

Humanity, Christ, and Salvation

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February 19-23, 2024

Morning Sessions: 9:30-11:30 am ~ Afternoon Sessions: 1:00-3:00 pm

Organizational Purpose

The Institute of Biblical Studies (IBS) exists to help develop Christ-centered missionaries who possess the biblical and theological competencies they need to live out the Great Commandment and help fulfill the Great Commission through the ministry of Cru. This course treats several doctrines that are foundational to the Christian understanding of reality. Special attention is paid to significant cultural challenges to faithful ministry in Christ's name, as well as to the shared commitments of Cru staff to organized life and mission together.

Course Description

This course engages with historic Christian teaching, focusing on the interconnected doctrines of the triune God (character, intentions and actions in relating to the world and humanity); human beings, both in creation and in sin; the person and the work of Christ; and the nature and scope of salvation. They form the core of the gospel of the kingdom of God and of Christ. We will consider how these doctrines bear upon several significant contemporary issues. We will also examine how *intellectual formation* (theology) becomes translated into practical reality in our lives here and now through *spiritual formation*, bringing about personal growth and transformation into greater Christlikeness in character and life.

Course Objectives

1. Strengthen your grasp of the truth about reality, fueling your motivation to know, worship, and walk with the triune God, rooted in his kingdom and understanding what it means to bear his image and likeness.
2. Develop a deeper understanding of and commitment to the foundational teachings of the Christian faith (particularly the doctrines of humanity; sin; the person and work of Christ; and salvation), especially as expressed in the Cru Statement of Faith.
3. Grow in your ability to read Scripture theologically.
4. Become more familiar with the major viewpoints, distinctives, and areas of agreement and disagreement on several of these doctrines that exist within historic Christianity and among Christians.
5. Be better prepared to partner in ministry with those who affirm the Christ and the gospel, and the Cru Statement of Faith as one expression of it, allowing for differing theological opinions on matters not central to the organizational values, policies, and mission of Cru.

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6. Understand that theological orthodoxy (thinking rightly) is inseparable from orthopathy (loving rightly) and orthopraxis (living rightly) before God.
7. Understand major ethical implications of the doctrines studied.
8. Understand the path of personal spiritual growth that makes possible practical obedience to Christ in his example and teachings.
9. Grow in your capacity to relate biblical and theological teaching to personal growth, evangelism, and cross-cultural mission (both for yourself and others).
10. Develop a firm grasp and greater confidence in Jesus Christ, his Word and Spirit, and better appreciate the need to contextualize the gospel, appropriately and faithfully addressing social and cultural needs, challenges, and opportunities.

Required Textbooks

Milne, Bruce. *Know the Truth: A Handbook of Christian Belief*, 3d ed. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009, pp. 79-281.

Stott, John. *Same Sex Relationships*, ed. Sean Doherty. Epsom, UK: The Good Book Company, 2017, pp. 11-87.

Willard, Dallas, and Don Simpson, *Revolution of Character*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2005.

Ch. 1: A Revolution Has Begun (pp. 9-21)

Ch. 3: A Magnificent Ruin (pp. 39-54)

Ch. 4: Restoration of the Soul (pp. 55-67)

Ch. 5: Christ's Pattern for Spiritual Transformation (pp. 69-82)

Required Readings (posted on Canvas)

Cru. "Compassionate & Faithful: Navigating LGBT+ Questions in Ministry."

Gilson, Rachel. "Truth, Love, and Gender Identity." *Christianity Today* (April 2021): 60-61. Online: "Gender-Identity Conversations Don't Have to Be Scary." Interview with Preston Sprinkle (March 16, 2021). www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/april/preston-sprinkle-embodied-transgender-identity-church-bible.html

Guzman, Karen Hice, et al. "Singleness: A Roundtable Conversation": <https://thewell.intervarsity.org/podcasts/singleness-roundtable-conversation>

Willard, Dallas. "Guidelines for Hearing from God." In *Hearing God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 37-55.

