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Munster Bible College

**033: Biblical Spirituality**

# Professor

Dr. Ryan Rippee

# Course Description

This course will involve a careful historical and textual study of the biblical concept of growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ through communion with our Triune God. The student will also learn to identify and evaluate the different views of spirituality and sanctification prominent in various Christian communities as well as the relation between law and grace.

The local church is healthy to the degree that: 1) its pastor-teachers are able—accurately, effectively and broadly—to bring the gospel to bear *specifically* into the real lives of the people; and 2) its people have a deep personal understanding of and a deep personal appreciation for the gospel so as to be able to live out a robust biblical spirituality. Furthermore, communion with the triune Godhead is only possible when it is built upon the foundation of the Christian’s union with Christ and thus, positional sanctification received from the Father by the Holy Spirit at the point of union with Christ in conversion is the soil from which progressive sanctification grows.

# Course Objectives

As a result of this course the student should be able better to:

1. Clearly decipher between wrong approaches and biblical approaches to spirituality with the goal of life changing transformation of the heart.
2. Comprehend how the gospel of grace is the proper motivation for the Christian life.
3. Present and articulate a Christ-centered approach to sanctification.
4. Build a Christ-centered, gospel saturated foundation for local church ministry and missions in the area of Christian growth.
5. Practice the spiritual disciplines in order to commune with the triune God

These course objectives will be achieved in the following ways:

* Readings in the course texts.
* Course lectures and discussion.
* Critical book review of Peter Adam, *Hearing God’s Words*.
* Student journal.
* Essay on the Christian Life.
* Final Exam

# Diploma Required Texts

1. Peter Adam*: Hearing God’s Words: Exploring Biblical Spirituality* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).
2. Peterson, David. *Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995).
3. Hedges, Brian G: *Christ Formed in You: The Power of the Gospel for Personal Change* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2010).
4. Ferguson, Sinclair. *The Whole Christ: Legalism, Antinomianism, and Gospel Assurance—Why the Marrow Controversy Still Matters* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016).

# Diploma Course Assignments

***Reading (10%)***

Complete all assigned readings in the four textbooks. You will be on your honor to complete them. You will be asked to state, on a reading assignment report *as part of the journal*, what percentage of the reading you have completed.

Due by 20 Aug 22

***Critical Book Review (15%)***

You will write a critical book review of Peter Adam’s *Hearing God’s Words*. It will be a four to five page critique, not just a book summary.

A review (or “critique”) of a book or article is not primarily a summary. Rather, it **analyses, comments on** and **evaluates** the work. As a course assignment, it situates the work in the light of specific issues and theoretical concerns being discussed in the course. Your review should show that you can recognize **arguments** and engage in **critical thinking** about the course content. Keep questions like these in mind as you read, make notes, and then write the review or critique

1. What is the specific **topic** of the book or article? What overall **purpose** does it seem to have? For what **readership** is it written? (Look in the preface, acknowledgements, reference list and index for clues about where and how the piece was originally published, and about the author's background and position.)
2. Does the author state an explicit **thesis**? Does he or she noticeably have an axe to grind? What are the **theoretical assumptions**? Are they discussed explicitly? (Again, look for statements in the preface, etc. and follow them up in the rest of the work.)
3. What exactly does the work **contribute** to the overall topic of your course? What general problems and concepts in your discipline and course does it engage with?
4. What **kinds of material** does the work present (e.g. primary documents or secondary material, personal observations, literary analysis, quantitative data, biographical or historical accounts)?
5. **How** is this material used to demonstrate and argue the thesis? (As well as indicating the overall argumentative structure of the work, your review could quote or summarize specific passages to describe the author's presentation, including writing style and tone.)
6. Are there **alternative ways** of arguing from the same material? Does the author show awareness of them? In what respects does the author agree or disagree with them?
7. What theoretical issues and topics for **further discussion** does the work raise?
8. What are **your own reactions and considered opinions** regarding the work?

