

## Spring 2022 Theology Exam

### Section I: Reformed Confessional Heritage

You are pastor of Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church. Joan, a member of the congregation, meets with you and shares her struggles as a Christian:

Pastor, I used to be so self-indulgent, treating everyone around me horribly. When I started my Christian journey, I truly committed myself to serving God and loving others with all my heart and soul. But lately I find myself falling into the old bad habits. I feel weak and inadequate as a Christian. Should I stay away from church until I can live a more perfect Christian life?

**REQUIRED RESPONSES:** (*Total responses in this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.*)

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of **sanctification**. In the essay, identify and discuss at least one (1) citation (e.g., 0.000) from each of three (3) different documents in the *Book of Confessions*.
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, respond theologically to Joan, with appropriate pastoral sensitivity.

## Section II: Constructive Statement of Christian Doctrine

You are pastor of Second Presbyterian Church. During worship one Sunday, the congregation reads part of A Brief Statement of Faith:

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!" (11.4, lines 73-76)

After worship, three church members have the following conversation:

Ben:	Are we praying for the world to end when we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus!"?
Beatrice:	I think it has more to do with praying for God's will and for faith that God will do all things in God's time.
Agnes:	Sometimes I get impatient waiting for God's time. God never seems to do anything according to my time.

**REQUIRED RESPONSES:** (*Total responses in this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.*)

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of **the human experience of God's time**. In the essay, use **all three (3)** of the following resources: the Scriptures, classical theology, and contemporary theology. Lines 73-76 from A Brief Statement of Faith may be used in the essay, but those lines will not count as one of the required resources.
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, respond theologically to Ben, Beatrice, and Agnes.

### Section III: Application to Ministry

As pastor of Twelfth Street Presbyterian Church, you are teaching an adult Bible study on the Gospel of Luke. At the end of one class, a few class members who have read ahead immediately begin talking with you about next week's text, Luke 14:25-33.

Hanna:	How can Jesus ask us to hate our families as a condition of following him? Isn't family where we learn to love others, just as he commanded?
Tim:	And is it really true that we can't be his disciples if we hold on to <i>any</i> of our possessions?
Chenin:	It's worse than that; Jesus says we must hate our lives! This all sounds like too much to ask. If these are the expectations, how can any of us really be disciples of Jesus?

**REQUIRED RESPONSES:** (*Total responses for this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.*)

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of the **cost of discipleship**. In the essay, use at least two (2) of these resources: the Scriptures, classical theology, contemporary theology. Luke 14:25-33 or its parallels may be used in the essay, but it will not count as one of the required resources.
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, provide an annotated outline for a 45-minute Bible study on the cost of discipleship. Be sure to address the questions that Hanna, Tim, and Chenin have shared. (For this exam, an annotated outline is an outline with explanatory notes.)