

Leadership & Discipleship

Meeting Information

Wednesdays, 1-3PM (Aug 19-Dec 3; no class on Oct 7 for Fall Break)

Contact Information

Dr. Matthew Miller

Email: m.miller@cslewisinstitute.org (please indicate “RTS” at the beginning of the subject line)

Cell: 864-884-8107

Course Description

A study of leadership philosophy, principles, catechesis, and skills through which a pastor can lead a session in developing a culture of discipleship to fulfill the church’s mission in its life and witness. A variety of leadership, discipleship, Christian education, and philosophy of ministry topics will be discussed.

Course Objectives

- Develop a view of leadership informed by church history
- Value and cultivate humility in personal life and leadership
- Learn how to cultivate a spiritually mature and unified session, and to equip elders and sessions for disciple-making
- Develop skills for building, leading, and evaluating a church staff
- Grow in ability to handle conflict and have difficult conversations
- Understand the biblical and theological foundations of discipleship
- Appreciate the disciple-making value of traditional catechesis
- Understand the role of Christian schools and Christian non-profit ministries in the church’s mission

Required Reading (1,024 pages)

Chap Bettis. *Managing Your Households Well: How Family Leadership Trains You for Church Leadership*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2025. (117 pages)

John Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Vol. 1. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1960. (Book III, “The Way in Which We Receive the Grace of Christ,” chs.1-3 & 6-10, 120 pages).

Henry Cloud and John Townsend. *How to Have That Difficult Conversation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005. (chapters 1-20, plus student chooses any two of chapters 21-27; approx. 220 pages)

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971. (chapters 3-12, 94 pages).

Andrew Murray. *Humility*. Columbia, SC: An Essential Christian Classic. (43 pages). Also available free online in numerous places.

J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*. Fourth Edition. Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute, 2017 (chapters 1-12, 15, 17-18; approx. 150 pages).

Alexander Strauch, *Meetings That Work: A Guide to Effective Elders' Meetings*. Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 2001. (68 pages)

Thomas A. Tarrants, *Following Jesus Christ: A Guide to Growing in Authentic Discipleship*. Washington, DC: C. S. Lewis Institute Press, 2026. (chapters 13-19, 112 pages)

Donald Whitney. *Praying the Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015. (100 pages)

Additional Reading on Leadership

Joel R. Beeke, *How to Lead Your Family: A Guide for Men Wanting to Be More*. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2025.

Christopher A. Beeley. *Leading God's People: Wisdom from the Early Church for Today*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012.

Peter F. Drucker. *The Effective Executive: The Definitive Guide to Getting the Right Things Done*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1967.

Edwin H. Friedman. *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix. Revised Edition*. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.

Scott M. Manetsch, *Calvin's Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536-1609*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Harold L. Senkbeil and Lucas V. Woodford. *The Culture of God's Word: Faithful Ministry in a Post-Christian Society*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2026.

Timothy Z. Witmer. *The Shepherd Leader: Achieving Effective Shepherding in Your Church*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010.

Captain John Warren and Master Sergeant John Thompson. *Lead Like a Marine: Run Towards a Challenge, Assemble Your Fireteam, and Win Your Next Battle*. New York: Harper Business, 2023.

Additional Reading on Discipleship

Matthew Bingham. *A Heart Aflame for God: A Reformed Approach to Spiritual Formation*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2025.

Martin Bucer. *Concerning the True Care of Souls*. Translated by Peter Beale. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009.

Ian Green. *The Christian's ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England c. 1530-1740*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Greg Ogden. *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016.

J. I. Packer. *Growing in Christ*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1994.

Francis Schaeffer. *True Spirituality*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020.

Stephen Smallman. *The Walk: Steps for New and Renewed Followers of Jesus*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009.

Trevin K. Wax. *Eschatological Discipleship: Leading Christians to Understand Their Historical and Cultural Context*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2018.

