

# Invest: In the Study of Theology

## Teachers' Introduction

### Why Theology?

“Invest: In the Study of Theology” is a course designed for use by small groups of men in Covenant Life Church. We offer it as a foundation to leadership development. Invest exposes men to sound doctrine and provides them with a forum for theological discussion led by a pastor. We’ve chosen systematic theology as our core content for a number of reasons: 1. Many of the men who come to our church come with a lack of theological study—in some circles it is even disdained; 2. Some who come to our church have learned theology, but they do not see that to be a true lover of God and his Word, doctrine must change the way we think and live in every aspect of our lives—it must be more than an intellectual pursuit, it must lead to obedience; 3. Those new to the faith need to see how the Bible speaks to so many crucial areas of our lives; 4. In order to build a church effectively there must be agreement about fundamental doctrinal issues.

This final point is critical. Ministry grows out of theological assumptions. More often than not, these assumptions are unrecognized or superficially assumed. For example: How a church approaches unbelievers with the gospel depends on its understanding of election and conversion. How a church understands the personal problems and failures we face depends on its doctrines of sin, justification, and sanctification. How a church responds to trial and suffering depends on its doctrines of God’s sovereignty and providence.

### Target Audience

We have targeted men for our groups. While the material can be very useful for women as well, our pastors’ time is limited and we feel a constant burden to develop new church leaders. We also realize that if we train the men of our church, the effect will be multiplied as they transmit to their families, through example and training, what they have learned.

Since effective discussion groups must be small, we must be selective with whom we invite. We seek to choose men for the group who show the most promise as small group or ministry team leaders.

## Why Small Groups?

We encourage limiting the groups to eight to 12 members. Eight allows for a lively, varied discussion and 12 seems to be the maximum for allowing each member to participate regularly. As we observe members participate, we can see who takes the material most seriously, who makes the sharpest observations, who is quick to apply truth to his life, and who has the most potential for church leadership.

## Goals for the Group

1. To expose members to reasonable, biblical answers to common theological questions.
2. To encourage and illustrate how theological truth applies to common life experiences.
3. To experience fellowship as a group and to model how a leader can draw people into good discussion.
4. To promote the spiritual disciplines of Bible reading, prayer, and Scripture memory.
5. To learn to speak to a small group through summarizing and applying a short chapter of Thomas Watson's book, *The Godly Man's Picture*.
6. To influence others through sharing with them what you have learned.

## Why Memory Work?

One of the most effective means of Bible meditation with resulting application is through memorizing key passages of Scripture. Memorization can be an arduous mental challenge, especially since it is neglected as a tool of learning in most American schools today. Since all good theology must be grounded in Scripture, we want our men to make a passage of Scripture their most enduring benefit from this course of study.

At the close of the memory portion of the meeting or at the beginning of the discussion of the theme for the day, it can be helpful to ask why we chose this passage for memorization.

## Why Read Watson?

Thomas Watson was a skillful theologian with a passionate love for God and a knack for making God's word accessible to common people. The challenge with Watson is that he lived and wrote 340 years ago. Many of his allusions and illustrations come from a culture distant from ours. We want our men to experience the benefit of reading old books because the content continues to be relevant and it is helpful to hear theology taught in a context outside of our narrow cultural environment. We also want them to experience the reward of having to learn and then explain a text that requires use of a dictionary and can be a challenge to summarize.

## Asking Good Questions

The course is designed for discussion—not lecture. This is often the biggest danger a pastor faces in leading. Speaking is far easier than drawing thoughtful responses out of others, understanding their thoughts, and then getting others to engage in response. While we expect the discussion leader to know much more about the content of the reading material, his first goal should be to get the group members to articulate what they have read and then to explore its challenges and applications. There may be points in the discussion when teaching will serve the group best, but these should be brief.

## From Content to Application

You will notice that the questions we provide from the reading move from review to application. The purpose of review is to see that the students grasp the essential points of the reading. Avoid skimming over these questions, but also avoid spending so much time on them that you miss the opportunity to help the students make application of these truths to their lives.

## Administering the Course

1. Send out a recruitment letter well in advance or personally contact each invitee.
2. Make sure that all students have *Bible Doctrine*, “The Cross and Criticism,” and the first assignment two weeks prior to the first session.
3. Meet in a home if you can. If not, meet in a place that is private and quiet.
4. Print the student notes and all supplemental reading (See “Course Summary—Student Materials below) and assemble the notebooks with 15 tabs.
5. Obtain permission from all publishers for photocopied reading. You can find contact information for all publishers after the bibliography at the end of the teacher’s notes. The permission process can take 4-6 weeks, so leave plenty of time to make your requests.
6. Order CJ Mahaney’s book, *The Cross Centered Life*, to arrive in time for Session 8.
7. Though the teacher’s notes allow for two hours for each session, schedule an extra fifteen minutes with the students. This allows you to start in a relaxed fashion and gives you some cushion if you go over during any segment.

## Format

- Beginning with Session 2, as the participants arrive ask them to form groups of two to three and recite the memory verse to each other. Having done this, they should give each other an update on their habits of meeting with God during the past week. They should encourage one another if they fail to meet the goals that they believe God has set for them. Keep this to the ten minute time slot.
- As you gather as a group, don't feel rushed to get right into the material. If someone had a significant event in the past few weeks or has faced a significant trial draw him out and pray for him if appropriate. Remember you have a 15 minute cushion.
- Make sure that the person who summarizes Watson sticks to ten minutes. Use of a timer can be a help for this.
- When you get to the reading discussion, don't feel obligated to cover all of the questions, nor to give the questions you do cover equal time. Listen for where there is a lack of comprehension or disagreement. Before you begin, have fixed in your mind what questions are most important and where to park the discussion. And make sure you get to the application questions.
- Some of the sessions recommend that you sing and give praise to God. If a member of your group is skilled in leading worship, invite him to lead and tell him ahead of time what songs you'd like to sing.
- At the end of each session, review the coming session's homework and confirm who will lead the next Watson summary.
- Keep it fun. Laughter is a gift from God and binds a group together.

## **Permission to Make Photocopies**

Except for Wayne Grudem and Thomas Watson's books, the rest of the reading consists of journal articles or excerpts of books. You must order (or instruct your students to order) copies of Grudem and Watson's works. Since a large portion of CJ Mahaney's book is used, you should probably purchase that as well. You must obtain permission from the publishers of all other materials to reproduce and distribute copies. Since two entire chapters are used from John Piper's book, you may want to consider purchasing that book as well. The section following the bibliography points you to the publishers of each work used.

## **The Critical Role of the Group Leader**

More than any other means of influence, you are to model what it means to know and love God. This will require that you have a firm grasp of the material in the reading and complete the memorization thoroughly. The students must see your enthusiasm for the material and you must be a full participant in showing how you have made practical application of these truths to your life. Don't ask questions mechanically, but let your enthusiasm and interest in the topic shine through in how you engage the material and ask questions.

We hope that you find this course of study useful. May your church grow as a result of the careful investigation and application of his Word through Invest.

