No ___ % Read (0-100) ____

Course Bibliography

Required:

- Childers, Steven L., ed., *Introduction to Spiritual Formation: A Reader, 2005*. Articles for this reader will be handed out during class throughout the semester.
- Packer, James I., *Rediscovering Holiness*, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Vine Books, 1992. (276 pp).
- _____, *The Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian* 1990 Life. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990. (Selected Chapters)
- _____, *Knowing God*, Downers Grove, IL InterVarsity Press. Chapters 15, 18, 19. (55pp)
- Prior, Kenneth, *The Way of Holiness: A Study in Christian Growth*, 1982. Christian Focus Publications (166 pp)
- Lovelace, Richard, *Renewal as a Way of Life, A Guidebook for Spiritual Growth*, 1985. (206 pp)

Highly Recommended Reading:

- Baxter, Richard
1656 The Reformed Pastor. Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth, Reprinted 1997. (256 pp)
- Lovelace, Richard
1979 Dynamics of Spiritual Life, An Evangelical Theology of Renewal, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, Chapters 2-8. (200pp)
- Packer, J.I.
1984 Keep in Step with the Spirit. Old Tappan, NJ: F.H. Revell. (270pp)
1992 Knowing God. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Ryle, J.C.
1956 Holiness. Wilmington, DE: Associated Publishers and Authors and London: J. Clarke.

Recommended Reading:

- Alexander, Archibald
1967 Thoughts on Religious Experience. Banner of Truth.
- Baxter, Richard
A Christian Directory, Volume One, *Baxter's Practical Works*, Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications. (Read J.I. Packer's "Introduction" and especially "Part One: Christian Ethics", 394 pages).
The Saints Everlasting Rest, Abridged by Benjamin Fawcett in 1758, American Tract Society, New York.
- Berkouwer, G.C.
1952 Faith and Sanctification. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Bonar, Horatius
1993 The Everlasting Righteousness. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth.
God's Way of Holiness. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth.
Words to Winners of Souls. _ (Read especially chapter four, *Ministerial Confession*)

- Bridges, Jerry
1992 The Discipline of Grace. Colorado Springs: NavPress.
1997 The Joy of Fearing God. Water Brook Press.
2002 The Gospel for Real Life. Colorado Springs: NavPress. (199 pp)
- Brooks, Thomas
Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices. Banner of Truth, reprint.
- Bunyan, John
Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners.
The Pilgrim's Progress.
The Holy War
- Calvin, John
The Institutes of Christian Religion. (Read especially Book Three: The Way in Which We Receive the Grace of Christ, Chapters VI–X).
- Chalmers, Thomas
1850 "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection", Sermons and Discourses by Thomas Chalmers, D.D., LL.D., Now Completed by the Introduction of His Posthumous Sermons in Two Volumes, New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. (8 pp)
- Chappell, Bryan
1994 Christ Centered Preaching. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House. (Read chapters 10,11)
- Charnock, Stephen
1979 Discourses Upon the Existence and Attributes of God. Baker.
- Childers, Steven L.
1995 "The Transforming Power of the Gospel". The Reformed Quarterly, Fall, RTS.
- Curtis, Brent, and John Eldredge
1997 The Sacred Romance. Thomas Nelson.
- Demarest, Bruce
1999 Satisfy Your Soul. NavPress
- Edwards, Jonathan
"A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections". The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. One. (pp 234–343)
1992 "A Divine and Supernatural Light". Selected Writings of Jonathan Edwards, edited by Harold P. Simonson, Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., Reissued (68-88 pp.)
- Eldridge, John,
2000 The Journey of Desire. Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- Ferguson, Sinclair B.
1987 John Owen on the Christian Life. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, reprinted 1995.
"The Reformed View of Sanctification" in Donald Alexander's Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.
1989 Children of the Living God. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth.
1995 John Owen on the Christian Life. Carisle, PA: Banner of Truth.
- Fisher, Edward
The Marrow of Modern Divinity. Presbyterian Board of Pub., n.d.

