Principles of Sanctification (ST526)
1 credit
Summer 2012

Reformed Theological Seminary
Washington, D.C.

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Description

This course examines the doctrine of sanctification in Reformed theological perspective. Topics taken up include union with Christ, the role of the Holy Spirit in sanctification, the relationship of justification to sanctification, the use of the law in the believer’s life, the means of grace, and the role of suffering in Christian growth.

This course complements consideration of sanctification in ST520.

Schedule

June 28-29

Thursday and Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Course Goals

• Gaining resources for cultivating growth in the Christian life
• Growing in appreciation for our triune God in renewing His church in the image of His Son
• Growing in our understanding of the roles of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in Christian growth
• Grasping something of the importance of the means of grace to sanctification

Required Texts

John Calvin. Institutes of the Christian Religion

Donald Alexander. Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification

Martin Luther, On Christian Liberty (also published as The Freedom of a Christian)

Lecture Topics
• Christian views of sanctification, compared and contrasted: Lutheran, Wesleyan, Contemplative, Pentecostal, Reformed
• Introduction to sanctification in Reformed perspective
• Eschatology and sanctification
• Indicative and imperative
• Definitive and progressive sanctification
• 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
   b. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*
      i. Book II, Chapter 8
      ii. Book III, Chapters 1-20, 34-52
      iii. Book IV, Chapter 14
      iv. Book IV, Chapter 15, Sections 1-14
      v. Book IV, Chapter 17, sections 1-11
   c. *On Christian Liberty* in its entirety


3. Calvin Questions (33%). See last page.

4. *On Christian Liberty* Review (33%) consisting of two roughly equal parts: analysis and person reflection. Luther is making an argument in this little book, and your task is to (a) trace his argument (what is he arguing for and how does he argue for it?) and (b) consider how the points Luther makes might be an aid to your personal growth in Christ. Three pages, double-spaced, 12 point font.

Note: you may start these assignments before class begins.

Evaluation
Christian Spirituality Review (33%)
Calvin questions (33%)
On Christian Liberty Review (33%)

Due Dates

- Christian Spirituality Review – July 3
- Calvin questions – July 9

All assignments should be emailed as a MS Word (no PDFs) attachment to the instructor at gsackett@rts.edu.

Grading Scale

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

Each answer should be approximately 6-8 sentences in length (double spaced, 12 pt font).

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 (a) firm and certain knowledge of (b) God’s benevolence toward us, (c) founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ, both (d) revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit.” Explain what he means and how he arrives at this definition. Your explanation must include discussion of (a) – (d).


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.