**Kenneth Maresco**

**John Loftness**

*For the Pastors of Covenant Life Church*

# **Invest: In the Study of Theology**

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# Course Summary Student Materials<sup>1</sup>

Session	Materials/Articles	Reprint Permission Required?	Books to Purchase
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Binder (1.5")</li> <li>•15 Tabs</li> <li>•Student Notebook contents</li> </ul>		Grudem Watson
<b>1</b>	Porier, "Cross and Criticism"	Yes	
<b>1</b>	Davis, "Approach to the Extended Memorization of Scripture"	No, reprint on web	
<b>2</b>	Piper, <i>When I Don't Desire God</i> , cpts 8 & 9	Yes, if copying	Yes, unless copying
<b>5</b>	Lyrics: "Holy, Holy, Holy"	No	
<b>5</b>	Powlison, "The Sufficiency of Scripture to Diagnose and Cure Souls"	Yes	
<b>6</b>	Bridnes, "Does Divine Sovereignty Make a Difference in Everyday Life?"	Yes	
<b>8</b>	Ryle, "Sin"	Yes	
<b>9</b>	Mahaney, <i>The Cross Centered Life</i> , cpts 4-6	Yes, if copying	Yes, unless copying
<b>9</b>	Lyrics: "I Will Glory in My Redeemer"	Yes	
<b>10</b>	Lane/Tripp, "How Christ Changes Us by His Grace"	Yes	
<b>10</b>	Copy "Three Trees"	Yes	
<b>11</b>	Maresco, "Proclaiming Christ Crucified"	Yes	
<b>11</b>	Copy "Three Trees"	Yes	
<b>12</b>	Copy "Three Trees"	Yes	
<b>12</b>	Lyrics: "In Christ Alone"	Yes	
<b>13</b>	Copy "Three Trees"	Yes	
<b>13</b>	"Worldliness: Half a Poison Pill..."	Yes	

<sup>1</sup>For bibliography and information on how to obtain permission to reprint, see the pages at the end of these teachers' notes.

# Introduction to the Course

## What is Systematic Theology?

1. **Introduce the course. (15 minutes) See outline in the student notes.**
2. **Share stories of coming to faith in Jesus. (30 minutes)**
  - Cover briefly “How to Give Your Testimony in Five Minutes” (addendum after Session 1 in Student Notes).
  - You should speak first to model what you are looking for.
  - Use a cooking timer or some other clock that can be set to ring at five minutes. Otherwise you will not have time to cover at least half the group, up to six participants.
3. **Discuss Grudem Chapter 1: “Introduction to Systematic Theology.” (questions in student notes) (35 minutes)**
4. **Discuss Poirier, “The Cross and Criticism.” (questions in student notes) (20 minutes)**
  - Explain to the participants that as we study the nature and character of God it inevitably points out our weakness and sin. As we seek to apply what we are learning in each session, we will need to discuss our failures to measure up to God’s holy law. Without a firm grasp of what Jesus’ death means to us, we’ll miss the whole point of Christian theology falling either into condemnation or self-righteousness.
5. **Pray together. (10 minutes)**
6. **Explain how to prepare for next session. (10 minutes)**
  - Memory work
    - Look at Andrew Davis’, “An Approach to the Extended Memorization of Scripture” (in notebook). Note that it is there as a resource and that we will not discuss it as a group.
    - Memorize the IOUS verses (Ps 119:36, Ps 119:18, Ps 86:11, Ps 90:14) from Piper, pp. 150ff

- Read Thomas Watson, *The Godly Man's Picture*, "A Godly Man is a Praying Man," pp. 87-96.
- Read John Piper, *When I Don't Desire God* chapters 8 & 9, "How to Wield the Word in the Fight for Joy," and "The Focus of Prayer in the Fight for Joy." (chapters and discussion questions in notebook, or if you so decide, make sure each student has a copy of the book.)

# Invest: In the Study of Theology

## Introduction to the Course

### 1. Purpose

- a. to learn theology and apply it to life
- b. to experience fellowship through the discussion of theology
- c. to strengthen habits of private prayer, meditation on Scripture, and Bible memory
- d. to learn how to participate effectively in small group discussion
- e. to influence others through our knowledge of theology
- f. to engage God together through group prayer and giving praise to him.

### 2. Format for each session

- a. Begin in small groups (2-3)
  - i. recite verses
  - ii. update on spiritual disciplines
- b. Hear summary and application of a short section of Thomas Watson's The Godly Man's Picture
- c. Discuss reading and influence each other through sharing our lives together
- d. Engage God together through prayer or praise
- e. Introduce homework

### 3. Preparation for each session

- a. Memorize the assigned passage of Scripture
- b. Read the selection from The Godly Man's Picture. If assigned, prepare for summarizing and applying the selection for the group.
- c. Read the assigned chapters and think through the discussion questions

#### 4. Participant commitment

- a. Regular attendance. Please communicate in advance if you won't be able to attend a session.
- b. Full preparation for each discussion, completing the reading in advance and memorizing the assigned verse(s). We recommend that you take time to schedule this into your calendar for the entire course.
- c. A consistent and growing devotional life. In Session 2 we will cover this in depth.
- d. Faithfulness and example as a care group member. Our intention is that what you learn here will make you a more effective member of your group.
- e. Humility in our discussions. Anything shared is open to one another's encouragement, questions and concerns.

### Reading Discussion Questions

#### **"Introduction to Systematic Theology," Chapter 1, *Bible Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem**

1. How does Grudem define systematic theology? What are the differences between systematic theology, historical theology, biblical theology and ethics? (17-18)
2. Explain the statement: All Christians have a theology, but many do not have a systematic theology? How can a disorganized theology create problems for a Christian? Give an example of a doctrine that requires drawing from various parts of the Bible. (19)
3. How does our study of systematic theology help us fulfill Jesus' commandment in Matthew 28:19-20? (22)
4. How does the study of systematic theology benefit us personally? (23)
5. Why is humility a requirement for the study of theology? How can we demonstrate humility in our discussions? (points 1-4 on 24-25)
6. How has this chapter changed your understanding of the study of theology?
7. What could happen to our church if we gave up the study of systematic theology over a generation?

#### **"The Cross and Criticism" by Alfred J. Poirier in *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*, Vo. 17, No. 3, Spring 1999, pp. 16ff. Copy in your notebook.**

One danger in the study of theology is to learn concepts without application. All of the doctrines that we study in this course have immediate application to how we think and live in our everyday affairs. And if we study theology rightly, with humility, we will discover that we do not measure up to the character or the standards of God. We are judgment-deserving sinners in need of grace.

So our study and discussion will give us opportunities to talk about how we fall short and how we need to grow and change. Such discussion can only lead to discouragement or self-righteousness unless it is informed by Jesus' work on the cross for us. So read "The Cross and Criticism" with this in mind.

1. Review Poirier's definition of criticism on page 16.
2. What is the author's point when he says, "We defend that which we deem of great value"?
3. How does understanding the judgment of the cross humble us and help us to receive criticism?
4. Why is it so hard to believe that "no one can criticize you more than the cross has"? How could embracing this fact change the way you receive criticism?
5. Tell us of a pattern of responding to criticism or some recent criticism that you received and how you could apply the principles of this article to your response.

## Preparation for Session 2

1. Memorize Psalms 119:36; 119:18; 86:11; 90:14—the IOUS pattern taught by John Piper in *When I Don't Desire God*, pp. 150f.
2. Read "A Godly Man is a Praying Man" in *The Godly Man's Picture*, pp. 87-96.
3. Read "How to Wield the Word in the Fight for Joy" and "The Focus of Prayer in the Fight for Joy," chapters 8&9 in *When I Don't Desire God*, by John Piper, pp. 114-153.

