

Personal Spiritual Disciplines

Course 40150 (2 hours) Spring, 2011 Tuesday/Thursday

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This & other class materials are available on Ecampus & at www.BiblicalSpirituality.org on the "For SBTS students" button

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I. Course Description from the Catalog

A scriptural approach to Christian spirituality utilizing biblical, classical, and contemporary materials. This course will assist the student in pursuing intimacy with and conformity to Jesus Christ through personal spiritual disciplines such as Bible intake, prayer, fasting, silence and solitude, and journaling.

II. Degree Program Outcome Relevant to this Course

The student will grow as a person of Christlike character whose integrity imparts credibility to his/her ministry.

III. Student Learning Objectives

- A. The student will understand biblical, classical, and contemporary materials concerning Christian spirituality. This objective will be evaluated on the basis of journal entries about the biblical, classical, and contemporary materials assigned to read as per the specifics below. This objective will also be evaluated by means of reading quizzes or chapel report forms, as described below.
- B. The student will practice personal spiritual disciplines found in Scripture, such as prayer, Scripture memory, devotional Bible study, fasting, journaling, and personal evangelism. This objective will be evaluated by journal entries made about the student's practice of these disciplines during the course of the semester according to the specifics of the assignments below, and by a floating exam which the student will take as per the specifics below.
- C. The student will describe the significance of these disciplines to their life and ministry. This objective will be evaluated by journal entries made about the student's practice of these disciplines during the course of the semester according to the specifics of the assignments below.
- D. The student will develop accountability relationships. This objective will be evaluated by means of journal entries recorded following sessions with the student's accountability partner, according to the specifics of the assignment below.

III. Required Texts

- Alcorn, Randy. *The Purity Principle*. Colorado Springs, Colo.: Multnomah, 2003. ISBN 1590521951.
- Bunyan, John. *Pilgrim's Progress*. (Any edition except children's or modern language; must include parts 1 & 2, such as ISBN 0192803611).
- Packer, J. I. *A Quest for Godliness*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1990 (hardback), 1994 (paperback). ISBN 0891078193. **[This is required only for students choosing option III.A.1 below.]**
- Steer, Roger. *George Müller Delighted in God!* Tain, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2004. ISBN 1857923405. [This book may be difficult to acquire except through the SBTS bookstore. The hardback (1985) or paperback version (1992) published by Harold Shaw is acceptable.]
- Whitney, Donald S. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress, 1991 (hardback), 1996 (paperback). ISBN 1576830276.

IV. Grades

A. Each student must choose between option A1 or A2.

1. Read and take quizzes on J. I. Packer's *Quest for Godliness*. Seven unannounced reading quizzes will be given at various times through the semester on Packer's *A Quest for Godliness*. Each quiz will cover only the material assigned from Packer's book for that day. See the initials "JIP" on the class calendar for the reading assignments from Packer's book. The total of these quizzes will count for 20% of the final grade. The score of the lowest three quizzes by each student will be dropped. There are no makeup quizzes. Up to the first three quizzes missed, a quiz missed is a quiz dropped. After three quizzes missed, a missed quiz receives a zero.
2. Attend chapel faithfully throughout the semester and complete Chapel Interaction Forms. This will count for 20% (or 20 out of a possible 100 points) of the final grade. Usually there are 24 to 26 chapel services during the semester. The student will receive one point for each chapel attended and each Chapel Interaction Form adequately completed, up to 20 points. On the table of contents page in the student's journal, the student will report the number of chapels attended, plus one copy of the Chapel Interaction Form (see at the end of this syllabus) for each chapel attended. The total number of points may be reduced if the Chapel Interaction Forms do not contain sufficient information.

Students are allowed to switch from one plan to another any time before the semester break. As a backup plan, students may take Packer quizzes even if they have chosen the chapel option. Students who switch from chapel to the Packer quizzes may not make up any missed quizzes.

E. Each student must keep a journal throughout the term. See the chapter on "Journaling" in *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* for general guidelines.

