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Invest: In the Study of Theology

Table of Contents

- Session 1** Introduction to the Course
What is Systematic Theology?
The Cross and Criticism
- Session 2** How Can I be Motivated to Study God's Word and to Pray?
- Session 3** Why is the Bible Important?
- Session 4** What Can I Know About the Nature of God?
- Session 5** How Can God be Three Persons, Yet One God?
How Does the Bible Explain Why I Sin and How I Can Change?
- Session 6** How did God Create the Universe?
How Does God Control the World?
- Session 7** What is the Nature of Man?
Why did God Make Man Male and Female?
- Session 8** What is Sin?
Why Does it Demand my Attention?
- Session 9** How is Jesus both God and Man?
Why did Jesus Die?
How Should I Respond to His Death?
- Session 10** How Does God Decide Whom to Save?
How Can I Understand My Circumstances, My Sin, the Gospel, and Change?
- Session 11** How Did I Become a Christian?
How Can I Tell the World About His Saving Work?
- Session 12** How is a Person Converted?
What Does it Mean that God Justifies and Adopts His People?
- Session 13** How Can I Grow in Holiness?
What is Worldliness?
- Session 14** How Does the Holy Spirit Give us His Gifts?
- Session 15** What is a True Church?

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?

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.

Reading Summary and Application Assignments

Thomas Watson, *The Godly Man's Picture*

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

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?

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?

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?

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?

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?

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?

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?

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 He 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?

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 led 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?

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?

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?

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?

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.