

## Personal Sanctification (04PT5375)

Reformed Theological Seminary Atlanta  
Fall 2020

Dr. Guy M. Richard

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Office Hours: Mondays, 2pm – 4pm, or by appointment

### Class Schedule

Mondays, 4:30pm – 5:30pm

### Class Description

This course explores the theology and methodology of personal growth in Christ. It will focus on what the Bible says about sanctification and the means of grace. Special attention will be given to growth in grace and the practice of prayer (as a means of grace in the Christian life).

### Required Reading

John Onwuchekwa, *Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018).

JC Ryle, *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots*.

Walter Marshall, *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification: Growing in Holiness by Living in Union with Christ. A New Version Put Into Modern English by Bruce H. McRae* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005). Amazon currently has this available in Kindle edition.

*\*It is expected that students will bring their Bibles with them to class.*

### Course Evaluation

1. **Student Self-Evaluations: 40% of final grade. Dates Due: August 24, 2020 and December 11, 2020.**

Students will evaluate their own spiritual condition at the beginning and the end of the semester. This will involve two one-page single-spaced papers—one of which is due on first day of class and one of which is due at the end of the semester—written by each student answering questions similar to the following:

How would you evaluate the condition of your spiritual life currently?  
How is your time in the Word, prayer? How much are you in the Word devotionally (not in order to teach or preach)? How much are you praying?  
Do you avoid time in prayer? Why or why not?  
Do you pray with your spouse (if you are married)? Why or why not?  
Do you engage in family worship (if you are married and/or have a family)? Why or why not?  
Do you love Jesus and His Word more now than when you were first converted? Why or why not?

Are you holding onto (i.e., cherishing) any particular sins in your life? If so, why?

Is there anything keeping you from intimate communion with the Lord? If so, what? And what would it take to deal with that “anything”?

The whole point of this assignment is to have each student evaluate his or her own spiritual condition. Sometimes we drift as Christians and are not pursuing Christ with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. If this is where you are currently, then own it, write it down, and confess it to the Lord.

Near the end of the first day of class, we will divide into groups of three or four, and each student will share their own evaluation with the other students in the group. Each student can get as personal as they would like to, but each at least needs to share a big picture idea of how he or she is currently doing spiritually.

These groups will spend the last few minutes of each class period praying together for one another’s growth in sanctification and the things that we are learning about in class over the course of the semester. The groups will stay the same over the course of the semester in order to allow the students to build deeper relationships and, thus, to pray for one another more intelligently and with more ownership. It is expected that this will lead the students to pray for one another outside of class as well.

Then at the end of the semester, each student will again evaluate their spiritual condition similarly and specifically look for any signs of growth in grace over the course of the semester. I realize that the semester is only 13 weeks long, but that should be plenty of time to see changes in attitudes and desires and maybe even behavior.

**2. Class attendance and participation: 30% of final grade.**

Because of the nature of the class, students will be expected to attend class each week and to participate in the discussion/activity.

**3. Required Reading: 30% of final grade. Date Due: December 11, 2020.**

Students will report on the percentage of reading they have completed over the course of the semester. If the student does not report the percentage of the reading they have completed, it will be assumed that they have not completed any of it.

**All work is due by 11:59pm on the date prescribed, according to the time-stamp of the email.** Late submissions will be accepted but will merit a deduction of 3 percentage points per day off of what would otherwise be the student’s grade (i.e., if student earned a 95 on given assignment [out of total of 100 points] and was 2 days late, the student’s final grade would be an 89 [i.e., 95 – 6 points = 89]). The 3 percentage-point penalty will begin at midnight of the day after the due date. This penalty will be waived only if a student is providentially hindered from completing the assignments on time (i.e., death, hospitalization, etc.) and/or has made prior arrangements with the professor.

## Proposed Lecture Schedule

1. Syllabus and introductory information.
2. Course introduction: Why is sanctification important?
3. What is sanctification?
4. Sanctification and the *ordo salutis*.
5. The means of grace.
6. Preaching.
7. Sacraments.
8. Prayer.
9. Fellowship?
10. Role of suffering.

## Select Texts for Additional Reading on your own

Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace: God's Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness* (NavPress, 1994).

Jerry Bridges, *Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate* (NavPress, 2007).

John Calvin, *Institutes*, see especially 3.1-2, 6-9, and 11-14; and 4.14.1-12 and 4.17.1-11; etc.

Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* (Crossway, 2003).

Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Christian Life: A Doctrinal Introduction* (Banner of Truth, 1989).

Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Devoted to God: Blueprints for Sanctification* (Banner of Truth, 2016).

R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man* (Crossway, 2006 reprint).

R. Kent Hughes, *Set Apart: Calling a Worldly Church to a Godly Life* (Crossway, 2003).

David Mathis, *Habits of Grace: Enjoying Jesus through the Spiritual Disciplines* (Crossway, 2016).

JP Moreland, *Love Your God with all Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul* (NavPress, 1997).

John Murray, "Definitive Sanctification," *Calvin Theological Journal* 2 (April 1967), 5-21.

John Murray, *Redemption—Accomplished and Applied* (Banner of Truth, 1961 reprint).

John Owen, *Communion with God*, ed. R.J.K. Law (Banner of Truth, 1991).

J.I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Crossway, 1990).

J.I. Packer, *Rediscovering Holiness* (Servant Publications, 1992).

Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (NavPress, 1991).

**Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes**

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 Campus: Atlanta  
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| <b><u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u></b>   |   | <b><u>Rubric</u></b>                  | <b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>   |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| <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> |   | Strong<br>Moderate<br>Minimal<br>None |  |
| <b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>  | Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.  | Moderate                              | Students will have to write two short papers and participate in classroom discussions.     |
| <b>Scripture</b>  | 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.) | Strong                                | Scripture will be the basis for the course.  |
| <b>Reformed Theology</b>  | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.  | Strong                                | Westminster standards will be the basis for the course.                                    |
| <b>Sanctification</b>   | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.  | Strong                                | Course is dealing with sanctification.   |
| <b>Desire for Worldview</b>   | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.   | Moderate                              | Course will touch on worldview issues.   |
| <b>Winsomely Reformed</b>   | 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                                | Course will be taught with an emphasis on being winsome in all things.                     |
| <b>Pastoral Ministry</b>  | Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading, and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Xns.  | Moderate                              | Course will prepare students for pastoral ministry by focusing on personal sanctification. |