- This journal must be submitted on the designated day and time at the end of the term, and will count for 75% of the final grade.
- Unless explicit arrangements are made in advance and agreed to by the professor, the journal may *not* be submitted by email.
- The journal must be computer-generated. Hand-written versions deemed legible by the professor will be accepted. But any exception to a computer-generated journal *must* be approved by the professor *by the end of the first week of class*.
- In *all* cases *the student should make a copy* of his/her journal before it is submitted to the professor. Please save your journal on your hard drive, a portable storage system, and on a hard copy *each* time you make an addition to it.
- The journal may be simply stapled, or placed in a binder. Do *not* submit your journal in a binder which has a spine that can fall off.
- The journals are usually available from the professor's secretary about two weeks after the due date. Any journals not claimed by one month after they are due are subject to being thrown away.
- Students who prefer to have their journal mailed to them may provide a SASE with their journal and it will be returned by mail, provided that sufficient postage is supplied.
- Please put your phone number(s) and e-mail address on the front or inside cover of your journal so that you may be reached in case the professor or his Garrett Fellow needs to contact you while it is being graded (sometimes pages are missing, etc.), or in case it is returned to the seminary by the post office.
- Spelling counts. Points may be deducted from the journal for spelling errors.
- The journal should be single-spaced. This method uses less paper and is easier to read.
- The journal must include the following:

1. Eighteen “Scripture or life” (as explained below and in class) entries, arranged in nine pairs. See the example of these at the end of this syllabus.
 - a) Nine of these entries must be from meditations on *Scripture* (i.e., on a paragraph, verse, phrase, word, theme from the Bible).
 - b) Nine must be from *life*, that is, from reflection upon life events, God’s providence, creation, seminary or church experiences, etc., which are then evaluated or interpreted in light of Scripture.
 - c) Arrange the entries into nine pairs of entries, with each pair consisting of one Scripture meditation and one “life” meditation. The two entries in each pair may, but do not have to relate to one another in theme or any other way.
 - d) Each *pair* should contain a *total* of at least 400 (four hundred) words. The two entries in each pair do *not* have to be approximately equal in length.
 - e) The entries should be spread throughout the semester. A deduction from the total points for the journal may be made if, in the judgment of the professor, the entries were made in a time frame that was too narrow.
 - f) It does not matter whether a meditation on *Scripture* is first in each pair or a meditation on *life*, just as long as each pair contains one of each type. However, all eighteen entries should be listed chronologically.
2. Ten “designated” entries of at least 400 (four hundred) words *each*. These entries may be made at any time during the semester, *unless* otherwise determined by the class calendar or announced by the professor. The “designated” entries should be placed chronologically in a separate section, following the section for the “Scripture and Life” entries (see the example at the end of this syllabus). The ten designated entries are:
 - a) An entry consisting of at least 400 words where you reflect upon, describe the impact of, etc., your complete reading of Roger Steer’s *George Müller Delighted in God!*
 - b) An entry consisting of at least 400 words describing/reflecting upon an evangelistic encounter you experienced during the term. This encounter must include at least a significant portion of the Gospel spoken in-person to an unbeliever. Online witnessing experiences, while valuable, do not qualify.
 - c) An entry consisting of at least 400 words where you reflect upon, describe the impact of, etc., a fast of at least two meals’ (i.e., approximately twenty-four hours’) duration which you experience sometime during the term, but *prior* to the classroom discussion on fasting.¹
 - d) An entry consisting of at least 400 words where you reflect upon, describe the impact of, etc., a fast of at least two meals’ meals’ (i.e., approximately twenty-four hours’) duration which you experience sometime during the term, but *after* the classroom discussion on fasting.
 - e) An entry consisting of at least 400 words where you reflect upon a scheduled time of at least four consecutive hours of silence and solitude with God which occurs during this term. A suggested, yet modifiable outline of how to spend the four hours is in an appendix to this syllabus. *The professor must approve in advance any significant deviation from this plan.* It is expected that most of the time will be spent reading and meditating upon Scripture, praying through Scripture, playing an instrument and/or singing to the Lord, journaling, and doing devotional reading. No schoolwork, church work, or other required reading or writing should be done during this leisurely time. You may also choose to complete one of the assigned fasts on the same day as this event.
 - f) An entry consisting of at least 400 words where you reflect upon how your understanding of the biblical and theological truth regarding family worship has grown in this course, particularly through the lecture on family worship.

¹If you have physical, medical, or dietary reasons why you should not fast (such as diabetes, pregnancy, migraine headaches, etc.), please inform the professor as soon as possible.

This entry may include the formulation of a simple plan for the implementation of family worship in your present (or if you are single, future) family setting. This entry may also include thoughts of how to introduce and/or reinforce family worship in your present and/or future ministry setting. Women's entries may include modifications of the above, including how you believe family worship should be practiced, the mother's role in family worship (especially in the father's absence), how to appeal to a present or future spouse about taking responsibility for family worship, etc.