Willard, Dallas. "Never Alone." In *Hearing God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012), pp. 56-83.

Willard, Dallas. "Looking Like Jesus: Divine Resources are Always Available." In *The Great Omission*. (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), pp. 23-31.

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Willard, Dallas. "The Keys to the Kingdom." In *The Great Omission* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), pp. 32-39.

Willard, Dallas. "Idaho Springs Inquiries Concerning Spiritual Formation," Sections 1-4. In *The Great Omission* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), pp. 105-112.

Willard, Dallas. "How Does the Disciple Live?" www.dwillard.org/articles/how-does-the-disciple-live

Willard, Dallas. "Live Life to the Full." www.dwillard.org/articles/live-life-to-the-full

Learning Tasks

1. **Class Sessions.** Classes will include a combination of lectures and discussions in plenary and small-scale groups.
2. **Required Reading.** You will read selected chapters in Bruce Milne's *Know the Truth* (the primary systematic-theology textbook); excerpts from several books by Dallas Willard, who provides richly insightful exposition of the best of the classical Christian tradition on discipleship and spiritual formation in Christlikeness; a short book by John Stott on same-sex relationships; and an article by Rachel Gilson, interviewing Preston Sprinkle regarding conversing with individuals self-described as transgender, nonbinary, and so forth. Given the compressed time-frame of this course, strive to complete the assigned readings prior to the first class session. See "Course Schedule and Assignments" for the order of the required readings with the correlated writing assignments. You will submit a **Reading Report** indicating how much of the Required Reading you completed. **DUE: Friday, February 23, at 11:59 pm, Eastern** (submit to Canvas).
3. **Daily Course Readings and Daily Class Reflections**
 - A. **Reading: Short Answers.** Your response should synthesize and reflect on the implications of what you read. Special note: two readings in Milne (177-195; 237-244) have an assigned question (listed in the Syllabus) correlated to the material, for which you will write a short answer (1 or 2 paragraphs). **Daily entry DUE by 11:59 pm, Eastern** (submit to Canvas).
 - B. **Class Reflections: Daily Journal Entries.** After each afternoon adjourns, write a short entry (100-150 words) reflecting on one significant insight, claim, or issue that captured your attention. It may have been surprising, upsetting, a new connection you drew, or something you resonated with. These prompts may be helpful: *What stood out as the most important thing that emerged in today's session? Why was it important? If you felt uncomfortable or found it challenging, why was this so? What's one way that your life and ministry might be impacted by what was discussed today? What*

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needs more clarification, exploration, research, discussion, and prayer? In your **final journal entry**, discuss your biggest take-aways from the class. **Daily entry DUE by 11:59 pm, Eastern** (submit to Canvas).

4. **Course Essays.** Write an essay for each topic (3 or 4 pages, 12-pt font, double-spaced).

1. ***Sexuality: Biblical and Theological Foundations***

DUE: Wednesday, February 21, by 11:59 pm, Eastern (submit to Canvas).

Reflect on the foundational theological convictions that frame Stott's treatment of marriage, same-sex relationships, and singleness, in light of biblical teaching about God's will for sexual intimacy. Be sure to address *Points 1-5* and *7-9*.

