

Introduction to Spiritual Formation (Spring 2012)

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 from 6:00 PM-9:00 PM beginning Thursday, February 9, 2012, and ending Thursday, May 10, 2012. Class will NOT meet on March 29 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.

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 usually scheduled by Joyce for Thursdays from 1:15 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. The course teaching assistant, Lloyd Dawson, can be reached at 407.677.0372 or ldawson@rts.edu.

IV. Course Texts

Required:

- Childers, Steven L., ed., *Introduction to Spiritual Formation: A Reader*, 2012.
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—separate 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 6:00 PM. 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) | March 1, 2012 |
| (2) <i>The Way of Holiness</i> by Kenneth Prior (166 pp) | March 22, 2012 |
| (3) Excerpts from <i>Knowing God</i> by J. I. Packer
(Chapters 15, 18 and, 19 from above book) | April 19, 2012 |
| (4) Excerpts from <i>The Quest for Godliness</i> by J. I. Packer
(Chapters 2-4, 7, 10-16, 19 from above book) | April 19, 2012 |
| (5) <i>Rediscovering Holiness</i> by J. I. Packer (276 pp)*** | May 10, 2012 |
| (6) <i>Spiritual Formation Reader: Miscellaneous Articles</i> | Portfolio 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 a question answered in your course portfolio regarding your percentage and depth of reading of Reader Articles. 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 turned in to your portfolio by midnight on the due dates will be considered late. Students are to record the actual date the reading report is completed and added to the portfolio for review by the professor later.

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.

C. Spiritual Formation (Gospel Promise) Presentations

Each student will participate in the development and presentation of at least one (two max) “Gospel Promise” Presentation. The outline of these presentations (list of questions to be answered) is in the appendix of this syllabus. These presentations will include the topics below (20 minutes):

- April 12, 2012 **Election**
- April 12, 2012 **Propitiation**
- April 19, 2012 **Justification**
- April 19, 2012 **Adoption**
- April 26, 2012 **Regeneration**
- April 26, 2012 **Redemption**
- May 3, 2012 **Sanctification**
- May 3, 2012 **Glorification**

D. “Miscellanies” Journal and Spiritual Retreat Report

Miscellanies Journal – Each student will record their ideas/thoughts (“including blogging each class period”) about spiritual growth/formation as a result of the in-class discussions/presentations, the course readings, and ones own devotions and meditations. These “Miscellanies” will be turned in at the end of the course and will be graded based on thoughtful integration of all course lectures, discussions and materials. It should include holistic, tri-perspectival (head, heart and behavior) applications.

Spiritual Retreat and Spiritual Retreat Report – The student will set aside a minimum of 4 hours (one morning, afternoon or evening), following class #7 (March 22) and before class #13 (May 3), 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 2 -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, May 10. 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 (with the Portfolio) by noon on the last day of Final Examinations.

F. Spiritual Formation Portfolio

Students are required to assemble all their course work into an organized, single resource that is due (in designated box near Joyce Sisler's desk or in Dr. Childers' office) the final day of exam week. The goal is for students to have a resource that can be easily accessed and utilized during their future ministries. Each entry ***must be dated on or before the due date*** of the assignment to get the full credit for that assignment (honor system). Each portfolio must be organized according to the requirements below and include every assignment to receive full credit. These portfolios will be returned to you after grading. Note: Please make sure this document is well organized and that no items are missing. Please feel free to use post-it notes to make clarifying comments for the grader.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS

1. **Cover Page (Course name & your name)**
2. **Outline/Table of Contents** (List categories below with dates where appropriate)
3. **Class Notes**
 - a) Syllabus
 - b) Hard copy of ALL course notes
 - c) Typed (electronic) or legible hand written student notes on class lectures (dated by class)
 - d) <Electronic copy of class lecture slides and videos on CD/DVD (optional)>
4. **Reading Reports (Using form provided in appendix)**
 - a) *Renewal as a Way of Life* by Richard Lovelace
 - b) *The Way of Holiness* by Kenneth Prior
 - c) Excerpts from *Knowing God* by J. I. Packer
 - d) Excerpts from *The Quest for Godliness* by J. I. Packer
 - e) *Rediscovering Holiness* by J. I. Packer
5. **Spiritual Retreat Report (2-page minimum)**
6. **Miscellanies Journal/Blog (Optional: May include this in journal/class notes on lectures)**
7. **Gospel Promise Presentation (PowerPoint: 6 slides per page, black & white format)**
 - a) All 8 presentations (Dated. Students will distribute all presentations to each other)
 - b) Notes on group discussions (Dated)
8. **Spiritual Formation Integration Paper**
9. **Spiritual Formation Reader Articles (print & insert hard copy of all Reader Articles)**
10. **Report Page**
 - a) Percentage of *Required Reading Books/Excerpts* read thoughtfully?
 - b) Percentage of *Spiritual Formation Reader Articles* read thoughtfully?
 - c) Perceived grade earned in the course?

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 the teaching assistant or Dr. Childers for permission to turn in 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 the teaching assistant) asking to wave the late penalty with the assignment. Please discuss any such special circumstances with the teaching assistant. ***No assignments will be received after May 24. (last day of finals)***

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 Presentation (20%)
- Miscellanies Journal and Spiritual Retreat Report (20%)
- Course Integration Paper (40%)

NOTE: No Mid-Term and No Final Exam!



Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Introduction to Spiritual Formation, 2PT702

Professor: Dr. Steven L. Childers

Campus: Orlando

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<p><i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<p>Strong Moderate Minimal None</p>	
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student will be in a group and prepare presentations on reading materials and class discussions. 2. Student submits an entire portfolio, from which they can teach in the future.
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Minimal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student does not engage with Scripture in the original languages. 2. Student must demonstrate that their understanding of Spiritual Formation is biblical.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Student reads various articles by Reformed authors
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student will 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. 2. Student will understand, evaluate critically and appreciate various principles, methods and models used today to help people grow spiritually. 3. Students will become acquainted with the extensive literature relating to personal, spiritual growth and renewal and be able to think biblically and critically about how it can be used properly and effectively in the student's life and ministry.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	Student gains a deep understanding of a biblical theology of personal, spiritual growth and renewal, especially as it relates to the centrality of the Gospel.
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	Student reads articles and books by authors that are not Reformed, and is shown the value of ecumenicalism.

Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	None	
Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	None	
Shepherd	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Strong	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This course will lay a strong foundation for the student to engage in future studies in the dynamics of how the Gospel brings spiritual growth and renewal both personally and corporately. 2. Student will work in groups and lead a class presentation (s).
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This course will lay a strong foundation for the practical development of church based ministries of spiritual growth and renewal, especially for students planning to be church planters, pastors and missionaries. 2. Student will obtain a set of criteria for evaluating spiritual growth and renewal principles, methods, materials, programs and trends.

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) ___

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?