# Addendum: How to Give Your Testimony in Five Minutes

**The goal of your testimony** should be to highlight the activity of God in saving you. Choose details from your life that highlight his work.

**The center point of your testimony** should be the gospel: “Christ died for my sins.”

**The pattern of your testimony** can follow the testimony of the blind man in John 9, “...though I was blind, now I see.”

1. Give some context to your darkened condition prior to your coming to faith:
  - Your religious background
  - Conditions that worked against belief.
2. People and circumstances that lead you to consider the gospel
3. How the light came on for you and you saw your sins, the death of Christ on your behalf, and your need to repent and believe.
4. The changes you made as a result of your conversion.

# How Can I be Motivated to Study God's Word and to Pray?

## 1. Memory Work (10 minutes)

- As the men arrive, ask them to form groups of two or three. In these groups they will recite the verse(s) assigned for memorizing (Ps 119:36, Ps 119:18, Ps 86:11, Ps 90:14) and encourage each other in being consistent in the practice of private Bible reading and prayer.

## 2. Review Watson: "A Godly Man is a Praying Man" pp. 87-96. (15 minutes)

- Lead this one yourself as a model for the students.
- Cover: "How to Summarize and Apply Selections from *The Godly Man's Picture*" (See addendum at the end of the student notes for this session)
- Pass around the master sign up sheet (see below) for them to sign up to lead all future sessions. There is a copy of the sign up sheet in their notes so each can remember his assignment.

## 3. Share stories of coming to faith in Jesus. (30 minutes)

- Same as last session. If you think it will be helpful, briefly review "How to Give Your Testimony in Five Minutes."

## 4. Discuss chapters 8 & 9 from John Piper's *When I don't Desire God*. (40 minutes)

- Draw on the questions in the student notes.

## 5. Introduce to the group how we hope to encourage each other in the practice of private meditation on Scripture and prayer. (20 minutes)

- Cover the form "A Plan for Meeting with God" (after session 2 in student notes). Ask the men to write out their plan for the coming months here to be shared with the group over the next two sessions.
- Look at the Bible reading plan in the notebook and explain how it is structured.

## 6. Review Preparation for Session 3 (5 minutes)

- In the student notes
- Confirm the assigned discussion leader for the Watson reading.

## Reading Summary and Application Assignments

### Thomas Watson, *The Godly Man's Picture*

Session	Reading	Date	Speaker
<b>2</b>	"A Man of Prayer" 87		Group Leader
<b>3</b>	"Loves the Word" 60		
<b>4</b>	"A Man of Knowledge" 20		
<b>5</b>	"Fired with Love to God" 30 "Like God" 32		
<b>6</b>	"Moved by Faith" 28		
<b>7</b>	"Makes Others Godly" 183		
<b>8</b>	"Evangelical Weeper" 55		
<b>9</b>	"Prizes Christ" 44		
<b>10</b>	"Humility" 77		
<b>11</b>	"Zeal" 112		
<b>12</b>	"Serves God Not Men" 37		
<b>13</b>	"Not Indulge in Sin" 146		
<b>14</b>	"Spirit Resides in Him" 67		
<b>15</b>	"A Lover of the Saints" 139		

# How Can I be Motivated to Study God's Word and to Pray?

## Discussion Questions

### **"How to Wield the Word in the Fight for Joy"**

from *When I Don't Desire God: How to Fight for Joy*, chapter 8, pp. 114-135.

1. Do you have a daily appointment with God? If so, tell us about your time and place and your typical approach.
2. How did George Mueller find joy through meditating on Scripture?
3. What benefits does Piper list for Bible memorization?
4. Do you practice memorizing Scripture? What do you do? For those who do not, what keeps you from it?
5. How does a pen aid in meditation on Scripture? Do you meditate with pen and paper? How has it helped you?
6. What books have you read that have most helped you understand the Bible and have inspired you to walk with God?
7. Read Psalm 119:67, 71. What is Luther's point about suffering and Bible study?

### **"The Focus of Prayer in the Fight for Joy"**

from *When I Don't Desire God: How to Fight for Joy*, chapter 9, pp. 136-153.

1. Look at pages 138-143. What is the relationship between prayer and joy?
2. Use the 16 points on pages 143-148 to pray as a group. Attach specific situations to your prayers.
3. How do prayer and meditation on Scripture relate to the work of the Spirit?
4. What is your experience of prayer? How would you like to grow?

## Preparation for Session 3

1. Memorize 2 Timothy 3:16
2. Create a plan for meeting with God by filling in the form provided (see form at the end of Session 2).
3. Read “A Godly Man is a Lover of the Word” in *The Godly Man’s Picture*, pp. 60-67.
4. Read “The Authority and Inerrancy of the Bible” chapter 2, *Bible Doctrine*.
5. Read “The Clarity, Necessity, and Sufficiency of the Bible” chapter 3, *Bible Doctrine*.

## **Addendum: How to Summarize and Apply Selections from A Godly Man's Picture**

- 1. Read** the selection a few times to understand the main points and the direction of Watson's argument.
- 2. Summarize**
  - a. Put the key points in your own words
  - b. Since Watson wrote 340 years ago, help us understand any vocabulary unfamiliar to us and crucial to his thesis (you may have to use a dictionary).
  - c. What is his goal in this section?
  - d. Draw us to one or two key Bible texts which make his point.
- 3. Apply**
  - a. How were you influenced by what you read? What would you like to do differently as a result of your reading?
  - b. What is the call of this selection on our lives?
  - c. Give us some ideas of how we can make Watson's goal our own.
  - d. You may engage the group with questions following your summary as long as you stay within ten minutes.

## **A Plan for Meeting with God**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**When I plan to meet with him (time of day):**

**Where I plan to meet:**

**My general plan for meditation:**

**My general plan for prayer:**

# Why is the Bible Important?

1. **Break into groups of two or three to recite the memory verse, 2 Timothy 3:16 and to ask each other about their practice of the spiritual disciplines (10 minutes)**
  
2. **Review Watson, “A Godly Man is a Lover of the Word” pp. 60-67 lead by assigned participant (10 minutes)**
  
3. **A Plan for Meeting with God (30 minutes)**
  - Ask each participant to share his plan with the group. Invite the group’s comments. If there is not enough time for everyone to share, you can finish next session.
  
4. **Discuss Grudem, chapters 2&3 (50 minutes)**
  - Questions in the student notes.
  
5. **Pray Together (15 minutes)**
  - Spend no more than about five minutes giving thanks to God for the gift of his Word.
  - Transition to inviting participants to lift their requests to God.
  
6. **Review Preparation for Session 4**
  - In the student notes.
  - Confirm the assigned discussion leader.

# Why is the Bible Important?

## Discussion Questions

### “The Authority and Inerrancy of the Bible,” Chapter 2, *Bible Doctrine*

1. What does the Bible say about the relationship between the Bible and God’s words? What is a circular argument? Why is the Bible’s truth claim legitimate despite its circularity?
2. How can we know God’s words are truthful? What is “pluralism”? In our pluralistic society why do we need a strong conviction of the truthfulness of Scripture?
3. What is inerrancy and why is it such an important term in relation to God’s word? How have people sought to “dumb down” inerrancy?
4. How can a robust faith in the authority and truthfulness of God’s Word strengthen your walk with God? How can it protect you from error?

