

DM716 Studies in Pastoral Theology: Biblical Spirituality
August 2022

Professor: Nathan Tarr
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Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course engages students in the historical appreciation, theological assessment, and pastoral application of Biblical Spirituality.

COURSE OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, the student will:

1. Understand the different meanings of the phrase “biblical spirituality,” and appreciate how each meaning applies to the requirements of pastoral ministry.
2. Relish the treasure of being “in Christ” and recognize importance of becoming increasingly like Christ.
3. Be equipped to constructively engage a culture, and a church, that increasingly opposes “spirituality” to external, objective revelation.
4. Carry experience in retrieving and communicating the riches of the history of evangelical spirituality.
5. Gain a scriptural imagination for what renewal could look like in their place of ministry.
6. Be renewed and refreshed in their own practice of the spiritual disciplines.
7. Be alert to, and committed to avoid, cultural habits that contribute to spiritual deformation.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

1. Winfried Corduan, *Mysticism: An Evangelical Option?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock), 1991.
2. James Gordon, *Evangelical Spirituality* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock), 2006.
3. Christopher Holmes, *A Theology of the Christian Life: Imitating and Participating in God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic), 2021.
4. Richard F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic), 2020.
5. David Mathis, *Habits of Grace: Enjoying Jesus Through the Spiritual Disciplines* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway), 2015.
6. Robert Louis Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP), 2005.

REQUIRED READINGS

1. D. A. Carson, “When is Spirituality Spiritual?” *JETS* 37.3 (September 1994): 831—394.
2. Adam McClendon, “Defining the Role of the Bible in Spirituality: ‘Three Degrees of Spirituality’ in American Culture” *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 5.2 (2012): 207—225.
3. Guest lecturers may assign additional reading(s). Such readings will be provided in class.

For Assignment 1: History of Spirituality

Students will **select one** from among the following books for an in-class presentation. **Books are available on a first-come, first-served basis.** Email the professor at nathantarr@gmail.com with your selection. I will let you know if it is still available. Additional information on pg 4—5 below:

1. “The Letters of Ignatius of Antioch” **and** “The Martyrdom of Polycarp” *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations* ed. and trans. Michael Holmes (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 166—334.
2. Alistair Stewart-Sykes trans., *Origen, Tertullian, and Cyprian on the Lord’s Prayer* Popular Patristics Series 29 (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press), 2004.
3. John Owen, *Communion with the Triune God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway), 2007.
4. John Cotton, *Christ the Fountain of Life* (Peterborough, Ontario: H&E Publishing), 2021.
5. Thomas Watson, *The Godly Man’s Picture: Drawn with a Scripture Pencil* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth Trust), 2021.
6. Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections* Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 2 (New Haven, CT: Yale UP), 2009.
7. Henry Scougal, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway), 2022 **and** Thomas Chalmers, *The Expulsive Power of a New Affection* (Wheaton, IL, Crossway), 2020.
8. William Wilberforce, *Real Christianity* ed. James Houston (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing), 2003.
9. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship* Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works Vol. 4 (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press), 2003,
10. James Packer, *Knowing God* The IVP Signature Collection (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press), 2021.

For Assignment 2: Going Deeper in a Spiritual Discipline

Students will **select one** from among the following books for an in-class presentation. **Books are available on a first-come, first-served basis.** Email the professor at nathantarr@gmail.com with your selection. I will let you know if it is still available. Additional information on pg 5—6 below:

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (San Francisco, CA: HarperOne), 2009.
2. Rosaria Butterfield, *The Gospel Comes with a House Key: Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality in our Post-Christian World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway), 2018.
3. John Coe and Kyle Strobel eds., *Embracing Contemplation: Reclaiming a Christian Spiritual Practice* (Westmont, IL: IVP Academic), 2019.
4. John Jefferson Davis, *Meditation and Communion with God: Contemplating Scripture in an Age of Distraction* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic), 2012.
5. John Piper, *A Hunger for God: Desiring God through Fasting and Prayer* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway), 2013.
6. James K.A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press), 2016.
7. John Starke, *The Possibility of Prayer: Finding Stillness with God in a Restless World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press), 2020.
8. Kelly Kopic, *You’re Only Human: How Your Limits Reflect God’s Design and Why That’s Good News* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway) 2022.
9. Ken Gire, *Windows of the Soul: Hearing God in the Everyday Moments of Your Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 2017.
10. Don Whitney, *Praying the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway), 2015 **and** Whitney, *Family Worship: In the Bible, History, and Your Home* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway), 2019.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. History of Spirituality Presentation (30%) <i>Outcome(s) 1, 4, 5</i> Due: August 15, 2022	In addition to reading Wilkin and Gordon, students will <i>select 1</i> work from the list provided (under “for assignment 1”) and compose a paper of 2000-2500 words. Students will present their paper to the seminar and facilitate a discussion. See “assignment policies” below for more information.
2. Spiritual Discipline Presentation (30%) <i>Outcome(s) 3, 6, 7</i> Due: August 15, 2022	In addition to reading Mathis, students will <i>select 1</i> work from the list provided (under “for assignment 2”) and compose a paper of 2000-2500 words. Students will present their paper to the seminar and facilitate a class discussion. See “assignment policies” below for more information.
3. Response paper (30%) <i>Outcome(s) 1, 2, 5</i> Due: October 14, 2022	Synthesizing input from course readings, class discussion, student presentations, and guest lectures, students will craft a 1500-2000 word answer to the question, “what is biblical spirituality and why does it matter in <i>my</i> pastoral ministry?”
4. Class participation (10%)	Students will give evidence of having read the assigned reading through their in-class engagement.

GRADING INFORMATION

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Points	Description
A+	100–97	4.0	
A	96–93	4.0	Excellent; superior achievement.
A-	92–90	3.7	
B+	89–87	3.3	
B	86–83	3.0	Good; commendable achievement.
B-	82–80	2.7	
C+	79–77	2.3	
C	76–73	2.0	Satisfactory; acceptable achievement.
C-	72–70	1.7	
D+	69–67	1.3	
D	66–63	1.0	Poor; marginal achievement.
D-	62–60	0.7	
F	59–0	0.0	Failure to advance in the course. No credit earned. Computed in GPA.

SEMINARY ACADEMIC POLICIES

All Seminary policies affecting student work, appeals, and grievances, as outlined in the Academic Catalog or Student Handbook will apply, unless otherwise indicated in this syllabus.

Writing Center

The Phoenix Seminary Writing Center exists to help students become better writers who communicate biblical truth with clarity. The Writing Center provides one-on-one consultations with students at any stage in the writing process. In addition to giving feedback on papers, tutors can also help students define a research topic, navigate sources, or learn SBL citation style. Appointments are available in-person or online and can be booked by visiting <https://ps.edu/writing-center/>. If you would like a consultant to review a paper, please send a copy of your draft at least 24 hours in advance to writingcenter@ps.edu with your name and appointment time in the subject line.

Assignment Policies

General Instructions

All papers should be formatted according to the PS style guide, available [here](#). For *in-class* presentations, students should submit a hard copy of their paper in addition to an electronic copy (.docx or .pdf) emailed to the professor. For the *post seminar* response paper, an electronic copy will suffice.

For the History of Spirituality Presentation

Broadly, the goal of this assignment is two-fold. First, the assignment aims to increase your exposure to the rich heritage—theological rootedness and spiritual vitality—of the broadly evangelical tradition. Second, it aims to strengthen your competence in the pastoral practice of theological retrieval; drawing discerningly on the past to develop historically proven resources to meet contemporary challenges in Christian life and ministry. Specifically, this assignment creates an opportunity for you to cultivate a deeper familiarity with a particular era/figure from the history of Christian spirituality, honing your understanding of their times and their teaching along with your facility in communicating their impact to others.

Students are free to structure their paper/presentation as seems best to them. Each paper should, however, engage at least these four kinds of questions (n.b.: not all of these questions need equal emphasis):

- (1) **Context Questions:** what about the historical context of the person/work was significant in shaping its message?
 - a. For example, Augustine's *City of God* was written in the face of the sack of Rome, and Richard Baxter's *The Reformed Pastor* was a response to George Herbert's *The Country Parson*. How do these religious/social/political contexts shape their respective works?
- (2) **Content Questions:** what do you see as the main contribution/argument made in the work? What steps does the author take to make this point?
 - a. The goal here is not simply summary, i.e. condensed versions of the chapters. You are not simply re-presenting the book, but helping us understand how the author's different chapters/points work together to advance the heart-beat, or main idea, of the work.
 - b. The purpose at this stage is *not* to assess the work (i.e. to tell us whether you agree or disagree), but to clearly understand and faithfully present its message.