- g) An entry consisting of at least 400 words where you reflect upon, describe the impact of, etc., your complete reading of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (parts I and II).
 - h) An entry consisting of at least 400 words where you reflect upon, describe the impact of, etc., your complete reading of J. I. Packer's *A Quest for Godliness* (if you chose option A1 above) OR an entry consisting of at least 400 words where you comment on your chapel experience this semester (if you chose option A2 above).
 - i) An entry consisting of at least 400 words where you reflect upon what the experience of this term has taught you about the importance and value of keeping a spiritual journal. This will be one of your final journal entries.
 - j) An entry consisting of at least 400 words where you reflect upon, describe the impact of, etc., this class upon your practice of the personal spiritual disciplines. This will typically be your final journal entry. NOTE: the class calendar may call for this entry to be written by hand in the final class. Consult the professor or class calendar for this.
3. A record of your meetings with your accountability partner(s). Each student should, on his/her own initiative, find in this class another student of the same gender as an accountability partner. (Groups of three—of the same gender—are also permissible.) Only accountability partners from this class (or from another section of this course, provided it is taught by this professor) are allowed. If a student's partner drops the course, the student should join an existing accountability group. Record your semester's accountability experience according to the sample "Accountability Partner Participation Report" found at the end of this syllabus.
- a) You should meet with your partner at least ten times during the semester, for at least fifty (50) minutes per meeting, at any time and place of your mutual agreement, with no greater frequency than one meeting per week.
 - b) The following guidelines should shape the format of your meetings:
 - (1) Read part or all of a Psalm.
 - (2) Pray.
 - (3) Hear each other's Scripture memory work (optional).
 - (4) Discuss material (if any) assigned by the professor to be discussed in a given week's meeting.
 - (5) Ask *fellowship questions* of each other, such as:
 - (a) What is the best thing that has happened to you since our last meeting?
 - (b) Do you have any unusual burdens or troubles this week?
 - (c) How is your [teaching, hospitality, outreach, deacon, or whatever] ministry going?
 - (d) Where have you seen the Lord at work lately?
 - (e) What has the Lord been teaching you recently?
 - (f) Have you had any evangelistic opportunities lately?
 - (g) Have you had any obvious answers to prayer recently?
 - (h) What you have been reading? How has it impressed you?

- (i) Where in the Bible have you been reading lately? What impact has it had on you?
 - (j) What is the growth point in your life right now?
 - (k) What are you passionate about right now?²
 - (6) Ask *personal accountability* questions of each other, such as:
 - (a) Have you been with a member of the opposite sex in a way that might be considered compromising or questionable?
 - (b) Have any of your financial dealings lacked integrity?
 - (c) Have you exposed yourself to any sexually explicit material?
 - (d) Have you spent adequate time in Bible reading and prayer?
 - (e) Have you been meditating on, and not just reading, Scripture?
 - (f) Have you given priority time to your family (if applicable)?
 - (g) Have you fulfilled the mandates of your calling?
 - (h) Have you lied to me in any of these answers?³
 - (7) Ask *personal goal* questions of each other. These are questions you may develop for yourself based upon individual goals (personal, physical, spiritual, relational, etc.) you have set for yourself for this semester, and for which you desire the encouragement of accountability.
 - (8) Ask each other, "How can I pray for you?"
 - (9) Pray.
 - c) After completing the book, discuss in one meeting Alcorn's *The Purity Principle*.
4. A list, placed on your journal's table of contents, of all the required texts and a statement beside each of whether you read all of each book. See the example at the end of this syllabus. The complete reading of each text receives a certain number of points.
 5. A record of your chapel attendance, if you chose option A2 above.
 6. A table of contents for the journal. The table of contents should tell what *page number* on which *each* of the above entries can be found (make sure your journal has page numbers!), as well as indicate the *word count* for each pair of "Scripture and life" entries and the word count for each "assigned" entry. The beginning point (or heading, title, etc.) of each assigned entry should be conspicuous on the page where each is found. See the example of a table of contents at the end of this syllabus. In order to better ensure compliance with this requirement, you are encouraged to paste this page from the table of contents page from the course website into the front of your journal, and use it as a template. You would, of course, record each entry in the actual order in which you completed each assignment, fill in your own dates, page numbers, etc.
- F. Journals received after the due date will be marked down five points per day. Email submissions of the journal—with a promise of delivery of the hard copy—may *not* count as an on-time submission, unless explicit arrangements are made in advance and agreed to by the professor or Garrett Fellow.
- G. The "floating exam" may be taken at any time during the term which is convenient for the professor, his secretary, or Garrett Fellow. The student must write out in the presence of the professor, secretary, or Garrett Fellow (1) the names of the books of the Bible in order (and correctly spelled), (2) the Ten Commandments (short version, and in order), and (3) the text of 1 Timothy 4:7b and 4:16 (noting which translation you are quoting). This will count for 5% of the final grade.

