

Personal Sanctification (PT5375)

Reformed Theological Seminary Atlanta

Fall 2026

Rev. Joel E. Smit

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Office Hours: By appointment

Class Schedule

Thursdays, 9AM-12PM (Aug. 27, Sept. 17, Oct. 15)

Thursday 9AM-1PM (Nov. 12)

*since there are limited classes, PLEASE make a priority to attend all classes in-person. Only very limited exceptions will be made.

Class Description

This course explores the theology and methodology of personal growth in Christ. It will focus on what the Bible says about sanctification and the means of grace. Special attention will be given to growth in grace and the disciplines of sanctification (as a means of grace in the Christian life).

Required Reading

Crossway Short Classics (Wheaton, IL: Crossway 2022).

*students will choose 3 of the possible 10 titles to read and do reports.

David McIntyre, *The Hidden Life of Prayer* (Christian Focus, 2010)

David Murray, *Reset, Living a Grace-paced Life in a Burnout Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017)
(for male students)

Shona & David Murray, *Refresh, Embracing a Grace-paced Life in a World of Demands* (Crossway, 2017)
(for female students)

**It is expected that students will bring their Bibles with them to class.*

Course Evaluation

1. Student Self-Evaluations: (40% of final grade)

Students will evaluate their own spiritual condition at the beginning and the end of the semester by using the following questions as a spiritual diagnostic.

-How would you evaluate the condition of your spiritual life currently?

-What measurable advances has the Lord made in your soul's sanctification in the past year?

-How is your time in the Word, prayer? How much are you in the Word devotionally (not in order to teach or

preach)?

-How much are you praying? Do you avoid time in prayer? Why or why not?

-Are you presently experiencing real profit in your soul from the public means of grace? Why or why not?

-How are using your singleness (if not married) for the Lord and the work of His Church?

-Do you pray with your spouse (if you are married)? Why or why not?

-(If not married) Do you have times of gathering in extended prayer with others? Why or why not?

-In what ways does your relationship with your spouse (if you are married) positively mirror Christ's relationship to the church?

-(If not married) What are examples of biblical marriage have you seen or experienced?

-Do you engage in family worship (if you are married and/or have a family)? Why or why not?

-(If not married) have you seen models of family worship?

-How are you concretely nurturing your children (if you have children) in the admonition of the Lord?

-(If you do not have children) what ways have you been connected with teaching or training children? How has this experience been?

-Do you engage in regular fellowship and communion with the saints? Why or why not?

-Do you love Jesus and His Word more now than when you were first converted? Why or why not? -Are you holding onto (i.e., cherishing) any particular sins in your life? If so, why?

-Are you presently harboring anything against a brother or sister in Christ's church? Are you harboring a bitterness/anger of some kind toward someone?

-Is there anything keeping you from intimate communion with the Lord? If so, what? And what would it take to deal with that "anything"?

-In what ways are you taking care of your body to the glory of Christ and His Spirit, whose temple you are?

-What three books would you say have had the most spiritual impact upon you other than the Bible?

-What excitements, expectations, reservations, apprehensions, and/or fears do you have about this class?

Please provide short paragraph answers that demonstrate contemplation of the question.

The whole point of this assignment is to have each student evaluate his or her own spiritual condition. Sometimes we drift as Christians and are not pursuing Christ with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. If this is where you are currently, then own it, write it down, and confess it to the Lord.

At the end of the semester, each student will again evaluate their spiritual condition similarly and specifically look for any signs of growth in grace over the course of the semester. I realize that the semester is only 13 weeks long, but that should be plenty of time to see changes in attitudes and desires and maybe even behavior.

2. Class attendance and participation: 30% of final grade.

Because of the nature of the class, students will be expected to attend class each week and to participate in the discussion/activity.

3. Required Reading: 30% of final grade.

Students will write a one-page, single spaced report on each required reading (5 one-page reports in total). The student must reflect on aspects of that book that were personally encouraging, strengthening, convicting, etc., and the role those aspects have played/will play in their personal sanctification.

