

CLASS GOAL

Refine our perspective as it relates to Christian spirituality

“Your _____ will influence your _____.”

CLASS OVERVIEW

Week 1: What is Reformed Spirituality: Defining terms, form and function

Week 2: Spiritual Disciplines: The Historic Decline of Reformed Spirituality: The influence of the Counter-Reformation and Roman Catholic Theology

Week 3: Reformed Spirituality and Sanctification: Our works or God’s?

Week 4: Means of Grace: Transitioning from an inward to an outward perspective
Explanation of the class: The daily Christian life from a reformed perspective

DEFINING TERMS

SPIRITUALITY:

Set of beliefs, values and way of life that reflect the teachings _____.

Question: Does everyone agree on what is found in the Bible?

REFORMED:

Seven affirmations that clarify the meaning of reformed

1. Affirm the _____ of the Reformation

- Sola Scriptura (“Scripture alone”): The Bible alone is our highest authority
- Sola Fide (“faith alone”): We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ
- Sola Gratia (“grace alone”): We are saved by the grace of God alone
- Solus Christus (“Christ alone”): Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Savior and King
- Soli Deo Gloria (“to the glory of God alone”): We live for the glory of God alone

Book recommendation: *Case for Traditional Protestantism: The Solas of the Reformation Paperback* – Terry L. Johnson

2. **High view of the _____.**
 - Man-centered theology vs a God-centered theology
3. **Hold to the _____**
 - Also known as “Calvinism”
4. **_____ : to affirm the historic creeds of the church**
 - The Apostles' Creed
 - The Nicene Creed
 - The Athanasian Creed

Book recommendation: *Know the Creeds and the Councils* - Justin Holcombe

5. **_____ : To affirm one or more of the reformed confessions**
 - London Baptist Confession
 - Westminster Confession
 - Belgic Confession
6. **_____ : To see the three great covenants as the means by which God interacts with and accomplishes His purposes in redemption**
 - Covenant of Redemption
 - Covenant of Works
 - Covenant of Grace

Book recommendations: *Sacred Bond: Covenant Theology Explored* - Michael Brown and Zach Keele

7. **_____ : A redemptive-historic understanding of the Bible**
 - The purpose of the Bible: _____
 - What is the OT about? _____
 - Distinction: _____

Book recommendations:
Biblical Theology - Geerhardus Vos (advanced)

Far As The Curse Is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption - Michael Williams (easy)

QUESTIONS:

- **What is the difference between being Reformed and Calvinist?**
- **What does it matter?**

PIETY & PIETISM

Piety:

Piety, generally, in the classical definition, is the way one relates to the gods. So, it is discharging one's religious duties to the gods would be the classical way of understanding it. The Reformed would have said it is the way we relate personally and corporately to God. And specifically, it is the discharge of our duty in response to the grace of God manifested in Jesus Christ. God has graciously granted us new life, sovereignly elected us from all eternity in Christ, in time and history applied that salvation by his Holy Spirit, and granted us true faith. Through that faith, he has united us to Christ and by his Holy Spirit is enabling us to respond to the preached gospel and to respond in lives of gratitude by the Spirit in union with Christ. All of that is entailed in piety.

Quote from: R. Scott Clark – What is Reformed Piety: Interview

<http://reformedcollective.com/2017/01/24/interview-dr-r-scott-clark-piety/>

Pietism:

[The] ...approach to Christianity that is preoccupied with the interior of the Christian life...In the broadest sense the main focus of pietism is the life of the Christian. This observation is central. Pietism has committed itself to placing the duty of the Christian above all other realities. The real issue with pietism is not only what it emphasizes but also what it minimizes. The concern is not that Christ is missing from pietism's message. This would be an unfair characterization. The concern is rather that Christ's work stands more in the background than in the foreground (Colossians 2:20-23). This is seen clearly in that most all information and instruction within pietism is aimed at how to live. Duty overshadows identity. Pietism begins with the question, "What must I do?"