² From Donald S. Whitney, *Simplify Your Spiritual Life* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress, 2003), p. 193.

³ Adapted from a list attributed to Chuck Swindoll in Chuck Colson, *The Body* (Dallas: Word Books, 1992), p. 131.

- H. Extra credit. A student may gain two points extra credit if, in *addition* to a complete reading of *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, he/she listens to the entire unabridged audio version of the book. In other words, a student who listens to the audio version of *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* without reading the book will earn no extra credit.
- I. According to seminary protocol, "All students are required to affirm their academic integrity when submitting all course work with the following statement, signed by the student: *On my honor, I have neither given nor taken improper assistance in completing this assignment.*" This statement and signature should appear on the final page of each assignment submitted.
- J. The grading scale for this course is:
- | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|
| A = 97-100 | B- = 87-88 | D+ = 75-76 |
| A- = 95-96 | C+ = 84-86 | D = 72-74 |
| B+ = 93-94 | C = 80-83 | D- = 70-71 |
| B = 89-92 | C- = 77-79 | F = 0-69 |
- K. Classroom preparation, participation, attitude, and other factors may influence the final grade assigned by the professor.
- L. More than three absences from class, as well as excessive tardiness, may reduce your grade. Furthermore, a student must attend at least 75 percent of the class sessions to receive credit.

V. Miscellaneous

- A. All the textbooks (and most of the extra credit texts, if applicable to this course) are on reserve in the library. In your studies, take advantage of our seminary library. New resources related to this course are added to the library regularly. You will find that the personnel at our library serve our seminary community willingly and well.
- B. In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g., recording devices, special adaptive equipment, special note-taking or test-taking needs) should contact the professor or his Garrett Fellow at the beginning of the course.
- C. According to seminary protocol, "All students are required to affirm their academic integrity when submitting all course work with the following statement, signed by the student: *On my honor, I have neither given nor taken improper assistance in completing this assignment.*" This statement and signature should appear on the final page of each assignment submitted. When the student submits forms from the Applied Ministry Handbook, the student may write the statement by hand and submit it along with his signature on one of the margins on the front of the final page of the form.
- D. Before recording, students must complete and submit the following request form to the professor:
- I, _____(student name)_____, will record _____(class sessions)_____ and agree that I will not reproduce, distribute, or sell electronic recordings or transcriptions of class sessions.

Signature of Student, Date

EXAMPLE OF A TABLE OF CONTENTS IN A JOURNAL*[The dates used are only examples of random dates spread throughout the semester, not assigned dates.]*

Journal of Donald S. Whitney

Page 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS**ENTRY****WORD COUNT****PAGE NUMBER****Scripture and Life entries**

First pair	437	2
August 22—Scripture		
August 26—Life		
Second pair	505	3-4
August 30—Life		
September 3—Scripture		
Third pair	476	5
September 13—Scripture		
September 15—Life		
Fourth pair	414	6
September 24—Life		
September 30—Scripture		
Fifth pair	458	7
October 2—Life		
October 14—Scripture		
Sixth pair	624	8-9
October 19—Life		
October 28—Scripture		
Seventh pair	480	10
October 30—Scripture		
November 1—Life		
Eighth pair	447	11
November 6—Scripture		
November 11—Life		
Ninth pair	865	12-13
November 18—Life		
November 22—Scripture		

Designated entries

1. <i>George Mueller: Delighted in God</i>	August 24	473	14
2. Evangelistic encounter	August 31	598	15
3. Fasting experience before lecture on fasting	September 24	428	17
4. Four hours of silence and solitude	October 5	642	19
5. Family Worship	October 13	522	20
6. Fasting experience after lecture on fasting	October 21	511	21
7. <i>Pilgrim's Progress</i>	October 26	456	22
8. The importance and value of journal keeping	November 11	419	23
9. <i>A Quest for Godliness</i> OR chapel experience	November 21	521	23
10. Impact of this class	November 28	588	24

Accountability Partner Participation Report

25

Summary: I met with my accountability partner(s) ____ times for at least fifty minutes per meeting.