All work is due by 11:59pm on the date prescribed, according to the time-stamp of the email. Late submissions will be accepted but will merit a deduction of 3 percentage points per day off of what would otherwise be the student's grade (i.e., if student earned a 95 on given assignment [out of total of 100 points] and was 2 days late, the student's final grade would be an 89 [i.e., 95 – 6 points = 89]). The 3 percentage-point penalty will begin at midnight of the day after the due date. This penalty will be waived only if a student is providentially hindered from completing the assignments on time. and/or has made prior arrangements with the professor.

Zoom Policy

Your professor may allow you to Zoom into class or watch Zoom recordings for excused absences based on the professor's discretion and subject to the availability of equipment. Students should contact their professor well in advance of the class meeting. For a third absence the Registrar should be consulted. Your professor may require additional interactive assignments to offset the absence of classroom interaction. Sync or Remote Live courses have priority for the limited Zoom equipment.

Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Registrar's Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 46 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 18)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 49)

Proposed Lecture Schedule

Class 1.

Syllabus and introductory information.

Creation / Fall

Redemption

Class #2

Definition of Sanctification

Justification / Sanctification Distinction

Old Man / New Man

Class #3

Word of God & the Use of the Law in Sanctification

Communion with God – Prayer
Church & Sacraments
Class # 4
Sexual Temptation & Sin
The Role of Trials & Suffering in Sanctification
Godly Lifestyle & Habits

Select Texts for Additional Reading on your own

Joel Beeke & Michael Barrett, *A Radical Comprehensive Call to Holiness* (Mentor, 2021)
Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (Harper & Rowe, 1954)
Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace: God's Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness* (NavPress, 1994).
Jerry Bridges, *Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate* (NavPress, 2007).
John Calvin, *Institutes*, see especially 3.1-2, 6-9, and 11-14; and 4.14.1-12 and 4.17.1-11; etc.
Kevin DeYoung, *The 10 Commandments: What They Mean, Why They Matter, and Why We Should Obey Them* (Crossway, 2018)
Kevin DeYoung, *The Hole in Our Holiness* (Crossway, 2014)
J. Douma, *The Ten Commandments: Manual for the Christian Life* (P&R Publishing, 1996)
Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Christian Life: A Doctrinal Introduction* (Banner of Truth, 1989).
Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Devoted to God: Blueprints for Sanctification* (Banner of Truth, 2016).
R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man* (Crossway, 2006 reprint).
R. Kent Hughes, *Set Apart: Calling a Worldly Church to a Godly Life* (Crossway, 2003).
David Mathis, *Habits of Grace: Enjoying Jesus through the Spiritual Disciplines* (Crossway, 2016).
JP Moreland, *Love Your God with all Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul* (NavPress, 1997).
John Murray, *Redemption—Accomplished and Applied* (Banner of Truth, 1961 reprint).
John Owen, *Communion with God*, ed. R.J.K. Law (Banner of Truth, 1991)
JI Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Crossway, 1990).
JI Packer, *Rediscovering Holiness* (Servant Publications, 1992).
David W. Saxton, *God's Battle Plan for the Mind: The Puritan Practice of Meditation* (Reformation Heritage, 2015)
Thomas Watson, *The Ten Commandments* (Banner of Truth, 1999 reprint)
Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (NavPress, 1991).
Kenneth B. Wingate, *Rich Grace in Poor Soil* (Christian Focus, 2022)

Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes

Course: 04PT5375 Professor: Joel Smit Campus: Atlanta

Date: Fall 2025

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes		Rubric	Mini-Justification
<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. —*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		Strong Moderate Minimal None	
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	Students will have to write papers and participate in classroom discussions.
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.)	Strong	Scripture will be the basis for the course.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Westminster standards will be the basis for the course.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Course is dealing with sanctification.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	Course will touch on worldview issues.
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.)	Strong	Course will be taught with an emphasis on being winsome in all things.
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-Xns.	Moderate	Course will prepare students for pastoral ministry by focusing on personal sanctification.