- c. One way to draw out the heart-beat (and avoid simply summarizing one chapter after another) is to ask what we learn not just by the message of the book but the *manner* (whether in logic, method, or tone) with which the points are made?
 - d. You should spend a significant amount of your paper (around 50%) answering these “content” kinds of questions.
- (3) **Reception Questions:** how has the church responded to this work between the time it was written and today? What have they found particularly helpful/successful? Where have they raised questions or cautions?
- a. Picture a discussion thread about your topic. With the “context” question above, you have investigated how your book engaged in that conversation up to the point of its publication. Now, with this step, you are thinking about how your book shaped the conversation that came after.
 - b. Whether your book was written 50, 500, or 1500 years ago, how has the intervening history of the church helped us to read it well?
 - c. Book reviews and author/title indexes are good places to start.
- (4) **Application questions:** how can this work help shape the congregation where you serve?
- a. You should include your own theological assessment of the work here. What would you adjust about the argument or approach of the work, and why?
 - b. What about this work would present the greatest challenge and/or encouragement to your congregation?
 - c. What would be the most effective way to introduce them to it? Would you start with a certain group? A particular portion of the book? What categories might you have to build for your congregation to enable them to engage the work in a fruitful way?
 - d. How would you hope God would bless your church through their encounter with the work?

Students will submit the paper to the instructor on the first day of class (August 15) and will present it to the seminar on the day assigned by the seminar schedule. After finishing their presentation, students will field questions from their peers and the professor regarding their work and its application in the church. The total time for each student presentation, including the discussion, will be between 35-45 minutes.

For the Going Deeper in a Spiritual Discipline Presentation

Broadly, the goal of this assignment is to enrich your practice of the spiritual discipline(s) and to equip you to invite those you shepherd to imitate your example in this regard. More specifically, the aim is to ensure that our personal practice and pastoral presentation of the spiritual disciplines is aligned with the liberating, energizing grace of the gospel. Without this gospel orientation, the transformation that the *spiritual* disciplines are designed to produce—unto increasing Christlikeness—degenerates into behavior modification and moral improvement.

Think of your paper in three parts, with each part comprising roughly one-third of the total length.

The first part should engage with David Mathis’s *Habits of Grace*. This is not a book review, but I do want you to demonstrate that you understand both the theological burden of the book and the way Mathis suggests this theology will be worked out in practical life (i.e. the practice of the disciplines). It would be appropriate here to include ways that the book challenged or changed ways you have

thought about the disciplines to this point, or to bring Mathis's book into dialogue with other favorite/popular treatments on the disciplines.

The second part of the paper should engage your specific discipline/chosen book against the theological backdrop Mathis has set. In this second part, you should present the main argument of the book you have selected. What I am looking for as the "main argument" is not simply, to take one example, "that we should pray." Rather, help us understand how the author makes their case for this discipline. What sources do they use (i.e. history? Scripture? personal testimony?)? What objections or possible abuses do they discuss? How/do they relate the discipline under discussion to other disciplines or means of grace? *Pay special attention to their discussion of the Spirit's work* in and through the practice of the discipline.

The third part of the paper turns to assessment and action. In terms of assessment, ask the theological question of how well your selection presents the discipline in a way that fit with Mathis's perspective. What evidence do you see that this is a habit of grace? Ask also the personal question of whether you found the presentation of the discipline compelling. Would you have presented key parts differently? Why? Did the book answer questions you have encountered in your own practice, or did it not resonate with your experience? What are the texts or questions that you think the author should have engaged but did not?

In terms of action, discuss whether/how the book has enriched your practice of the discipline under discussion, as well as how you might consider deploying it in your church. Are the spiritual disciplines talked about in your congregation? Are they talked about in a way that Mathis would recognize as oriented by grace? How might you begin to lead your congregation into the discipline you studied in a way that both fit where they are coming from and is faithful to the gospel? What work would you have to do to prepare your congregation (or perhaps as strategic part of it) to respond well to this book?

