

# *Humanity, Christ, and Salvation*

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## **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 the 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. "Leading in a Complex Moral Environment."

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](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/april/preston-sprinkle-embodied-transgender-identity-church-bible.html)

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.

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

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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](http://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](http://www.dwillard.org/articles/live-life-to-the-full)

## Learning Tasks

- 1. Zoom Class Sessions.** Class sessions will involve a combination of lectures and discussions in whole-class and smaller groups. Please log into the Zoom session at least five minutes prior to the start of each session.
- 2. Required Reading.** You will read selected chapters in Bruce Milne's *Know the Truth* (the main theology textbook); chapters in several books by Dallas Willard, who provides a richly insightful exposition of the best of the classical Christian tradition on spiritual formation in Christlikeness; a book by John Stott on same-sex relationships; and an article by Rachel Gilson, interviewing Preston Sprinkle on his book addressing conversations with individuals describing themselves as transgender, nonbinary, and so forth. Given the compressed time-frame of this course, it is crucial to **complete the assigned reading 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, July 23, at 11:59 pm, Eastern (submit to Canvas).**
- 3. Course Study & Reflection Log.** Please maintain a course log that includes the following elements:
  - A. Reading: Short Answers.** Some readings have an assigned question correlated to the material, for which you will write a short answer (between 1-2 paragraphs). Your response should synthesize what you read and reflect on its implications. See "Course Schedule and Assignments" for instructions on the specific question(s) to answer in conjunction with Reading.
  - B. Class Reflections: Daily Journal Entries.** After each day adjourns, please write a short entry (100-150 words) reflecting on a significant insight, claim, issue, or the like that captured your attention. It may have been surprising, upsetting, a new connection drawn, or something you resonated with. Consider these prompts: 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 is one way that your life and

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ministry might be impacted by what was discussed today? What needs more clarification, exploration, research, discussion, and prayer? In your **final journal entry**, discuss your biggest take-aways from the class.

**DUE: Friday, July 23, at 11:59 pm, Eastern (submit to Canvas).**

4. **Final Essays.** Write an essay on both topics (three or four pages, 12-point font, double-spaced). *Note:* On the Course Schedule, the essay is first listed with the date the topic is discussed in class. The essays are **DUE one day after** the in-class discussion.

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

**DUE: Friday, July 16, 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 7-10.

- 1) In our post-Fall world, what makes our understanding of sex and gender issues complex, according to Doherty (Stott, pp. 17-20); Stott (pp. 75-78); and Sprinkle/Gilson? How can the distinctions they draw (e.g., preference vs. practice) inform our overall approach as Jesus's followers, as we interact with others, whether we or they identify as heterosexual or LGBTQ?
- 2) If human beings are not defined by their sex or gender (Stott, 16), who are we, and where does our dignity and value lie
- 3) What do all persons have in common, being created by God? What do they share as a result of the Fall?
- 4) What is the biblical view of "the God-ordained context for one-flesh intimacy" (Stott, 39-40)? What are the four elements of marriage as God established it, according to Genesis 2 (Stott, 38), and the three principles Jesus affirmed (Stott, 38)?
- 5) How do all other sexual practices and relationships 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) What is love, and what is freedom, biblically defined?
- 7) How is the Lord Jesus relevant to the widespread belief that sexual experience and/or marriage are necessary for a good life, filled with love, joy, and meaning?
- 8) What hope does the risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and his redemptive and transformative love offer to all who experience loneliness and unfulfilled longings, whatever their sexual orientation and situation?
- 9) How will these biblical-theological convictions—and Cru's statement, "Leading in a Complex Moral Environment"—shape the way you will approach sexuality-related issues in your own life, and interact with others

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in the future, as a follower of the Lord Jesus? What is one next step you can take to be better informed and prepared to live and minister in his name?