- Flavel, John
1963 The Mystery of Providence. Banner of Truth.
- Foster, Richard
1978 Celebration of Discipline
- Foster, Richard, and Emilie Griffin
2000 Spiritual Classics. Harper Collins.
- Gurnall, William
1964 The Christian in Complete Armour. Banner of Truth.
- Hoekema, Anthony A.
1989 Saved by Grace. Eerdmans.
- Hughes, R. Kent
1993 Disciplines of a Godly Man. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.
- Keller, Timothy J.
1988 "Puritan Resources for Biblical Counseling". The Journal of Pastoral Practice, Vol. IX, No. 3.
- Lewis, Peter
1996 The Genius of Puritanism. Soli Deo Gloria.
- Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn
1965 Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cures. Eerdmans.
- 1985 The Cross, God's Way of Salvation. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.
- Londgaard, Kris
1998 The Enemy Within. Presbyterian & Reformed.
- Luther, Martin
The Preface to Martin Luther's Commentary on Galatians.
- 1962 *Two Kinds of Righteousness*. Martin Luther: Selections from his Writings, edited by John Dillenberger, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday, (86-96 pp).
- 1962 *The Freedom of the Christian*. Martin Luther: Selections from his Writings, Edited by John Dillenberger, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday. (42-85 pp).
- 1968 *A Simple Way to Pray*, Luther's Works: Devotional Writings II, Vol. 43, Edited by Gustav K. Wiencke, Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press. (187-211 pp).
- MacDonald, Gordon
1985 Ordering Your Private World. Nashville, TN: Oliver Nelson.
- Marshall, Walter
1954 The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- McGrath, Alister E.
1999 Christian Spirituality: An Introduction. Blackwell.
- Miller, John C. (Jack)
1986 Outgrowing the Ingrown Church. Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resource Library. (Read especially The Ingrown Leader, The Pastor as Pacesetter, and Preaching by Faith)
- Miller, Rose Marie
1994 From Fear to Freedom: Living as Sons and Daughters of God. Wheaton, Illinois, Harold Shaw Publishers.
- Morris, Leon
1983 The Atonement: Its Meaning and Significance. IVP.

- Murray, John
 1974 Principles of Conduct. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing.
- 1976-82 Definitive Sanctification in The Collected Works of John Murray Vol II, Edinburgh, UK and Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth.
- Newton, John
The Letters of John Newton. See The Works of John Newton, Volumes 1,2,6. Banner of Truth.
- Owen, John
The Works of John Owen. See especially Vol. I–*Meditations and Discourses on the Glory of Christ*, Vol. II– *On Communion with God*, Vol. III–*A Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit*, Vol. VI– *On the Mortification of Sin, On Temptation and On Indwelling Sin in Believers*, Vol. VII–*The Grace and Duty of Being Spiritually Minded, and On the Dominion of Sin and Grace*.
- Packer, J.I.
 1992 Rediscovering Holiness. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Vine Books.
- Piper, John
 1986 Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist. Portland, OR: Multnomah Press.
- Powlison, David
 1995 *Idols of the Heart and “Vanity Fair”*, The Journal of Biblical Counseling, Vol. 13, Num. 2, Winter 1995 (35-50 pp).
- Ryken, Leland
 1986 Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were. Zondervan.
- Schaeffer, Francis A.
 1971 True Spirituality. Tyndale.
- Stott, John R.W.
 1986 The Cross of Christ. Downers Grove: IL, InterVarsity. (Especially chapter 7–*The Salvation of Sinners and the Conclusion–The Pervasive Influence of the Cross*.)
- Toon, Peter
 1990 Spiritual Companions: An Introduction to the Christian Classics, Baker.
 1993 The Art of Meditating on Scripture. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Wallace, Ronald
 1957 Calvin’s Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament. Eerdmans.
- Watson, Thomas
 1994 The Doctrine of Repentance. Banner of Truth.
- Welch, Edward T.
 1997 When People are Big and God is Small. Presbyterian & Reformed.
- Whitney, Donald S.
 1991 Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life. NavPress.
- Willard, Dallas
 1985 The Spirit of the Disciplines. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.
 1998 The Divine Conspiracy. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Winslow, Octavius
 1978 Personal Declension and Revival of Religion in the Soul, Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1841 reprinted 1978.

Confidential Student Information

Please fill out and turn in at the first class..

Name:

Spouse name:

Children, name(s) and age(s):

RTS degree program/emphasis:

Years at RTS-Orlando:

Church presently attending:

Denomination background (Southern Baptist, PCA, etc.):

Desired future ministry role (pastor, church planter, missionary, counselor, etc.):

What are your expectations of the course? What would you like to learn?

What is a specific, personal prayer request you would like the professor to be remembering in prayer for you this semester?