Students will submit the paper to the instructor on the first day of class (August 15) and will present it to the seminar on the day assigned by the seminar schedule. After finishing their presentation, students will field questions from their peers and the professor regarding their work and its application in the church. The total time for each student presentation, including the discussion, will be between 30-40 minutes.

Courteous Use of Technology in the Classroom (phone, tablet, laptop)

Phoenix Seminary considers a student's character to be evidenced in part by their respect for their classmates, professors, and their valuable time in class. Please consider how to be a good steward of our time together by bearing in mind the following:

- Laptops and tablets are welcome in class to take notes and to access readings we're discussing. Using them for anything else (social networking, accessing non-course related websites, checking email) is discourteous and distracting to others.
- Phones must be silenced in class and stowed. That includes turning off the vibrate function. (We can hear it buzzing.) Is texting ok? No. If an emergency situation exists out of which you feel you must use your phone you should quietly step out of class to do so.

COURSE SCHEDULE*

Monday, August 8

Time	Topic	Teacher
8-8:50	Course and Class Introduction	
9-9:50	Lecture:	
10-10:50	Lecture:	
11-11:50	Lecture:	
11:50-1:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
1:30-2:20	Wilken's <i>Spirit of Early Christian Thought</i>	NT
2:30-3:20	Origen, Tertullian, and Cyprian <i>On the Lord's Prayer</i>	
3:30-4:30	Spirituality in the <i>Letters of Ignatius</i>	

Tuesday, August 9

Time	Topic	Teacher
8-8:50	Lovelace's Dynamics of Spiritual Life Part I	NT
9-9:50	Owen's <i>Communion with the Triune God</i>	
10-10:50	Lecture: The Spirituality of Augustine's <i>Confessions</i>	Guest
11-11:50	Lecture: The Spirituality of Augustine's <i>Confessions</i>	Guest
11:50-1:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
1:30-2:20	Cotton's <i>Christ the Fountain of Life</i>	
2:30-3:20	Scougal's <i>The Life of God in the Soul of Man</i>	
3:30-4:30	Lecture:	

Wednesday, August 10

Time	Topic	Teacher
8-8:50	Corduan's <i>Mysticism: An Evangelical Option?</i>	NT
9-9:50	Bonhoeffer's <i>Discipleship</i>	
10-10:50	Packer's <i>Knowing God</i>	
11-11:50	Lecture: The Spirituality of Anselm and Aquinas	Dr. David Hogg
11:50-1:30	<i>Lunch</i> (together as a class)	
1:30-2:20	Mathis's <i>Habits of Grace</i>	NT
2:30-3:20	Bonhoeffer's <i>Life Together</i>	
3:30-4:30	Butterfield's <i>The Gospel Comes with a House Key</i>	

Thursday, August 11

Time	Topic	Teacher
8-8:50	Holmes's <i>Theology of the Christian Life</i>	NT
9-9:50	Piper's <i>A Hunger for God</i>	
10-10:50	Lecture: The Spirit and Christ	Dr. Sam Storms
11-11:50	Lecture: The Spirit and the Christian	Dr. Sam Storms
11:50-1:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
1:30-2:20	Starke's <i>The Possibility of Prayer</i>	
2:30-3:20	Coe and Strobel's <i>Embracing Contemplation</i>	
3:30-4:30	Lecture:	

Friday, August 12

Time	Topic	Teacher
8-8:50	Lovelace's <i>Dynamics of Spiritual Life</i> Part II.a	NT
9-9:50	Lovelace's <i>Dynamics of Spiritual Life</i> Part II.b	NT
10-10:50	Whitney's <i>Praying the Bible</i>	Dr. Don Whitney
11-11:50	Smith's <i>You are What You Love</i>	
11:50-1:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
1:30-2:20	Kapic's <i>You Are Only Human</i>	
2:30-3:20	Davis's <i>Meditation and Communion with God</i>	
3:30-4:30	Lecture:	

*Exact topics and times are subject to change depending on student selections and guest availability.