Quote from: A Primer on Pietism – Theocast.org

Compared:

Piety is the God-caused transformation of the Christian's heart and life through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit aided by ordinary means. It is Spirit-wrought godliness. The latter, pietism, is a form of Christian practice that is focused mainly on the individual Christian's spiritual experience. As a rule, its major focus is the interior of the Christian life. This is compared to an emphasis on the objective realities of Christ's work found within reformed confessionalism. In other words, pietism is a Christian construct concerned about improving the moral and spiritual condition of the individual. To put it bluntly, it is mainly about Christians.

Quote from: *A Pilgrims Guide to Rest* - Theocast.org

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PIETISM AND REFORMED SPIRITUALITY

- Pietism is heavily practical in nature (do). Confessionalism is heavily declarative in nature (done).
- They are of very different tones. Because pietism is concerned with a reformation of behavior, its tone is usually exacting. Because confessionalism is concerned with the believer's confidence in Christ, its tone is usually compassionate.
- Since pietism is focused on what Christians should do, the Gospel is usually seen as the entry point for ongoing duty. Since confessionalism is focused on Christ's work, the Gospel is both the foundation of the sinner's confidence before God and the shelter under which they live in this fallen world.
- Pietism has a tendency to erode a sense of assurance by obsessing over relative degrees of personal righteousness. Confessionalism seeks to bolster assurance by pointing to the alien righteousness of Christ received by faith.
- In pietism, doubt often emerges as an implicit motivation for godliness. In confessionalism, certainty motivates the believer.
- One knows they are experiencing pietism when sermons contain sheer instruction, view the Gospel as a footnote, or apply it to the non-Christian at the end of the service. One knows they are experiencing confessionalism when the Gospel surrounds the entire service and is applied mainly to the redeemed.
- Pietism stresses the practice of "spiritual disciplines" as a means to spiritual growth. Confessionalism stresses the ordinary means of grace (Word, sacrament, prayer) in

strengthening one's faith in Christ.

- Pietism is concerned with cultivating spirituality in the individual. Confessionalism is concerned with exalting Christ as the sole object of faith.
- Pietism views assurance as the pursuit of the Christian life. Confessionalism sees assurance as the essence of Christianity.
- Pietism points the Christian inward to their progress in personal holiness. Confessionalism points the Christian outward to the righteousness of Christ.
- Pietism mixes Law and Gospel. Confessionalism maintains a distinction between Law and Gospel.
- Pietism is mainly concerned with nominalism. Confessionalism is mainly concerned with moralism.

LAW GOSPEL DISTINCTION

Law: _____ upon sinners resulting in judgement and damnation

Gospel: _____ resulting in salvation and declared righteousness

[Law:] For Paul often means by the term law the rule of righteous living by which God requires of us what is his own, giving us no hope of life unless we completely obey him, and adding on the other hand a curse if we deviate even in the slightest degree.

[Gospel:] This Paul does when he contends that we are pleasing to God through grace and are accounted righteous through his pardon, because nowhere is found that observance of the law for which the reward has been promised. Paul therefore justly makes contraries of the righteousness of the law and of that of the gospel [Romans 3:21 ff.; Galatians 3:10 ff.; etc.]

Quote From: John Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.9.4

William Perkins (1558–1602) explained to future preachers:

The basic principle in application is to know whether the passage is a statement of the law or of the gospel. For when the Word is preached, the law and the gospel operate differently..... By contrast, a statement of the gospel speaks of Christ and his benefits, and of faith being fruitful in good works.

The Art of Propheying, 1592, *Banner of Truth Trust*, 1996

Examples of law confused with the Gospel:

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WHAT IS REFORMED SPIRITUALITY?

- _____ by our present status before God – justified
- _____ grounds of our motivation for obedience
- Primary concern is to but “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18)

Book Recommendations:

- *Primer On Pietism* - Theocast
- *Pilgrim's Guide To Rest* - Theocast
- *Gospel Driven Life* - Michael Horton
- *Sacred Bond: Covenant Theology Explored* - Michael Brown and Zach Keele
- *What is Reformed Theology* - RC Sproul
- *Biblical Theology* - Geerhardus Vos
- *Far As The Curse Is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption* (Michael Williams)
- *Know the Creeds and the Councils* - Justin Holcombe
- *Case for Traditional Protestantism: The Solas of the Reformation* – Terry L. Johnson
- *Pilgrim Theology (Systematic Theology)* - Michael Horton