- 1) In our post-Fall world, what makes our understanding of sex and gender issues complex, according to Doherty in "2. The Incidence of Homosexuality" (*SSR*, 17-20); according to Stott, in the section titled "The Christian call to hope," in "7. Faith, Hope, and Love" (*SSR*, 75-78); and according to Sprinkle and Gilson? How can the distinctions they draw (e.g., "preference" vs. "practice") inform our overall approach as serious followers of Jesus committed to living a transformed life, as we interact with others, whether we or they identify as a heterosexual person or an LGBTQ person in terms of sex, gender, and attractional pattern?
- 2) If human beings aren't defined by their sex or gender (Stott, "1. Introduction" (*SSR*, 16), who are we, and where does our essential dignity and value lie?
- 3) What do all persons have in common, being created by God? What do we share as a result of the Fall?
- 4) What's the biblical view of "the God-ordained context for one-flesh intimacy" (Stott, *SSR*, 39-40)? What are the four elements of marriage as God established it, in Genesis 2 (Stott, *SSR*, 38), and the three principles Jesus affirmed (Stott, *SSR*, 38)? (See "4. Sexuality and Marriage in the Bible.")
- 5) How do all other sexual relations and practices outside of the biblical standards for sexual intimacy (e.g., engaging in purposeful lust, pornography, and nonmarital sex) measure up to God's revealed will, in light of Jesus's teaching? Is there room for Christians standing under biblical authority to "agree to disagree," and in what senses, if so?
- 6) Biblically defined, what is *agape* "love," and what is "freedom," as presented in the class lectures?
- 7) How is the Lord Jesus relevant to the widespread belief that sexual experience in or outside of marriage are necessary for "the good life," rich in love, joy, and meaning, and fulfilling a person's highest potential?
- 8) What hope does Jesus Christ (risen Lord, Savior, and Teacher) and his redemptive and transformative love and power offer to all who experience loneliness and unfulfilled longings for intimacy, whatever their sexual orientation and their relational situation?
- 9) How will these biblical-theological convictions—and Cru's statement, "Leading in a Complex Moral Environment"—shape the way you'll

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approach sexuality-related issues in your own life, and interact with others in the future, following the Lord Jesus? What's one next step you'll take to be better informed and prepared to minister to others in his name?

2. What is Salvation?

DUE: Friday, February 23, 11:59 pm, Eastern (submit to Canvas).

Many gospel presentations define salvation as receiving God's promise of forgiveness because Jesus died for our sins and heaven-when-we-die. However, according to Milne, *salvation* includes, but is more than simply *justification* (God's declaration that we now stand in a restored relationship with him because Jesus's personal righteousness has paid our sin-debts); rather, salvation consists in *union with Christ in the Spirit* (*Know the Truth*, p. 251). This union with Christ is established at the beginning of the Christian life (accompanied by election, effective calling, regeneration and the gift of the Holy Spirit, justification, and adoption)—and it continues in *sanctification*, in which God intends us to grow in personal holiness, becoming morally transformed into Christlikeness in personal character and life.

Compare and contrast these two conceptions of salvation (justification, as distinct from union-with-Christ-by-the-Holy-Spirit). Which view has more biblical support? What are some implications of the union-with-Christ view for a believer's life and approach to evangelism, discipleship, and mission? If you agree with Milne, what adjustments are called for in how you think, walk and talk about Jesus Christ and the "good news of salvation" with others? If you don't agree with Milne's view, why not?

Course Grade

<u>Learning Assignments</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Reading Report	30%
Course Readings & Class Reflection	40%
Readings: Daily Short-Answer Responses: 30%	
Class Reflections: Daily Entries: 10%	
Course Essays (2 at 15% each)	30%

Grading Scale

94-100	A	82-93	B-	65-71	D
92-93	A-	80-81	C+	0-65	F
90-91	B+	74-79	C		
84-89	B	72-73	C-		

Students with Learning Challenges

If you have a learning issue that affects your participation in the class, please contact me by email so that we can assist you as you engage with the learning tasks in the course.

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Course Schedule and Assignments