### “The Clarity, Necessity, and Sufficiency of the Bible,” Chapter 3, *Bible Doctrine*

1. What does it mean to say that the Bible is clear? If the Bible is clear in what it teaches, why do people misunderstand, reject, or distort what it says?
2. For what is the Bible necessary? For what is it not necessary?
3. If Scripture is sufficient for us to know everything we need, “for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly,” how can we be misled? In what ways are you aware of some other truth claim that denies that Scripture is sufficient?

## Preparation for Session 4

1. Memorize Jeremiah 9:23-24.
2. Read “The Godly Man is a Man of Knowledge,” Watson, p. 20-28.
3. Read “The Character of God: ‘Incommunicable’ Attributes” and “The ‘Communicable’ Attributes of God” chapters 4&5 in *Bible Doctrine*.

# What Can I Know About the Nature of God?

- 1. Break into groups of two or three to recite the memory verse (Jer 9:23-24) and to follow up on faithfulness in meeting with God (10 minutes)**
  - Each group member should report in their small group regarding how he is keeping up with his plan for meeting with God.
- 2. Review Watson, “A Godly Man is a Man of Knowledge” (pp. 20-28) lead by assigned participant (10 minutes)**
- 3. Cover plans for meeting with God if you were unable to cover everyone in the last session. (20 minutes)**
- 4. Discuss Grudem, chapters 4&5 on the attributes of God (60 minutes)**
  - Questions in the student notes.
- 5. Pray Together (15 minutes)**
  - Encourage the group members to thank and praise God for who he is and for how we benefit from meditating on his character.
- 6. Review Preparation for Session 5 (5 minutes)**
  - In the student notes.
  - If your group has someone skilled in leading people to praise God through singing, ask him to come prepared to lead the group next session with the song “Holy, Holy, Holy”.
  - Confirm the assigned discussion leader.

# What Can I Know About the Nature of God?

## Discussion Questions

### “The Character of God: ‘Incommunicable’ Attributes,” chapter 4, *Bible Doctrine*

1. How can we know God? How are we unable to know him? What is the nature of our knowledge?
2. Review the following attributes of God. What is true about these attributes? What ideas regarding these attributes should we dismiss?
  - Independence (aseity)
  - Unchangeableness (immutability)
  - Eternity
  - Omnipresence
  - Unity
3. How can an awareness of specific attributes of God help you face a current difficult circumstance in your life?

### “The ‘Communicable’ Attributes of God,” chapter 5, *Bible Doctrine*

1. Why does Grudem call the attributes described in this chapter “communicable”?
2. Assign each of the attributes covered in this chapter to different members of the group. Ask each to define the attribute and how we as humans can share this attribute and how we cannot. Each should give his definition in no more than two sentences since it is only for the purpose of review.
  - 1) spirituality
  - 2) invisibility
  - 3) knowledge (omniscience)
  - 4) wisdom
  - 5) truthfulness (including faithfulness)
  - 6) goodness
  - 7) love
  - 8) holiness
  - 9) righteousness (or justice)
  - 10) jealousy

- 11) wrath
  - 12) will
  - 13) omnipotence (or power, including sovereignty)
  - 14) perfection
  - 15) blessedness
  - 16) beauty
3. Is there anything in the chapter that was hard to understand or challenged your thinking?
  4. Look at the questions in Grudem on pages 101-102. The study of God's attributes should cause us to examine our lives and to seek to conform our thoughts, speech and behavior to his character. As time permits, discuss how individuals think they can conform their lives to God's as they look at specific attributes on this list.

## Preparation for Session 5

1. Memorize Matthew 3:16-17
2. Read in Thomas Watson, "A Godly Man is Fired with Love to God," pp. 30-32 and "A Godly Man is Like God," pp. 32-35.
3. Read chapter 6 in *Bible Doctrine*, "The Trinity."
4. Read David Powlison, "The Sufficiency of Scripture to Diagnose and Cure Souls" in your notebook.

# **How Can God be Three Persons, Yet One God? How Does the Bible Explain Why I Sin and How I Can Change?**

- 1. Break into groups of two or three to recite the memory verse, Matt. 3:16-17 and to ask each other about their practice of the spiritual disciplines (10 minutes)**
- 2. Review Watson, “A Godly Man is Fired with Love to God” (pp.30-32) and “A Godly Man is Like God” (pp. 32-35), lead by assigned participant (10 minutes)**
- 3. Continue to build relationships by asking each participant to tell the group about his family and work. Keep it brief so that the entire group can speak within the allotted time. (20 minutes)**
- 4. Discuss Grudem, “The Trinity” chapter 6 (30 minutes)**
  - Questions in the student notes.
- 5. Discuss Powlison, “The Sufficiency of Scripture to Diagnose and Cure Souls.” (30 minutes)**
  - Questions in student notes
- 6. Sing and Praise God Together (15 minutes)**
  - Sing “Holy, Holy Holy”
- 7. Review Preparation for Session 6 (5 minutes)**
  - In the student notes.
  - Confirm the assigned discussion leader.

# How Can God be Three Persons, Yet One God? How Does the Bible Explain Why I Sin and How I Can Change?

## Discussion Questions

### “The Trinity,” chapter 6, *Bible Doctrine*

1. Give scriptural evidence that God is one and scriptural evidence for differing persons in the Godhead.
2. How have people failed to make proper distinctions regarding the Trinity?
3. Define the ontological Trinity. Define the economic/functional Trinity. Why is this distinction important?
4. How can an understanding of the Trinity help us understand God’s intentions for the church and for marriage?

### “The Sufficiency of Scripture to Diagnose and Cure Souls,” David Powlison

Later in this course, as we study God’s holiness, our sin, and the doctrines of grace, we will look at a model for understanding our circumstances and our responses to our circumstances—both sinful and righteous—and how all relates to the gospel. This model is called the “Three Trees” and was developed by the writer of this article, David Powlison.

“The Sufficiency of Scripture to Diagnose and Cure Souls” will prepare you for that future study and its application. The essay explains the Bible’s interpretation of our sin and its promise of transformation.

1. Why is the question, “What do you want?” simple yet profound? (p. 3).
2. How we interpret our wants/lusts/desires is key. Why do secular attempts at interpretation fail? (p. 4).
3. How does the article define “lusts of the flesh”? (p. 5).
4. “What’s wrong with wanting things that seem good?” (p. 6).
5. Explain the statement: “...one lust can generate very diverse sins...” (p. 8).
6. What makes a desire inordinate? (p. 8).
7. How does change occur? (pp. 11ff).

## Preparation for Session 6

1. Memorize Isaiah 46:9-10.
2. Read “The Godly Man is Moved by Faith” in *The Godly Man’s Picture*, pp. 28-30.
3. Read “Creation” and “God’s Providence,” chapters 7&8, in *Bible Doctrine*.
4. Read “Does Divine Sovereignty Make a Difference in Everyday Life,” by Jerry Bridges (in the notebook under session 6).

## Recommended Reading

“Angels, Satan, and Demons,” chapter 10 in *Bible Doctrine*. We will not discuss this in our next session, but you will benefit from understanding its content.

