

PT5375 Personal Sanctification

Fall 2026

Michael Allen

Note that class meets on Friday, September 18 and Saturday, September 19.

Course Description

This course examines the doctrine of sanctification in reformed theological perspective. We will examine biblical themes, theological formulation, and contemporary understanding with an eye toward pursuing holiness within the students' lives.

Course Objectives

1. To help the student gain an understanding of the biblical doctrine of sanctification.
2. To grow in appreciation of our gracious Father renewing His people in the image of His Son through the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. To grasp the importance of pursuing holiness for Christian discipleship and ministry.
4. To gain resources for cultivating growth in the Christian life.

The Instructor

Michael Allen, Ph.D.

Email: mallen@rts.edu

Phone: 407-278-4445

Feel free to contact me whenever needed (preferably via email or a conversation in person). If you have questions about class protocols and expectations or about the content of your readings, please email early and inquire. Better yet, come by my office and talk in person.

The Textbooks

1. John Calvin, *A Little Book on the Christian Life: A New Translation* (trans. Raymond Blacketer; Wheaton: Crossway, 2024).
2. John Webster, *Holiness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).
3. Thomas Watson, *The Lord's Prayer* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1960).

4. James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2016).

The Requirements

1. Read.

Reading must be thoughtful and engaged. Read the entirety of the assigned texts.

Theology is an activity done largely through the process of good reading. Read carefully. Read charitably. Read with others. Read with the expectation that you will learn from others, even when you disagree with their main point. Read even when a text is dense and difficult, for you will learn perseverance and fortitude here. Read that which seems trite and obvious, asking how others might object or criticize. Most importantly, read because God was willing to reveal himself in written words, and because we can best witness to God's grace with corresponding words. Read because words matter in God's economy of grace.

You will submit a reading report on Canvas that records your completion of each book.

Read the short books by Calvin and Webster prior to class. The two other readings can be done in the following two months. Report of all reading due by 11:59 p.m. on Saturday, November 7.

2. Attend.

Please attend and participate actively. Bring your notes, books, and Bibles. Bring writing utensils. Don't try to take down everything that is said; rather, engage and participate actively in lectures, discussions, and exercises.

We will eat together, and we will pray together throughout our time together.

3. Spiritual Discipline Exercise.

You are to pick a spiritual discipline that you have not yet privileged and practice it intentionally from our weekend of class through the following four weeks. You are then to report on your commitment to this exercise and to post on its effect upon your life (and, as applicable, to that of your family, friends, and church community). Your report will be a single page post on Canvas that describes *what* you did, *why* you did it, *how* it fit into your daily or weekly rhythm, and *to what effect* it contributed to your spiritual growth this month.

Examples: praying the hours, practicing Sabbath, praying Psalms, fasting, attending Sunday evening worship, leading family worship, practicing Christian hospitality, practicing gratitude daily, etc.

Due 11:59 p.m. on Saturday, October 24.

4. Reflective Paper.

You will write a concluding paper that offers personal reflections prompted by the reading of Thomas Watson's *The Lord's Prayer* and James K. A. Smith's *You Are What You Love*. It has two parts. First, learning from Watson, what particular prayer or petition in the Lord's Prayer do you need to make your own and how has this study of the Lord's Prayer helped you understand it? Second, drawing on the analysis of Smith, what is an anti-habit that you can observe having formative significance in your own life and what is its mal-formative significance? In making this reflective account autobiographically, make sure to employ scripture and the two texts to help you convey your thoughts. You should write 1000-1500 words total (addressing both prompts within that word count).

Due December 9 by 11:00 a.m.

Grading Structure

Grades will be assessed as follows:

Reading	1/3
Spiritual Discipline Exercise	1/3
Reflective Paper	1/3

The grading scale can be found in the Academic Catalog. As laid out in the catalog, a "B" is the work normally expected of a student. An "A" is given for someone who consistently outperforms expectations, and a "C" is given for persons who only minimally and occasionally meet expectations. Read the Academic Catalog to see what grades reflect.

Technology Policy (*Modified from Dr. Alan Jacobs of Baylor University*)

Computers, tablets, and smart-phones are not allowed in class. Think I'm over-reacting? Think you're a master of multitasking? [You](#) are [not](#). No, [I really mean it](#). Notes taken by hand are almost always more useful than typed notes, because more thoughtful selectivity goes into them; plus there are multiple cognitive benefits to [writing by hand](#). And people who use laptops in class [see their grades decline](#) — and even contribute to lowering the grades of *other people*.

Class Schedule

We will meet on Friday, September 18 and Saturday, September 19.

Friday – Class Begins at 4:00 p.m.

The major theme of our first day will be a theological vision of sanctification as a divine gift of the gospel that is wrought in us by the transforming presence of the Triune God and also a Christian calling that involves discipline, duty, and habits.

Vespers Prayer

A Theological Vision of the Christian Life: An Introduction

Dinner

Sanctification in Brief

The Power of Habit and the Need for Spiritual Disciplines (taught by Mike Glodo)

Evening Prayer

Dismissal by 10:00 p.m.

Saturday – Class Begins at 9:00 a.m.

The major theme of our second day will be the various Means of Grace, with special emphasis on prayer, Word, and Sacrament, and further analysis of other means of grace such as Sabbath and Christian Fellowship (see Westminster Larger Catechism 154).

Morning Prayer

Means of Grace

Discussion of Readings: Webster's *Holiness*

Means of Grace: Word & Sacraments (taught by Mark Futato)

Lunch

Noontime Prayer

Means of Grace: The Lord's Prayer

Means of Grace: Sabbath (taught by John Muether)

Discussion of Readings: Calvin's *Little Book on the Christian Life*

Vespers Prayer

Dismissal by 6:00 p.m.

Other Due Dates

- (1) Reading Report: due by 11:59 p.m. on Saturday, November 7.
- (2) Spiritual Discipline Exercise: due by 11:59 p.m. on Saturday, October 24.
- (3) Reflective Paper: due by 11 a.m. on Wednesday, December 9.

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: PT5375 Personal Sanctification

Professor: Allen

Campus: Orlando

Date: Fall 2026

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes		Rubric	Mini-Justification
<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> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<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	Students will respond to material with a final paper.
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	This course stresses and explores the biblical depiction of holiness.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Introduction to the Reformed approach to moral transformation and to discipleship.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Sustained focus upon pastoral character and the practices of good theological study for Christians and specifically for future leaders.
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.	Strong	Stresses the systematic and ethical shape of Reformed theology, which is rooted in scriptural exegesis.

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	Focuses on the wider catholic heritage and also the Reformed distinctives that mark our theological approach.
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.	Moderate	The formation of a lived understanding of discipleship is a major focus of readings, lectures, and exercises.