

Course Syllabus – Personal Sanctification (PT5375)
Reformed Theological Seminary
Winter 2026

*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*
2 Peter 3:18

Professor: Dr. Dane Ortlund
Email: daneortlund@npchurch.org
Date: January 23–24, 2026
Times: Friday, Jan 23: 5:00–9:30 pm
Saturday, Jan 24: 8:00 am–5:30 pm (break noon–1:00 pm)
Location: Naperville Presbyterian Church (943 Sanctuary Lane, Naperville, IL, 60540)

Course Description

This course is a modular, in-person, weekend course that is an immersion in the Christian doctrine of progressive sanctification according to Scripture and in the Reformed tradition, drawing significantly from the riches of church history, for the sake of the student’s own personal sanctification as well as the equipping of them to teach and coach others in sanctification.

Course Purpose

The purpose of this course is to encourage the students with the hope that their own growth is actually possible and to empower them with biblical and theological understanding as to how that growth happens, both for their own growth and the growth of those to whom they minister and serve.

Course Objectives

1. To help the student to gain an understanding of the biblical doctrine of sanctification.
2. To understand how Scripture’s teaching on sanctification is different from all other religions and human strategies.
3. To gain an appreciation of the riches of church history on the subject of sanctification.
4. To help the student cultivate both their own personal holiness and their ability to help others grow in holiness.
5. To grow in worship of the Triune God and his surprising graces in growing his people.

Course Texts

Required Texts (read in their entirety):

Alexander, Donald L. *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988.

Bingham, Matthew. *A Heart Aflame for God: A Reformed Approach to Spiritual Formation*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2025.

Calvin, John. *On the Christian Life: A New Translation*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2024.

Lewis, C. S. "Three Kinds of Men." Pages 9–10 in *Present Concerns: Ethical Essays*. London: Fount, 1986.

Ortlund, Dane. *Deeper: Real Change for Real Sinners*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2021.¹

Recommended Texts (not required but useful for future growth and ministry!):

Bavinck, Herman. Pages 230–70 in *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume 4: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

Bridges, Jerry. *Transforming Grace: Living Confidently in God's Unfailing Love*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991.

Chalmers, Thomas. *The Expulsive Power of a New Affection*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2020.

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

Ferguson, Sinclair. *Worthy: Living in Light of the Gospel*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2023.

Lloyd-Jones, Martyn. *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965.

Ortlund, Dane C. "Sanctification by Justification: The Forgotten Insight of Bavinck and Berkouwer on Progressive Sanctification." *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 28 (2010): 43–61.

Powlison, David. *How Does Sanctification Work?* Wheaton: Crossway, 2017.

Ryle, J. C. *Holiness*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2014.

¹ If useful to you and your ministries, there is a concise edition of *Deeper* entitled *How Does God Change Us?* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2021), but the longer edition is the assigned course text.

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Lord of the Rings*. Various published editions.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and Participation (10%) – Given the tight schedule of this modular course, attendance at the entirety of the class is required in order for the student to receive the one credit hour for this course. Moreover, students will be expected to be engaged in all class activities and discussions. Any student doing email or browsing the internet during class hours will not receive a passing grade. All readings must be completed by 2/13/26, with the exception of Ortlund, *Deeper*, which must be completed by the beginning of the first class.
2. Reading Papers (30%) – The student will read all required texts in their entirety and write a clear and thoughtful 300-600 word response to each reading, with the exception of “Three Kinds of Men,” which may be 100-300 words. The goal of these papers is not simply to summarize content but to describe what insights in the book were most useful or new to you and why. All of these papers must be submitted by noon on 2/20/26.
3. Final exam (30%) – During the last hour of the course a written final exam will be administered. It will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions drawn from the content of the lecture material offered in the course of the class time.
4. Personal Growth Project (30%) – Pick an arena of life in which you wish to grow in holiness. Using the approaches discussed in class and in the readings, strive to see growth in that area in the four weeks following the class meetings. Report on your progress and the effect it has had on your life. Write up your project in 3,000 to 5,000 words and submit to the instructor, describing your efforts, the results, and what you have personally learned about sanctification. The instructor will not share any of the contents of your report in any way with anyone. Due by noon on 3/2/26.

Grading Scale (standard RTS scale):

97-100% A
94-96% A-
91-93% B+
88-90% B
86-87% B-
83-85% C+
80-82% C
78-79% C-
75-77% D+
72-74% D
70-71% D-
0-69% F

Electronic Devices

Phones are to be silenced. They may be consulted during breaks and before and after class, but not during class. Laptops or tablets may be used for note-taking and note-taking alone. This modular course is an immersive learning experience where students must be distraction-free and focused on the content at hand.

About the Instructor

Dr. Ortlund lives in Naperville, Illinois, with his wife, Stacey. They have five children; four sons and a daughter. Their oldest, Zach (19), is a sophomore at Covenant College. The younger four are in schools in the Naperville area (Nate, 15; Jeremiah, 13; Chloe, 11; Ben, 9). Dr. Ortlund is a graduate of Wheaton College (2001), Covenant Theological Seminary (MDiv 2005, ThM 2007), and Wheaton College Graduate School (PhD in NT, 2010). He served in nonprofit Christian publishing at Crossway for ten years (2010–2020) in various editorial roles and eventually as Chief Publishing Officer and Bible Publisher. He continues to serve on the Translation Oversight Committee of the ESV. In 2020 his home church, Naperville Presbyterian Church, called him to serve as senior pastor, where he has happily ministered these past five years, seeking by God’s grace to foster gospel culture out of the great doctrines of grace. Fun fun fun!!! His writings include *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers*, *In the Lord I Take Refuge: 150 Devotions on the Psalms, 2 Corinthians* in the ESV Expository Commentary series, and *Finally Home: The Christian Hope of Heaven* (forthcoming), along with various technical biblical articles and other pieces. More information is available at daneortlund.com.

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Personal Sanctification

Professor: Dr. Dane Ortlund

Campus: Chicago

Date: January 23-24, 2026

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes		Rubric	Mini-Justification
<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>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None 	
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. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	All oral and written student content will require strong communication.
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.)	Strong	Scripture will be foundational to all that is taught and said in this course, as Scripture is our authority for how to understand sanctification.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Lectures and materials and readings will all explicitly draw from Reformed resources.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Sanctification is the very <i>raison d'être</i> for the course.
Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	Public issues and worldview will be present but largely in the background.
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	The lectures and readings will interact with a broad range of evangelical stripes.
Pastoral Ministry	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-Christians.	Strong	Course content will be explicitly and pervasively connected to pastoral ministry.