Browse in published scholarly book reviews to get a sense of the ways reviews function in intellectual discourse. Look at journals in your discipline or general publications such as *University of Toronto Quarterly*, *London Review of Books*, or *New York Review of Books* (online at <[www.nybooks.com/nyrev/archives.html](http://www.nybooks.com/nyrev/archives.html)>).

Some book reviews summarize the book's content briefly and then evaluate it; others integrate these functions, commenting on the book and using summary only to give examples. Choose the method that seems most suitable according to your professor's directions.

To keep your focus, remind yourself that your assignment is primarily to discuss the book's treatment of its topic, not the topic itself. Your key sentences should therefore say "This book shows...the author argues" rather than "This happened...this is the case."

Due by 20 Aug 22

***Essay on the Christian Life (10%)***

This paper will cover a topic of your choice. I will need to approve your choice of topic. The essay should be about 2,000 words (8 pages). Marks will be deducted for numerous grammar and spelling errors.

Due by 20 Aug 22

## Student Journal (40%)

Each student must keep a journal throughout the course. The journal must be computer-generated. Hand-written versions deemed legible by the professor will be accepted. But any exception to a computer-generated journal must be approved by the professor.

The journal must include the following:

* + - 1. Eight “Scripture and theology” entries, arranged in four pairs.
* Four of these entries must be from meditations on the Christian Life (Spirituality and Sanctification from Scripture (i.e., on a chapter, paragraph or verse from the Bible).
* Four must be from the theology of the Christian Life, that is, from reflection upon the doctrine of spirituality and sanctification, (i.e., union with Christ, union with Christ, definitive sanctification, progressive sanctification, christian liberty, spiritual disciplines, mortification of sin, etc.).
* Arrange the entries into four pairs of entries, with each pair consisting of one Scripture meditation and one “theology” meditation. The two entries in each pair may, but do not have to relate to one another in theme or any other way.
* Each pair should contain a total of at least 800 (eight hundred) words. The two entries in each pair do not have to be approximately equal in length.
* It does not matter whether a meditation on Scripture is first in each pair or a meditation on theology, just as long as each pair contains one of each type. However, all eight entries should be listed chronologically.

2. A table of contents for the journal. The table of contents should tell what page number on which each of the above entries can be found (make sure your journal has page numbers!), as well as indicate the word count for each pair of “Scripture and theology” entries and the word count for each “assigned” entry. The beginning point (or heading, title, etc.) of each assigned entry should be conspicuous on the page where each is found. See the example of a table of contents at the end of this syllabus. You would, of course, record each entry in the actual order in which you completed each assignment, fill in your own dates, page numbers, etc.

Due by 20 Aug 22

***Final Exam (15%)***

This will be a short answer and essay final exam on the material covered in class.

Due by 9 Jul 22

## Assessment of learning (10%)

Meet with your pastor/mentor to talk through ways in which your learning applies to local church ministry and how it has helped them

## - reported by a series of questions (on Schoology) to assess the translation of your learning into ministry

Discuss these two questions with your pastor/mentor:

* + 1. How does this module impact your life?
    2. How does this module impact your ministry?

Due by 20 Aug 22

# Diploma Grading Breakdown

Reading 10%

Critical Book Review 15%

Essay on the Christian Life 10%

Student Journal 40%

Assessment of learning 10%

Final Exam 15%

**TOTAL 100%**

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# Certificate Required Texts

1. Peterson, David. *Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995).
2. Hedges, Brian G: *Christ Formed in You: The Power of the Gospel for Personal Change* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2010).
3. Ferguson, Sinclair. *The Whole Christ: Legalism, Antinomianism, and Gospel Assurance—Why the Marrow Controversy Still Matters* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016).

# Certificate Course Assignments

***Reading (15%)***

Complete all assigned readings in the three textbooks. You will be on your honor to complete them. You will be asked to state, on a reading assignment report *as part of the journal*, what percentage of the reading you have completed.

Due by 20 Aug 22

***Essay on the Christian Life (25%)***

This paper will cover a topic of your choice. I will need to approve your choice of topic. The essay should be about 1,000 words (4 pages). Marks will be deducted for numerous grammar and spelling errors.