# How Did God Create the Universe? How Does God Control the World?

1. **Break into groups to recite the memory verse Isaiah 46:9-10 and to follow up with each other regarding private prayer and Bible meditation (10 minutes)**
2. **Review Watson, “A Godly Man is Moved by Faith,” (pp.28-30) lead by assigned participant (10 minutes)**
3. **Discuss Grudem, “Creation” and “God’s Providence” chapters 7&8 in *Bible Doctrine* (60 minutes)**
  - Questions in the student notes.
  - Make sure that you do not spend too much time on the length of the creation “days” or other issues like Darwinism. We’ve assigned this chapter to familiarize the students with this critical doctrine, but you will miss other critical issues in the chapter on God’s providence if you take more than 25 minutes on creation.
4. **Discuss “Does Divine Sovereignty Make a Difference in Everyday Life?” by Jerry Bridges (20 minutes)**
  - Questions in the student notes.
5. **Pray Together (15 minutes)**
  - Begin by extolling God for his wisdom and glory in moving creation to its appointed end.
  - Invite participants to make specific requests in light of God’s providence and will.
6. **Review Preparation for Session 7 (5 minutes)**
  - In the student notes.
  - Confirm the assigned discussion leader.

# How Did God Create the Universe? How Does God Control the World?

## Discussion Questions

### **“Creation,” Chapter 7, *Bible Doctrine***

1. What does Scripture affirm regarding God’s relationship to the material universe? What are the alternatives?
2. Grudem states that the doctrine of creation out of nothing is the eternity of matter. What are the theological implications of this alternative? (p. 125)
3. What are the destructive consequences of a belief in Darwinian evolution and the philosophical materialism from which it flows? (pp. 137-138)
4. Brainstorm: In what ways can this doctrine affect how we live our lives day-to-day?

### **“God’s Providence,” chapter 8, *Bible Doctrine***

1. According to Scripture, how does God “cause” an event? How does a human “cause” an event? How do the two relate? (p. 145-146)
2. According to Scripture, what is the relationship between evil and God’s control of all things? (pp. 147-150)
3. A common criticism of the Reformed doctrine of God’s providence is that it promotes fatalism. What does Grudem say about this? What do you think? (pp. 152f)
4. Is “free will” a biblical idea? Explain.
5. How can this doctrine make us better disciples of Jesus?

### **“Does Divine Sovereignty Make a Difference in Everyday Life?” by Jerry Bridges**

1. How should a belief in divine sovereignty shape our planning?
2. How does God control people?
3. What difference should faith in God’s sovereign control make....
  - When people seek to harm us?
  - When faced with sickness, injury, or natural disaster?
  - When we fail because of our sin or simply because we are incompetent?

## Preparation for Session 7

1. Memorize Genesis 1:26-27.
2. Read “The Creation of Man” and “Man as Male and Female, chapters 11-12 in *Bible Doctrine*.
3. Read “A Godly Man Strives to be an Instrument for Making Others Godly,” pp. 183-188 in *A Godly Man’s Picture* by Thomas Watson.

## Recommended Reading

“Prayer” chapter 9 in *Bible Doctrine*. We will not discuss this in our next session, but you will benefit from understanding its content.

# What is the Nature of Man?

## Why did God Make Man Male and Female?

- 1. Break into groups of two or three to recite the passage, Genesis 1:26-27 and to follow up with each other regarding private prayer and Bible meditation. (10 minutes)**
- 2. Review Watson, “A Godly Man Strives to be an Instrument for Making Others Godly,” (pp.183-188) lead by assigned participant (10 minutes)**
- 3. Influencing others (20 minutes)**
  - Ask the participants how they would respond to a man who is discouraged and feels like giving up on the pursuit of God: He has money pressures from high credit card debt, regular conflict with his wife, and a chronically sick child who needs constant attention.
- 4. Discuss Grudem, “The Creation of Man” and “Man as Male and Female” chapters 11&12 in *Bible Doctrine*. (60 minutes)**
  - Questions in Student Notes
- 5. Break into groups of 3-4. Invite each participant to share his greatest need in fulfilling his God-given role in his home, his work, or the church. Then pray for him. (15 minutes)**
- 6. Review Preparation for Session 8. (5 minutes)**
  - In the Student Notes
  - Confirm the assigned discussion leader

# What is the Nature of Man? Why did God Make Man Male and Female?

## Discussion Questions

### The Creation of Man, chapter 11, *Bible Doctrine*

1. What is God's intention for humanity? What is each individual human's purpose?
2. What is the significance of man being made in the image of God?
3. What are the affects of the fall of man on his being made in the image of God?
4. What are the differences between the dichotomist and trichotomist views of human nature? What difficulties does a Christian encounter if he holds to the trichotomist position?

### Man as Male and Female, chapter 12, *Bible Doctrine*

1. Give biblical support for how men and women are equal and how they are different.
2. How would our understanding of humanity change if we did not know God as Trinity? How would it change if God created Adam and the Woman simultaneously and from the same stuff, i.e. with the woman not coming from Adam's own body?
3. How should the biblical teaching on manhood and womanhood affect a marriage? a church?
4. How can a Christian live out this doctrine in a world that rejects it, especially in government, commerce, education?

## Preparation for Session 8

1. Memorize Psalm 51:1-4
2. Read in Thomas Watson, "A Godly Man is an Evangelical Weeper," pp. 55-60.
3. Read chapter 13 in *Bible Doctrine*, "Sin."
4. Read JC Ryle, "Sin" in *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots*. (copy in the course notebook)

# What is Sin?

## Why Does it Demand my Attention?

- 1. Break into groups to recite the memory verse Psalm 51:1-4 and to follow up with each other regarding private prayer and Bible meditation. (10 minutes)**
- 2. Review Watson, "A Godly Man is an Evangelical Weeper," (pp. 55-60) lead by as signed participant (10 minutes)**
- 3. Discuss Grudem, chapter 13, "Sin" and the Ryle chapter, "Sin" from *Holiness* (80 minutes)**
  - Questions in the student notes.
  - Use a large portion of your time to discuss questions 3&4 under Ryle's work. Use yourself as an example and urge the students to consider the real life effects of sin and its deceit in their lives and how the gospel addresses our sin. Encourage story telling of instances where someone has discovered how he became aware of the deceit of a particular sin and how he came to deal with it.
- 4. Pray Together (15 minutes)**
  - Pray for a growing awareness of sin and God's thoughts of our sin.
  - Pray for a growing awareness of the gospel grace that is our only remedy for sin.
  - Encourage the men to make their requests specific to their life struggles.
- 5. Review Preparation for Session 9 (5 minutes)**
  - In the student notes.
  - Since you will spend time singing "I Will Glory in My Redeemer" together next session, assign a leader if one is available.
  - Confirm the assigned discussion leader.

# What is Sin? Why Does it Demand my Attention?

## Discussion Questions

### “Sin,” chapter 13, *Bible Doctrine*

1. How do we inherit sin and its condemnation? (p. 213)
2. Some say that the doctrine of inherited guilt is unfair. If this were so, how would it create problems for us in our relationship with Christ? (p. 214)
3. How corrupt are we in our sin? (pp. 215f)
4. Distinguish how God looks at sin legally and how he views it in the life of his children. (p. 219)

### “Sin,” by J.C. Ryle, from *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots*

1. Ryle begins and ends his essay with the thought, “He must dig down very low if he would build high.” What does he mean?
2. The first half of Ryle’s essay follows the same lines as Grudem’s chapter:
  - A definition of sin (p. 2)
  - Inherited sin (p. 3)
  - The pervasiveness of sin (p. 4)
  - Inherited guilt (p. 7)
  - The deceitfulness of sin (p. 8)What did you read here that you found helpful? What raised questions in your mind?
3. How have you discovered yourself deceived in your sin?
4. Beginning at the bottom of page nine, Ryle mentions two applications of this doctrine:
  - The “...deep reasons we have for humiliation and self-abasement.” (p. 9)
  - “...[H]ow deeply thankful we ought to be for the glorious gospel of the grace of God.” (p. 11)Apply these principles to a particular sin in your life.