Memorize

Bible: Matthew 5:3-12 ("The Beatitudes")

Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q's 23, 31, 36, and 90

Course Assignments

1. **Required Reading & Memorization (20%).** Students will self-report each week, by noon on Wednesday, how much of that week's assigned reading you have completed. Dr. Miller will explain on the first day of class how the memorization will be tested.
2. **Growing in Humility (15%).** For four weeks in September, students will give daily focused time to the virtue of humility through reading and meditating on Scripture; reading D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, Andrew Murray, and Donald Whitney; journaling; and praying. At the end of the month, you will compose a brief summary reflection for submission. **Due Sept 30.**

3. ***Managing Your Households Well Reflection Papers (10%)***. Students will write a brief (approx. 500-600 words) reflection paper on Chap Bettis's *Managing Your Households Well* that includes three parts: (1) a summary of Bettis's major theme, (2) a reflection on how you experienced "family leadership" in your own upbringing, and (3) a statement of aspirational goals for your own life and leadership in light of what you learned from reading Bettis. **Due Sept 9.**

4. ***How to Have That Difficult Conversation Paper and In-Class Exercise (10%)***. You will write a brief paper outlining a "difficult conversation" – real or imaginary – that applies the lessons you learned from reading Cloud and Townsend's book. Your paper will include four parts: (1) one paragraph (max) summarizing the background and significance of the difficult conversation; (2) one paragraph (max) stating the goals in mind before the conversation begins, the biblical rationale for those goals, and the personal preparation that precedes the conversation itself; (3) an imaginary dialogue of the conversation (this should be the longest part, length determined by student); and (4) one closing paragraph (max) of personal reflection on where you most need to grow personally to be ready and able to have difficult conversations. **Due Oct 21.** In addition to this written exercise, you will join with another student to present a "role play" in class of a difficult conversation (5 minutes max). Dr. Miller will provide additional instructions on the in-class portion of this assignment.

5. ***"Calvin's Theology of Discipleship" Paper (20%)***. Using the assigned chapters from Book III of Calvin's *Institutes* as your main text, write a paper (2000-3000 words) describing how Calvin defines the goal(s) of discipleship, motivations for discipleship, essential components for progressing in discipleship, and expected struggles in discipleship. **Due Nov 11.**

6. ***"A Philosophy of Leadership and Discipleship" (25%)***. Drawing on course readings, lectures, and your own reflection, compose "A Philosophy of Leadership and Discipleship for [Name of Church]" (1500-2000 words, not including footnotes) designed for presentation to, and adoption by, a church session. Topics to be covered include mission, vision, theological foundations, leadership philosophy, officer training, session and diaconate development, new members class, catechesis / discipleship pathway, youth ministry, men's and women's ministry, vision for your church's relationship to Christian schools and/or non-profit ministries, and an implementation plan. This paper should read less like an essay and more like a plan with headings, bullet points, and brief explanations (more expansive descriptions can go in the footnotes). Dr. Miller will provide more details in class. **Due Dec 3.**

Extensions Policy for Assignments: In extenuating circumstances, a deadline extension of **up to one week** may be granted at the discretion of the professor. Requests for extensions of **more than one week** must be submitted to the Registrar for consideration by the Academic Dean in consultation with the professor. Extensions are granted only for significant emergencies or unforeseen circumstances, and a grade penalty may be applied. *All extension requests must be made prior to the assignment deadline.* No retrospective extensions will be granted.

RTS Charlotte Classroom Technology Usage: RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made Wi-Fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and locate other important information. However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student's own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can easily view the screens of nearby students. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS. Classroom etiquette includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet or playing computer games or other distracting activities. In addition, students must respect standards set by individual professors regarding the use of technology during their class.

In order to address this issue, we must appeal to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We expect each student to take personal responsibility for proper classroom technology usage and to encourage others around them to do the same. All RTS-Charlotte students are accountable to the policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Catalog and are therefore expected to use technology in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities. Student conduct is under the supervision of the Dean of Students.

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: PT 5275 Leadership and Discipleship
 Professor: Dr. Matthew Miller
 Campus: Charlotte
 Date: Fall 2026

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u> <i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<u>Rubric</u> • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	Course integrates some biblical and theological concepts related to discipleship and leadership into the reading and lectures.
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Minimal	Principles of leadership and discipleship drawn from Scripture are integrated only minimally.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	A major paper on "Calvin's Theology of Discipleship" joins lectures on the Reformed doctrine of union with Christ, on the Reformed doctrine of the "triple office," and on the Reformed understanding of catechesis. Student also memorize select questions from the Westminster Shorter Catechism.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Students have a month-long assignment on growing in humility, as well as lectures and reading devoted to learning how to "meditate" on Scripture.

Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Moderate	Practical ministry is viewed from the perspective of Scripture as its foundation.
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Moderate	Students have a month-long assignment on growing in humility, as well as written and in-class assignments on how to handle disagreements.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Strong	Communication to the congregation and vision casting are addressed at length.