Due by 20 Aug 22

## Student Journal (50%)

Each student must keep a journal throughout the course. The journal must be computer-generated. Hand-written versions deemed legible by the professor will be accepted. But any exception to a computer-generated journal must be approved by the professor.

The journal must include the following:

* + - 1. Eight “Scripture and theology” entries, arranged in four pairs.
* Four of these entries must be from meditations on the Christian Life (Spirituality and Sanctification from Scripture (i.e., on a chapter, paragraph or verse from the Bible).
* Four must be from the theology of the Christian Life, that is, from reflection upon the doctrine of spirituality and sanctification, (i.e., union with Christ, union with Christ, definitive sanctification, progressive sanctification, christian liberty, spiritual disciplines, mortification of sin, etc.).
* Arrange the entries into four pairs of entries, with each pair consisting of one Scripture meditation and one “theology” meditation. The two entries in each pair may, but do not have to relate to one another in theme or any other way.
* Each pair should contain a total of at least 800 (eight hundred) words. The two entries in each pair do not have to be approximately equal in length.
* It does not matter whether a meditation on Scripture is first in each pair or a meditation on theology, just as long as each pair contains one of each type. However, all eight entries should be listed chronologically.

2. A table of contents for the journal. The table of contents should tell what page number on which each of the above entries can be found (make sure your journal has page numbers!), as well as indicate the word count for each pair of “Scripture and theology” entries and the word count for each “assigned” entry. The beginning point (or heading, title, etc.) of each assigned entry should be conspicuous on the page where each is found. See the example of a table of contents at the end of this syllabus. You would, of course, record each entry in the actual order in which you completed each assignment, fill in your own dates, page numbers, etc.

Due by 20 Aug 22

***Final Exam (10%)***

This will be a short answer and essay final exam on the material covered in class.

Due by 9 Jul 22

# Certificate Grading Breakdown

Reading 15%

Essay on the Christian Life 25%

Student Journal 50%

Final Exam 10%

**TOTAL 100%**

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# Grading Scale

96% - 100% A 85% - 89% B 73% - 75% C 63% - 66% D

93% - 95% A- 80% - 84% B- 70% - 72% C- 60% - 62% D-

90% - 92% B+ 76% - 79% C+ 67% - 69% D+ 0% - 59% F

# Lecture Outline

May 30–June 5: Biblical Spirituality

Monday, May 30, 7–10pm

Lectures 1–3

* Introduction and Terminology
* Historical Theology of Spirituality & Sanctification

Tuesday, May 31, 7–10pm

Lectures 4–6

* Spirituality and the Father (Relational)
* Spirituality and the Son (Christ-Centered and Cross Centered)

Wednesday, October 3, 9am–5pm

Lectures 7–11

* Spirituality and the Holy Spirit (New Covenant & Renewal)
* Spirituality and Word (Meditation, Prayer, Fasting)
* Biblical Theology of Sanctification (Definitive & Progressive)

Thursday, October 4, 7–10pm

Lectures 12–14

* Legal and Vital Union with Christ
* Law and Gospel

Friday, October 5, 7–10pm

Lectures 15–17

* Gospel Centrality for Sanctification and Spirituality
* Law and Gospel

Saturday, October 6, 9am–5pm

Lectures 18–22

* Spirituality and the Enemies of Sanctification
* The World (In the World but Not of the World)
* The Flesh (Mortification of Sin)
* The Devil (Spiritual Warfare)
* The Christian Life and the Community of Faith (Fellowship, Ordinances, Mission)

# Technology Requirements

A computer with basic internet access will be needed for this course

# Course Policies

**Late Work:** Points received for any late assignment will be reduced by 25% for every two days late. Unless every assignment is completed, you will receive a failing grade for the course.

**Respect for Divergent Viewpoints:** Students and faculty are to show appropriate respect for each other even when divergent viewpoints are expressed through class assignments and discussion boards. Such respect does not require agreement with or acceptance of divergent viewpoints.