## Preparation for Session 9

1. Memorize Romans 3:23-26.
2. Read “A Godly Man Prizes Christ,” pp. 44-55, in *The Godly Man’s Picture* by Thomas Watson.
3. Read chapters 14&15, “The Person of Christ” and “The Atonement” in *Bible Doctrine*.
4. Read chapters 4-6 in *The Cross Centered Life* by CJ Mahaney.

## Recommended Reading

“Resurrection and Ascension,” chapter 16 in *Bible Doctrine*. We will not discuss this in our next session, but you will benefit from understanding its content.

# How is Jesus both God and Man? Why did Jesus Die? How Should I Respond to His Death?

1. **Break into groups to recite the memory verse, Romans 3:23-26 and to follow up with each other regarding private prayer and Bible meditation. (10 minutes)**
2. **Review Watson, “A Godly Man Prizes Christ” (pp. 44-55), lead by assigned participant (10 minutes)**
3. **Discuss Grudem, “The Person of Christ” and “The Atonement,” chapter 14&15 in *Bible Doctrine*. (60 minutes)**
  - Questions in the student notes.
  - Go over the questions on atonement deliberately to insure comprehension, but save plenty of time for application through the questions from *The Cross Centered Life*.
4. **Discuss chapters 4-6 in *The Cross Centered Life*. (20 minutes)**
  - Questions in the student notes.
5. **Sing and Praise God Together. (15 minutes)**
  - “I Will Glory in My Redeemer” Steve and Vickie Cook
6. **Review Preparation for Session 10 (5 minutes)**
  - In the student notes.
  - Confirm the assigned discussion leader.

# How is Jesus both God and Man? Why did Jesus Die? How Should I Respond to His Death?

## Discussion Questions

### **“The Person of Christ,” Chapter 14, *Bible Doctrine***

1. Give Scriptural evidence for Jesus’ full humanity and for his full deity.
2. Why was it necessary for Jesus to be fully man in order to fulfill his mission?
3. Why was it necessary for Jesus to be fully divine in order to fulfill his mission?
4. How have people gotten this doctrine wrong?
5. What implications does Jesus’ humanity have on our daily living? What implications does his divinity have on our daily living?

### **“The Atonement” chapter 15, *Bible Doctrine***

1. Define atonement.
2. What motivated God to send Christ to live and die for us?
3. What is the “consequent absolute necessity” view of the atonement?
4. Distinguish Christ’s active and passive obedience. Why were both necessary?
5. What was the nature of Christ’s suffering?
6. Define “propitiation.”

### ***The Cross Centered Life*, by C.J. Mahaney, cpts 4-6**

#### **From Chapter 4**

1. Do you live with “low grade guilt”? Look at the questions on page 39. Do any of them describe your experience?
2. The Bible is vividly descriptive of our sin and how it requires punishment. How do we “beat condemnation”?

#### **From Chapter 5**

3. What is the difference, according to Martyn Lloyd-Jones, between “listening to yourself” and “talking to yourself”?
4. Why is it so important to recognize that, in Martin Luther’s words, “[The righteousness of Christ] is entirely outside and above us”?

### From Chapter 6

5. What practices would you like to adopt to live your days cross-centered?

## Preparation for Session 10

1. Memorize Ephesians 1:3-6
2. Read “Election,” chapter 18 in *Bible Doctrine*.
3. Read “How Christ Changes Us by His Grace” by Timothy Lane and Paul Tripp—in your notebook.
4. Read “A Godly Man is a Humble Man,” pages 77-87 in *A Godly Man’s Picture* by Thomas Watson.

## Recommended Reading

“Common Grace,” chapter 17 in *Bible Doctrine*. We will not discuss this in our next session, but you will benefit from understanding its content.

# How Does God Decide Whom to Save? How Can I Understand My Circumstances, My Sin, the Gospel, and Change?

1. **Break into groups to recite the memory verse, Ephesians 1:3-6 and to follow up with each other regarding private prayer and Bible meditation. (10 minutes)**
2. **Review Watson, “A Godly Man is a Humble Man” (pp. 77-87), lead by assigned participant (10 minutes)**
3. **Discussion: “Election” chapter 18 in *Bible Doctrine* (50 minutes)**
  - Questions in student notes
  - Make sure you spend no more than 20 minutes on common grace allowing you to devote most of your time to election.
4. **Discussion: “How Christ Changes Us by His Grace” by Timothy Lane and Paul Tripp (30 minutes)**
  - Questions in student notes
  - Cover carefully the elements of the Three Trees model. Apply the model using a circumstance and sin from your own life or use a hypothetical illustration. Place the chart and notes on a board if possible.
5. **Pray together (15 minutes)**
  - Break into small groups of three and invite each participant to express an area of his life where he sees a need for growth and change. Pray for each according to his request and the principles of Lane and Tripp’s article.
6. **Review Preparation for Session 11 (5 minutes)**
  - In student notes
  - Confirm assigned discussion leader.

# How Does God Decide Whom to Save? How Can I Understand My Circumstances, My Sin, the Gospel, and Change?

## Discussion Questions

### “Election” chapter 18, *Bible Doctrine*

1. What is the doctrine of election and how is it taught in the Bible? Refer to specific verses.
2. What is the difference between God choosing some for salvation and some for reprobation (see p. 292).
3. What are the benefits to knowing this doctrine according to the Bible (see pp. 284f)?
4. How is this doctrine misunderstood and misused?
5. Respond to the following statements:
  - “If this view of election is true, then human beings have no freedom of choice in their salvation.”
  - “If this view of election is true, then those who are not elect have no chance to be saved and thus God is unfair.”
6. What is the fundamental difference between the Reformed and Arminian views of election?
7. What difficulties have you encountered in studying this doctrine?
8. How can this doctrine be a great comfort to the believer?

### “How Christ Changes Us by His Grace” by Timothy Lane and Paul Tripp

1. How can a biblical view of eternity affect how we think about our personal problems?
2. How does an awareness of our union with Christ affect how we think about our personal problems?
3. How are our relationships with other Christians related to change?
4. Study the “Three Trees” heat, thorns, cross, fruit model of change. Then answer the questions that accompany each item on the chart on page 19 in reference to one circumstance in your life and your response to it.

## Preparation for Session 11

1. Memorize John 3:5-8
2. Read “The Gospel Call” and “Regeneration,” chapters 19 and 20 in *Bible Doctrine*.
3. Read “Proclaiming Christ Crucified” by Kenneth Maresco (in notebook).
4. Read “A Godly Man is a Zealous Man,” pages 112-118 in *A Godly Man’s Picture* by Thomas Watson.
5. Take out the copy of the “Three Trees” in your notebook under session 10. Review its explanation in Lane/Tripp’s article. From the group discussion, either improve on your understanding of a circumstance in your life and your responses to it or choose a new one. Write notes on your copy seeking to gain a better understanding of the heat, thorns, cross, and fruit aspects of your life in relation to this circumstance. Over the next three sessions we will use these notes as a basis for learning to grow in our understanding of our sin and sanctification.