Chapel Interaction Forms

26 ff.

Alcorn, Randy. *The Purity Principle*.

Yes, I read this entire book.

Bunyan, John. *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Yes, I read this entire book.

Steer, Roger. *George Müller Delighted in God*

Yes, I read this entire book.

Whitney, Donald S. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*.

Yes, I read this entire book.

Packer, J. I. *A Quest for Godliness*.

Yes, I read this entire book.

OR

I attended _____ chapel services this semester.

Extra creditYes, I read all of Whitney's book *and* I listened to the entire audio edition.

EXAMPLE OF A PAGE FROM “SCRIPTURE AND LIFE” ENTRIES IN A JOURNAL

Journal of [name of student]

Page 2

SCRIPTURE AND LIFE ENTRIES

First Pair of “Scripture and Life” entries

437 words

August 22—Scripture.

[illegible]

August 26 —Life

[illegible]

EXAMPLE OF A PAGE FROM “DESIGNATED” ENTRIES IN A JOURNAL

Journal of [name of student]

Page 14

DESIGNATED ENTRIES

August 24

George Mueller Delighted in God

473 words

[illegible]

EXAMPLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER PARTICIPATION REPORT

Journal of [name of student]

Page 25

ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER PARTICIPATION REPORT

My accountability partner(s) was/were _____

	Date	Time	Place	Length	Comments
First Meeting					
Second Meeting					
Third Meeting					
Fourth Meeting					
Fifth Meeting					
Sixth Meeting					
Seventh Meeting					
Eighth Meeting					
Ninth Meeting					
Tenth Meeting					

Our typical format was:

The questions we usually asked one another were:

The best part of this experience was:

In retrospect, what I wish I could have changed about this experience was:

We discussed Alcorn's *The Purity Principle* in the _____ meeting. Comments?

Other:

Chapel Interaction Form

The student should print and use one of these forms for *each* chapel service attended. The collected forms should comprise the final pages of the student's journal. The student may not receive credit for this form if it contains insufficient information.

Date:

Speaker:

Sermon text or theme:

Sermon outline or major propositions:

Personal application(s) of or interaction with the sermon:

I was physically present for this chapel service, and the content of this page is my original work based upon my hearing of the chapel speaker.

Signed, _____

Suggested Schedule for the Four Consecutive Hours of Silence & Solitude

Each student must complete four consecutive hours of silence and solitude with the Lord. Before entering into this experience, the student should present and receive approval of a schedule of how he/she intends to spend the four hours. However, if the student's schedule is very close to the suggested schedule below, it is not necessary to present your schedule to the professor. A student may modify the *time* allotted to any given element by as much as fifteen minutes per session without seeking the professor's approval. Any change in the *content* of a given element (that is, Bible reading, prayer, journaling, etc.) must be approved by the professor. The *order* of these elements may be changed also.

Once set, the student does not have to stick slavishly to this schedule. For example, if you are on a prayer walk and finding it enjoyable, you may extend the time for as long as you find it meaningful. Part of the reason for having a schedule is to ensure that you know you can spend the time profitably. This is in contrast with unexpectedly completing a less specific plan in only two hours (or having no plan at all), then spending two hours in boredom and frustration just to complete the required four hours.

Whenever a posture or activity becomes tedious, change it. So if you have been sitting and reading or journaling for twenty minutes out of a planned thirty, and sitting becomes wearisome, do not continue the activity just to complete your plan of thirty minutes for that activity. Notice that in the schedule below, the plan calls for the participant to remain seated for no more than an hour at any one time. The most common mistake people make when devising their own plans is unwittingly scheduling too much consecutive time in a chair.

Each activity should be refreshing and restorative. Rightly done, when you are finished with the four hours you should want to continue. In fact, I hope you will—but from a sense of sheer delight and enjoyment, not for an assignment.

- :15 Worshiping the Lord in song (perhaps while playing an instrument or listening to music)
- :30 Bible reading
- :30 Praying through Scripture, perhaps while walking.
- :30 Journaling
- :30 Devotional reading (NOT a book you have to read for school, church, etc., but simply an edifying Christian book you've wanted to read)
- :20 Praying through Scripture, perhaps while walking.
- :30 Meditation on Scripture
- :15 Journaling
- :20 Praying through Scripture, perhaps while walking.
- :20 Worshiping the Lord in song (as above) and/or devotional reading (as above)