**Plagiarism and Cheating:** Students who pass off ideas or words of another person as their own without crediting the source are guilty of intellectual property theft or literary theft better known as plagiarism. Students who conduct any part of their participation in the course in a fraudulent or deceptive manner are guilty of cheating. Students caught in either of these acts of academic misconduct will be reported to the Board of MBC, resulting in disciplinary action up to and including failing the course and academic dismissal.

**Special Needs:** As an institution, we strive to work with students and any challenges they face to the full degree possible. If there are any physical or mental challenges that might need special accommodation, please contact the instructor prior to or on the first day of class.

**Grievances and Grade Disputes:** If a student has a concern about a grade that he or she received, the student is expected to request clarification from instructor via email. If the student still has significant concern, he or she may contact the Board of MBC.

**Course and Syllabus Modification (Disclaimer):** This syllabus is intended to reflect accurately the leaning objectives, instructional format, readings, activities, evaluation criteria, policies and procedures, and other information necessary for students to complete this course. The instructor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus as deemed necessary to maintain the integrity of the learning experience as a result of events and circumstances that occur during the course.

# Contact Info

Email: [dustinbenge@gmail.com](mailto:dustinbenge@gmail.com)

# Supplemental Bibliography

I put an asterisk (\*) next to the recommended works

**Biblical Theology**

\*Adam, Peter. *Hearing God’s Words: Exploring Biblical Spirituality*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

\*Peterson, David. *Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness*. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 1995.

**Systematic Theology**

Alexander, Donald, and Sinclair B Ferguson. *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988.

Boa, Kenneth. *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

Bridges, Jerry. *The Discipline of Grace: God’s Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006.

Chapell, Bryan. *Holiness by Grace: Delighting in the Joy That Is Our Strength*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2011.

DeYoung, Kevin. *The Hole in Our Holiness: Filling the Gap between Gospel Passion and the Pursuit of Godliness*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2012.

Dieter, Melvin Easterday. *Five Views on Sanctification*. Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1987.

Ferguson, Sinclair B. *The Christian Life: A Doctrinal Introduction*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Whole Christ: Legalism, Antinomianism, and Gospel Assurance—Why the Marrow Controversy Still Matters.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016

Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline*. 3rd edition. HarperCollins, 2009.

\*Haykin, Michael A. G. *The God Who Draws Near: An Introduction to Biblical Spirituality*. Darlington, England; Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2007.

\*Hedges, Brian G. *Christ Formed in You: The Power of the Gospel for Personal Change*. Shepherd Press, 2010.

Howard, Evan B. *The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008.

\*Lovelace, Richard F. *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Renewal as a Way of Life: A Guidebook for Spiritual Growth*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985.

\*McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction*. Oxford, UK; Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.

Packer, J. I. *Keep in Step with the Spirit*. Old Tappan, N.J.: F.H. Revell, 1984.

Piper, John. *The Purifying Power of Living by Faith in-- Future Grace*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Press, 1995.

Sproul, R. C, and Don Kistler. *Trust and Obey: Obedience and the Christian*. Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1996.

Tripp, Paul David. *A Quest for More: Living for Something Bigger Than You*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2008.

Scorgie, Glen G, Simon Chan, Gordon T Smith, and Smith, James D. *Zondervan Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. Reprint edition. HarperCollins, 2009.

**Historical**

Beeke, Joel R. *Puritan Reformed Spirituality*. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2004.

\*Gordon, James. *Evangelical Spirituality*. SPCK, 1991.

Haykin, Michael A. G. *The Reformers and Puritans as Spiritual Mentors: Hope Is Kindled*. Kitchener, Ontario: Joshua Press, 2012.

\*Packer, J. I. *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990.

\*Wilken, Robert Louis. *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

Kay, Brian. *Trinitarian Spirituality: John Owen and the Doctrine of God in Western Devotion*. Studies in Christian history and thought. Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster, 2007.

Mursell, Gordon. *The Story of Christian Spirituality: Two Thousand Years, from East to West*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.

Randall, Ian M. *What a Friend We Have in Jesus: The Evangelical Tradition*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005.