# How Did I Become a Christian? How Can I Tell the World About His Saving Work?

1. **Break into groups to recite the memory verse, John 3:5-8, and to follow up with each other regarding private prayer and Bible meditation. (10 minutes)**
2. **Review Watson, “A Godly Man is a Zealous Man” (pp. 112-118), lead by assigned participant (10 minutes)**
3. **Ask the students to take out their copies of the “Three Trees.” Find out who is willing to share what he discovered about himself and God’s work in his life through applying this model of sanctification. If possible, write his content on a board, helping him sharpen his observations and application. (20 minutes).**  
**Focus especially on:**
  - Distinguishing between behavior and motive.
  - Emphasize how the Gospel, communicated by the Word and the Spirit, can change motive and therefore change behavior.
4. **Discussion: “The Gospel Call” and “Regeneration” chapters 19-20 and in *Bible Doctrine*. (40 minutes)**
  - Questions in student notes
5. **Discussion: “Proclaiming Christ Crucified” in notebook (20 minutes)**
  - Questions in student notes
6. **Pray Together (15 minutes)**
  - Pray for one another to become more effective evangelists and then for unbelievers you are seeking to reach with the gospel.
7. **Review Preparation for Session 12 (5 minutes)**
  - In student notes
  - Assign someone to lead singing “In Christ Alone”
  - Confirm assigned discussion leader.

# How Did I Become a Christian? How Can I Tell the World About His Saving Work?

## Discussion Questions

### **“The Gospel Call” chapter 19, *Bible Doctrine***

1. Distinguish “general call” from “effective call” and “external call” from “internal call.”
2. What must a person know in order to be saved from God’s wrath?
3. If God elects who is saved, why is a gospel call necessary?
4. Tell the story of your experience of the gospel call which lead to your repentance and faith.

### **“Regeneration” chapter 20, *Bible Doctrine***

1. What is “regeneration”? What is its cause? Its effect?
2. In what sense is God’s call “irresistible”? In what sense is it not?
3. What are the results of regeneration?
4. How can this doctrine comfort and encourage the believer?

### **“Proclaiming Christ Crucified,” Kenneth Maresco**

1. What has been your experience of sharing the gospel with people who are not Christians?
2. How did Kenneth’s report of the man who prays for his unbelieving neighbors while driving and taking walks affect you?
3. What is the idea behind Scripture calling us “ambassadors for Christ” (2 Cor. 5:20)?
4. After reading this article, what steps do you believe God is calling you to take to proclaim the gospel to unbelievers? Whom do you believe you should befriend in order to reach him or her with the gospel?

## Preparation for Session 12

1. Memorize Romans 3:27-28
2. Read “Conversion: Faith and Repentance” and “Justification and Adoption,” chapters 21 & 22, *Bible Doctrine*.
3. Read “A Godly Man Serves God Not Men” by Watson pp. 37-44.
4. Take your copy of the three trees from session 10. Review it. Then review what you did to work through the model for a situation in your life.

## Recommended Reading

“The Perseverance of the Saints (Remaining a Christian),” chapter 24 in *Bible Doctrine*. We will not discuss this in our next session, but you will benefit from understanding its content.

# How is a Person Converted? What Does it Mean that God Justifies and Adopts His People?

1. Break into groups to recite the memory verse, Romans 3:27-28, and to follow up with each other regarding private prayer and Bible meditation. (10 minutes)
2. Review Watson, "A Godly Man Serves God and Not Men," (pp. 37-44) lead by assigned participant (10 minutes)
3. Ask participants to take out their copies of "The Three Trees." Find out who is willing to share what he discovered about himself and God's work in his life through applying this model of sanctification. If possible, write his content on a board, helping him sharpen his observations and application. (20 minutes).  
Focus especially on:
  - Distinguishing between behavior and motive.
  - How the Gospel, communicated by the Word and the Spirit can change motive and therefore change behavior.
4. Discuss "Conversion: Faith and Repentance" and "Justification and Adoption," chapters 21 & 22, *Bible Doctrine*. (60 minutes)
  - Questions in student notes.
5. Sing and praise God together. "In Christ Alone" (15 minutes)
6. Review Preparation for Session 13. (5 minutes)
  - In student notes
  - Confirm assigned discussion leader.

# **How is a Person Converted? What Does it Mean that God Justifies and Adopts His People?**

## **Discussion Questions**

### **“Conversion: Faith and Repentance” chapter 21, *Bible Doctrine***

1. What are the two aspects of conversion, and what three qualities define each of them?
2. Why does Grudem prefer the word “trust” to the words “faith” and “belief” for use in our contemporary society?
3. How is conversion a personal interchange? Give evidence from Scripture.
4. Why does Grudem write that, “...we should never attempt to require that there be a period of time in which a person actually lives a changed life before we give assurance of forgiveness.”? (p 310)
5. What qualities in a personal relationship encourage trust? How can you apply this to living your life before God?

### **“Justification and Adoption” chapter 22, *Bible Doctrine***

1. What do we learn about justification from Romans 3:20-28?
2. If justification is a declaration, who does the declaring and what does he declare?
3. Look at the paragraph on the top of page 319. In what three ways does a Christian experience imputation?
4. Why is belief in “imputed,” rather than “infused,” righteousness crucial to our understanding of salvation and our joy in God’s grace?
5. Why is faith an instrument in the Christian’s justification but not meritorious?
6. How would your experience of life with God be diminished if you knew only of justification but were ignorant of adoption?

## Preparation for Session 13

1. Memorize Romans 6:11-14.
2. Read “A Godly Man Does Not Indulge Himself in Any Sin,” pp. 146-153, in *A Godly Man’s Picture* by Thomas Watson.
3. Read chapter 23, “Sanctification” in *Bible Doctrine*.
4. Read “Worldliness: Half a Poison Pill Can’t Kill Me” which is in your note book under session 13. As you read look at the questions in session 13.
5. Take your copy of the three trees from session 10. Review it. Then review what you did to work through the model for a situation in your life.

## Recommended Reading

“Death, the Intermediate State, and Glorification,” chapter 25 in *Bible Doctrine*. We will not discuss this in our next session, but you will benefit from understanding its content.

# How Can I Grow in Holiness?

## How Can I Be *In* the World but not *Of* It?

1. Break into groups to recite the memory verse, Romans 6:11-14, and to follow up with each other regarding private prayer and Bible meditation. (10 minutes)
2. Review Watson, “A Godly Man Does Not Indulge Himself in Any Sin” (pp. 146-153), lead by assigned participant (10 minutes)
3. Ask participants to take out their copies of “The Three Trees.” Find out who is willing to share what he discovered about himself and God’s work in his life through applying this model of sanctification. If possible, write his content on a board, helping him sharpen his observations and application. (20 minutes).  
**Focus especially on:**
  - Distinguishing between behavior and motive.
  - How the Gospel, communicated by the Word and the Spirit, can change motive and therefore change behavior.
4. Discuss “Sanctification” chapter 23 in *Bible Doctrine* (30 minutes)
  - Questions in student notes
5. Discuss “Worldliness: Half a Poison Pill Can’t Kill Me” (30 minutes)
  - Questions in student notes
6. Pray Together (15 minutes)
  - If someone has volunteered a specific sin which he struggles to overcome, pray for him specifically. Make the focus of your prayers engaging the “enemy within” and applying Romans 6:11-14.
7. Review Preparation for Session 14 (5 minutes)
  - In student notes
  - Confirm assigned discussion leader.

