

PT5531 Christian Worker's Personal Life & Spiritual Formations

TUE 7:30-9:30 PM, BWD-W203

Birmingham Theological Seminary

2200 Briarwood Way, Birmingham, AL 35243-2923

Telephone: (205) 776-5650 • Fax: (205) 824-8407

Spring 2010

Professor: Vic Minish, Ph.D.

Email: vicminish@bellsouth.net

Telephone: (cell) 256-454-5449, (home) 256-832-3061

Course Description:

A Course development of the church workers personal walk with God. Special attention is given to prayer life, devotional habits, call to work, relationship to spouse and children, and ability to relate to and minister to people.

Required Texts:

- M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*
- Jerry Bridges, *The Disciplines of Grace*
- William Law, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*
- J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*

Required Documents:

- Westminster Confession of Faith with Larger and Shorter Catechisms
- Heidelberg Catechism

Please note: The Westminster Confession of Faith is published with The Directory for Public Worship of God and The Directory for Family Worship, recommended below, by Free Presbyterian (1994), **ISBN-10:** 0902506358, **ISBN-13:** 978-0902506350.

Recommended:

- The Directory for Public Worship of God. <http://www.reformed.org/documents>
- The Directory for Family Worship <http://www.reformed.org/documents>
- The Book of Common Prayer, 1662. <http://www.vulcanhammer.org/anglican/bcp-1662.pdf>

Objectives:

At the end of the course the Student should have a more informed understanding of the following:

1. An awareness of the sacrifices, commitment level, potential crisis and pitfalls of Christian ministry.
2. The Biblical qualifications, foundation and importance of Character in the Christian Worker.
3. A Biblical understanding of the responsibilities of the Christian workers marriage and family life.

4. The importance of knowing God through systematic study and habits of the heart, including the discipline of the “daily grind.”

Course Requirements:

1. Class Attendance and participation in discussions.
2. Book review for each of the required texts.
3. Life Response Project.

All written assignments should be submitted according to the Turabian standard. Submissions that are submitted incorrectly will be reduced by one letter grade.

Grading:

Book reviews 50%

Project 50%

Book Reviews:

(Five paragraph minimum for each). For information about how to write a book review, please see John Frame’s *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, (P & R, 1987) Appendix E. Evaluating Theological Writings, summarized here.

A list of criteria by which to evaluate theological writings:

1. Scripturality: is it either deduced from or consistent with scripture?
2. Truth: is it true even if not found in Scripture?
3. Cogency: properly argued?
4. Edification
5. Godliness
6. Importance
7. Clarity
8. Profundity: does it deal with real important questions or just superficial ones?
9. Form and style: appropriate?
10. Emphasis (6). No such thing as a single normative emphasis. Emphasis only wrong if it falls into category 1-9.
11. Comparability: Resemblances to other poorly regarded work is irrelevant.
12. Terminology: can’t criticize terminology unless it commits errors in categories 1-9.

Life Response Project:

Explain: “The Life You’ve Always Wanted” in terms of the “daily grind.” Explain what that life looks like –how it is filled, and why. (Turabian Format)

As a part of the above, and after considering the lectures and reading, create a plan for the care of your own soul. Document: 1) Challenges specific to your personality, strengths, and weaknesses; 2) the wisest way to approach and respond to these challenge; and 3) your thoughts and reflections on the exercise itself. Due the last day of class.

Grading Standards:

	LOW QUALITY	AVERAGE	HIGH QUALITY
	1 2 3	4 5 6 7	8 9 10
_____	1. Title-creativity		
_____	2. Clarity of thesis and research problem		
_____	3. Adequacy of claims (claims are not too ambitious or too weak for thesis)		
_____	4. Tone (attitudes, purpose, audience)		
_____	5. Development of ideas, thoroughness, explains assumptions		
_____	6. Biblical, and logical, interpretive philosophy is fair, not inflexible (not mere proof text)		
_____	7. Follows accepted grammatical and mechanical norms		
_____	8. Scholarship (interacts with appropriate texts, writes at grade level)		
_____	9. Conclusion (ties up loose ends without being repetitive, correlates with thesis)		
_____	10. Documentation and Form (meets requirements of paper, neat)		

Tentative Course Schedule:

1. Taking Care of Your Own Soul, The Necessity of Such a Course
2. Devotional Life: Better Men Not Better Methods
3. Spiritual Disciplines, **Book Review: Packer**
4. Priorities: Ministry as Real Work
5. Married Ministers or “Two for One?”
6. The Ministers Family: Living Life Under a Microscope, **Book Review: Mulholland**
7. ~~Mid-Term~~ **Directed Class Discussion**
8. The Daily Grind of Ministry
9. Ministry Is Not Business Management and Marketing
10. Shepherding Dirty Sheep (difficult people) **Book Review: Bridges**
11. Dealing with Adversity in Ministry
12. A Serious Calling, **Book Review: Law**
13. ~~Final Exam~~ **Directed Class Discussion Project Due**