Given the course's compressed nature, *strive to complete the course readings prior to the first session.*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading & Writing Assignments Due</u>
Monday, Feb. 19 (AM)	<i>Introduction to Theology. Dogmatic Rank.</i>	
Monday, Feb. 19 (PM)	<i>Reality: God & His Kingdom. Doctrine of God: Persons; Nature and Attributes. Kingdom: Creation & Providence. God-World-Humans: Creation.</i>	Milne, 79-84 = 5 pp. <i>Answer Q. 1</i> (p. 84) 84-94 = 11 pp. <i>Q. 1 & either Q. 3 or Q. 4</i> (p. 94) 95-107 = 13 pp. <i>Either Q. 2 or Q. 5</i> (p. 106) 107-118 = 12 pp. <i>Both Q. 1 and Q. 2</i> (p. 112) 119-137 = 18 pp. <i>Pick one: Q. 3; 5; or 7</i> (136-37) Total Reading = 59 pp.
Tuesday Feb. 20 (AM)	<i>God & Human Persons. God & the imago Dei: Genesis 1. God & Persons, Male & Female: Creation (Genesis 2 - Part 1).</i>	Willard, "Guidelines for Hearing God" = 8 pp. Stott, <i>Same-Sex Relationships</i> = 76 pp. Total Reading = 84 pp.
Tuesday, Feb. 20 (PM)	<i>Creation (Genesis 2 - Part 2). Creation and Christ: Sex, Gender, Identity, Expression, Practice, Unions, Wholeness. Complementarity and Partnerships in Life and Work.</i>	Gilson/Sprinkle = 2 pp. Cru: "Compassionate & Faithful: Navigating LGBT+ Questions in Ministry" = 16 pp. Podcast: "Singleness: A Roundtable Conversation." Total Reading = 18 pp.; Podcast Listening: 60 minutes.
Wednesday, Feb. 21 (AM)	<i>Unity & Diversity: Culture and Ethnicity vs. Race/Racism. Humanity in Sin.</i>	*DUE: Essay, "Biblical and Theological Foundations Concerning Sexuality" - 11:59 pm ET (Canvas). Milne, 138-160 = 23 pp. <i>Q. 3 and Q. 5</i> (pp. 159-60) 161-166 = 7 pp. <i>Q. 1; Q. 2; and Q. 5: list a few points for sub-categories (a)-(f).</i> (p. 166)
	<i>The Person of Christ.</i>	Milne, 173-176 = 4 pp. <i>Q. 1 and Q. 4</i> (p. 177) 177-195 = 19 pp. <i>Comment on the "Conclusion" section: why bother with Jesus?</i> (p. 193) 195-204 = 9 pp. <i>Q. 3</i> (p. 204) Total Reading = 62 pp.
Wednesday, Feb. 21 (PM)	<i>The Work of Christ.</i>	Milne, 205-222 = 18 pp. 224-237 = 13 pp. 237-244 = 8 pp. <i>Comment on this "Application" section: which themes especially impress you as "good news" about Jesus?</i> (pp. 237-244) Total Reading = 39 pp.

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading & Writing Assignments Due</u>
Thursday, Feb. 22 (AM)	<i>What is Salvation?</i>	
	Holy Spirit: Person & Work	Milne, 245-247 = 3 pp. 247-250 = 4 pp.
	Christian Beginnings	250-260 = 10 pp. Q. 2; Q. 5; Q. 6; Q. 7 (pp. 260-61)
	Holy Spirit: Person & Work	Milne, 245-247 = 3 pp. 247-250 = 4 pp. Total Reading = 24 pp.
Thursday, Feb. 22 (PM)	Growth in Christ.	Milne, 261-273 = 13 pp. Q. 1; Q. 3 (p. 274)
	Sanctification & Spiritual Formation	Willard, "Never Alone" = 24 pp. Willard, "Idaho Springs Inquiries" 1-4 = 7 pp. Total Reading = 44 pp.
Friday, Feb. 23 (AM)	Character Revolution	Willard & Simpson, <i>Revolution of Character</i> (pp. 9-21, 39-54, 55-67, 69-82) = 56 pp.
	Jesus's Disciple: A Profile	Willard, "How Does the Disciple Live?" = 2 pp. Total Reading = 58 pp.
Friday, Feb. 23 (PM)	Learning Kingdom Living. Spiritual Disciplines.	Willard, "Looking Like Jesus" = 9 pp. Willard, "Key to the Keys" = 8 pp.
	Christ's Path for Growth	Willard, "Live Life to the Full" = 2 pp. Total Reading = 19 pp.
Friday, Feb. 23		*DUE: Essay, "What is Salvation?" plus your Reading Report and Final Reflection (what are your biggest take-aways from the course?) (11:59 PM)

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