# How Can I Grow in Holiness? How Can I Be *In* the World but not *Of* It?

## Discussion Questions

### “Sanctification” chapter 23, *Bible Doctrine*

1. Review the differences between justification and sanctification on page 326. Did any of these differences surprise you? Why?
2. What is the idea on page 329 of perfectionism? Why is it unbiblical? What bad fruit can come to a believer if he embraces this mistaken doctrine?
3. How do we passively and actively cooperate with God in sanctification?
4. Review the motives for sanctification. Then invite the group to share how they have viewed their role in being sanctified: which of these motives can they identify with? which not?
5. Do you think of sanctification as beautiful and joyous or something else? Explain.

### “Worldliness: Half a Poison Pill Can’t Kill Me”

1. Summarize in your own words the idea behind Iain Murray’s definition of worldliness. What is the biblical source of this idea?
2. What is the point behind the “half a poison pill” illustration. What do you think about it?
3. Temptations to adopting a worldly attitude come to us through a great variety of life experiences. Why is it important to focus on media and music habits?
4. Evaluate your media viewing and music listening habits in light of the list, “Biblical Principles of Conduct.” Are there any ways that you see a need to change? Could you apply any of the ideas listed under “Three Ways to Change Your Media Habits”? How could we add to this list?

## Preparation for Session 14

1. Memorize 1 Peter 4:10-11.
2. Read “Gifts of the Holy Spirit I&II” chapters 29-30 in *Bible Doctrine*.
3. Read “The Spirit Resides in Him,” pages 67-77 in *A Godly Man’s Picture* by Thomas Watson.

# How Does the Holy Spirit Give us His Gifts?

1. **Break into groups to recite the memory verse, 1 Peter 4:10-11, and to follow up with each other regarding private prayer and Bible meditation. (10 minutes)**
2. **Review Watson, “The Spirit Resides in Him,” (pp. 67-77) lead by assigned participant (10 minutes)**
3. **Discuss “Gifts of the Holy Spirit I&II, chapters 29&30 in *Bible Doctrine*. (60 minutes)**
  - Questions in student notes.
4. **Pray for one another. (30 Minutes)**
  - Ask each participant how he would like to grow in his awareness of the Spirit’s presence and what gifts he would like to ask of the Spirit so that he could grow in usefulness. If your group is large, break into groups of 3-5.
5. **Review Preparation for Session 15 (5 minutes)**
  - In student notes
  - Confirm assigned discussion leader.

# How Does the Holy Spirit Give us His Gifts?

## Discussion Questions

### **Gifts of the Holy Spirit (I): General Questions, chapter 29, *Bible Doctrine***

1. What is Grudem's definition of a spiritual gift?
2. What purposes does Scripture give for the use of spiritual gifts? How have you seen these purposes fulfilled in your experience of church life?
3. How has God used you to serve by employing the gifts of the Spirit? What gifts have you thought to seek?
4. Some say that 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 speaks to the cessation of spiritual gifts following the death of the apostles and the completion of the canon of Scripture. What evidence is there in this text to refute this claim?
5. How do you think our church could improve in the use of these gifts?

### **Gifts of the Holy Spirit (II): Specific Gifts, chapter 30, *Bible Doctrine***

1. What is Grudem's definition of the gift of prophecy as practiced and taught in the New Testament?
2. What are the purposes of prophecy in the church today?
3. What is the difference between prophecy in this age and prophecy that was given in the Old Testament? Give scriptural support for these differences.
4. Someone in your small group reports that he has a rare disease that can be controlled but has no known cure and will mean that he will spend the rest of his life in pain. How would you use Scripture to prepare him to receive prayer for healing and how would you pray for him?
5. Why is the translation "speaking in tongues" potentially unhelpful?
6. How is this gift of speaking a language unlearned by the speaker an expression of the "already but not yet" period in God's redemptive work in the earth?
7. What is the difference between prophecy and a message in a language unknown to the speaker (given with interpretation)?
8. What has been your experience with this gift of speaking in a language you have not learned?

## Preparation for Session 15

1. Memorize Ephesians 4:11-13
2. Read “The Nature of the Church” chapter 26, “Baptism” chapter 27, and “The Lord’s Supper” chapter 28 in *Bible Doctrine*.
3. Read “A Godly Man is a Lover of the Saints,” pages 139-146, in *A Godly Man’s Picture* by Thomas Watson.
4. Complete the evaluation found at the end of Session 15.

## **What is a True Church? What Does the Bible Teach About Baptism and the Lord's Supper?**

- 1. Break into groups to recite the memory verse, Ephesians 4:11-13, and to follow up with each other regarding private prayer and Bible meditation. (10 minutes)**
  
- 2. Review Watson, "A Godly Man is a Lover of the Saints," (pp.139-146) lead by assigned participant (10 minutes)**
  
- 3. Discuss "The Nature of the Church," "Baptism," and "The Lord's Supper," chapters 26-28 in *Bible Doctrine*. (40 minutes)**
  - Questions in student notes.
  
- 4. Cover the evaluation by asking the students for their comments. Collect the evaluations when you are done. (30 minutes)**
  
- 5. Pray for the church and our involvement in it. (30 minutes)**
  - Growth in knowledge and application of the Word
  - Growth in sanctification
  - Growth in service
  - Growth in evangelism
  - Encourage specific prayer for small groups and ministry teams

# **What is a True Church? What Does the Bible Teach About Baptism and the Lord's Supper?**

## **Discussion Questions**

### **"The Nature of the True Church" chapter 26, *Bible Doctrine***

1. What is the "invisible church"? Why can't we completely see the true church?
2. What is the visible church?
3. If Christians must determine who is the visible church:
  - What are their responsibilities?
  - What dangers do they face in this task?
4. What are the marks of a true church?
  - What doctrines would you consider essential for there to be a "right preaching of the Word"?
  - How should the sacraments mark a true church?
  - How does church discipline function regarding these marks?
5. Grudem identifies three purposes of the church: worship, nurture, and evangelism/mercy to unbelievers.
  - How have you participated in these purposes?
  - How would you like to grow in becoming more effective in fulfilling one of these purposes?

### **"Baptism" chapter 27, *Bible Doctrine***

1. What does baptism symbolize?
2. Who should be baptized?
  - What would you consider an adequate and credible profession of faith?
  - What other evidence would you look for?

### **"The Lord's Supper" chapter 28, *Bible Doctrine***

1. What happens when a local church celebrates the Lord's supper?
2. What preparation is necessary for a person to take this meal in good conscience?

# Evaluation

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. How have you grown most through this course?

- In your knowledge of doctrine?
- In your private pursuit of God?
- In your fight with sin?
- In your service to God?

## 2. How do you want to grow in the future? What changes do you want to make?

- In the knowledge of God and his Word?
- In overcoming sin and temptation?
- In serving in our church?

**3. What could we do to improve the course?**

- **Contents of the notebook or reading**
  
- **Schedule**
  
- **Location**

**4. What could the course leader do to improve his leadership of the course?**

## Further Reading

If you have not completed all of the reading for past sessions, we encourage you to do so and also to read the chapters in *Bible Doctrine* not covered in the Invest sessions (these were listed in the recommended reading in previous assignments and are chapters 9, 10, 16, 17, 24, 25). We also encourage you to read the final section of *Bible Doctrine* entitled “The Doctrine of the Future” chapters 31-34.

## Invest: In the Study of Theology

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