**2. *What is Salvation?***

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

Typically, gospel presentations define salvation as Jesus’ promise of forgiveness for our sins and heaven-when-we-die. However, according to Milne, *salvation* includes, but is more than, *justification* (God’s declaration that we stand in a right relationship with him because Jesus’ personal righteousness has paid our 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 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 Study & Reflection Log	40%
Reading: Short-Answers: 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 Issues**

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

NOTE: Given the compressed nature of this course, *it is important to complete the reading prior to the first session.*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading &amp; Writing Assignments Due</u>
<b>Monday, July 12</b>	Introduction to Theology Dogmatic Rank	
<b>Tuesday, July 13</b>	Reality: God & Kingdom. Doctrine of God: Persons; Nature and Attributes. Kingdom: Creation and Providence.	Milne, 79-84 = 5 pp. <i>Answer Question 1</i> (p. 84) 84-94 = 11 pp. <i>Q. 1 and Q. 3 OR Q. 4</i> (p. 94) 95-107 = 13 pp. <i>Q. 2 or Q. 5</i> (p. 106) 107-118 = 12 pp. <i>Q. 1 and Q. 2</i> (p. 112) Total Reading = 39 pp.
<b>Wednesday, July 14</b>	God-World-Humanity: <i>Creation</i> . God & Human Persons. God & the <i>imago Dei</i> (Gen 1)	Milne, 119-137 = 18 pp. <i>Q. 3 &amp; 5 OR 7</i> (pp. 136-137). Willard, "Guidelines for Hearing God" = 8 pp. Total Reading = 25 pp.
<b>Thursday, July 15</b>	God & Human Persons: <i>Creation</i> (Gen 2). Complementarity & Partnership in Work and Life  Sex, Gender, Identity, Expression, Practice, Union.	Stott. Total = 76 pp. Gilson. Total = 2 pp. "Leading in a Complex Moral Environment" (11 pp.) Total Reading = 89 pp.  <b>* Essay: "Biblical and Theological Foundations Concerning Sexuality"</b>
<b>Friday, July 16</b>	Unity & Diversity: Culture and Ethnicity vs. Race/Racism  Humanity in Sin	Milne, 138-160 = 23 pp. <i>Q. 3 and Q. 5</i> (pp. 159-60) 161-166 = 7 pp. <i>Q. 1; Q. 2; Q. 5 (list a few points for each sub-category</i> (p. 166) Total Reading = 23 pp.  <b>DUE: Essay, "Sexuality: Biblical and Theological Foundations"</b>

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading &amp; Writing Assignments Due</u>
<b>Monday, July 19</b>	The Person of Christ	Milne, 173-176 = 4 pp. <i>Questions 1 and 4</i> (p. 177) 177-195 = 19 pp. <i>Comment on "Conclusion" section</i> (p. 193)
	The Work of Christ	195-204 = 9 pp. <i>Q. 3</i> (p. 204) 205-222 = 18 pp. 224-237 = 13 pp. 237-244 = 8 pp. <i>Comment on "Application" section.</i>
		Total Reading = 81 pp.
<b>Tuesday, July 20</b>	What is Salvation?	Milne, 245-247 = 3 pp.
	Holy Spirit: Person & Work	247-250 = 4 pp.
	Christian Beginnings	250-260 = 10 pp. <i>Q. 2; Q. 5; Q. 6; Q. 7</i> (pp. 260-61)
		Total Reading = 17 pp.
<b>Wednesday, July 21</b>	Christian Growth	Milne, 261-273 = 13 pp. <i>Q. 1 and Q. 3</i> (p. 274) <b>* Essay: "What is Salvation?"</b>
	Sanctification & Spiritual Formation	Willard, "Never Alone" = 24 pp. Willard, "Idaho Springs Inquiries" 1-4 = 7 pp. Total Reading = 44 pp.
<b>Thursday, July 22</b>	Sanctification: A Revolution of Character	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.
<b>Friday, July 23</b>	Learning Kingdom Living	Willard, "Looking Like Jesus" = 9 pp.
	Spiritual Disciplines	Willard, "Key to the Keys" = 8 pp.
	Christ's Path for Growth	Willard, "Live Life to the Full" = 2 pp. Total Reading = 19 pp.
		<b>DUE: Essay, "What is Salvation?"</b>