

The Christian Life

May 26-28, 2009

Justin S. Holcomb
434.989.7055
justin.holcomb@gmail.com

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to assist the student in growth toward a deeper relationship with God and more mature Christian interaction with the world in which we live. This course will cover concepts central to the Christian life: grace, faith, repentance, new creation, assurance, and mission.

Required Reading

- John Calvin, "On the Christian Life" (*Institutes*, Book 3, chapter 6-10)
- Sinclair Ferguson, *The Christian Life*
- Paul F. M. Zahl, *Grace in Practice: A Theology of Everyday Life*
- Harold Seinkbeil, *Sanctification: Christ in Action*
- Gerhard Forde, *On Being A Theologian of the Cross*

Required Reading that will be available electronically

- David Brooks, "Spiritual Life"
- Christian Smith, "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism"
- John Piper, "Mission"

Before the course, please complete as much of the reading as possible (except for the Ferguson book, which you can read after the course). We will discuss the other readings in class.

Course Outline

I. Contemporary Spirituality: The Cultural Context of the Christian Life

Related readings:

- David Brooks, "Spiritual Life"
- Christian Smith, "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism"

II. Reformed Theology and the Christian Life

Related readings:

- John Calvin, "On the Christian Life"

II. Grace: The Cause of the Christian Life

Related readings:

- Paul F. M. Zahl, *Grace in Practice*

III. The Law, the Gospel, and the Holy Spirit: The Biblical Context of the Christian Life

Related readings:

Gerhard Forde, *On Being A Theologian of the Cross*

Galatians

IV. Sanctification: Loving God and Loving Neighbor

Related readings:

Harold Seinkbeil, *Sanctification: Christ in Action*

James

V. Mission

Related readings:

John Piper, "Mission: The Battle Cry of a Christian Hedonist"

Jonah

Course Requirements

Reading Report (1,000 words each)	30%
Take-home Exam	30%
Paper (2,000 words)	40%

The **reading reports** for Calvin's "On the Christian Life" and Ferguson's *The Christian Life* are due June 11. See the Reading Report form.

The **take-home exam** is due June 26, 2009. When you are ready to take it email me and I will send you the exam as an attachment.

The **paper** is due June 26, 2009. More will be said regarding the topics and guidelines for the paper during the course.

Reading Report

Title: _____

Author: _____

1. Did you read the entire book?
2. Summarize in one paragraph the thesis or argument of the text.
3. Summarize in one paragraph the author's method of proving her or his thesis. How does she or he "get there"?
4. What were some key points or passages that you think are relevant for a course on the Christian life?
5. Internal positive assessment: Assuming the author's point of view and being aware of what the author hoped and intended to do, write at least two paragraphs about some strengths of the text. To what extent did the author "pull it off" and accomplish a significant part of what she or he intended?
6. Internal negative assessment: Assuming the author's point of view and being aware of what the author hoped and intended to do, write at least two paragraphs about some weaknesses of the text. How many of your reservations about the text can be expressed from a point of view intrinsic to the text or assuming the author's point of view?
7. External positive evaluation: From your perspective and evaluating things in terms of your own commitments and purposes, what are some strengths of the text? Please write at least two paragraphs.
8. External negative evaluation: From your perspective and evaluating things in terms of your own commitments and purposes, what are some weaknesses of the text? Please write at least two paragraphs.