

A Day in the God-Centered Life

What is 'Reformational' or 'Reformed' Theology?

- Definition: *the God-centered life*: all of life lived according to the Word of God, by the grace of God, through faith in the Son of God, united by the Spirit of God, to magnify and enjoy God.
- Big Ideas: God rules and controls all things in creation, salvation, and history (*the sovereignty of God*)
The Bible is a single, unfolding story of God's saving promises to man (*covenant theology*)
The church is always striving to bring all of life in line with God's Word (*always reforming*)
Justification (being *declared* righteous) is distinct from sanctification (being *made* righteous)
In sanctification, we seek not just to change behavior, but also to *free our hearts from idols*.
Every Christian needs *membership* in a visible church for discipleship and accountability.
We worship God the way he tells us to (*regulative principle*) – with joy, order, and wonder.
God rules his church by groups of elders (*presbyters*) accountable to each other and his Word.

Today: Doctrine for Life!

- Reformational theology and churches are often accused of, and fall into, the trap of being overly cerebral.
- Although the Bible does teach us to pursue right thinking (*orthodoxy*), it also calls us to pursue right living (*orthopraxy*) – and to do both our thinking and our living with a right spirit (*orthopathos*).
- How do we bring what we've learned into daily life – not just into our minds, but our hearts and hands?

Waking Up

Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you. (Ps. 139:16-18)

- As we wake up each day, we should remember that nothing we are going to face before bedtime is truly random. Our God has written this day in his book before the foundation of the world, and he has ordained *everything* that is coming toward us for our good.
- But very, very few of us will remember all of this automatically or instantaneously – and so it is a very wise practice to begin our mornings with prayer and Scripture reading:
 - Note: Depending on when we must go to work – which can include getting children awake and ready! – the amount of time we have for morning prayer will vary. One size does not fit all! The most important thing is not *quantity*, but *regularity* and *sustainability*. Being faithful at 5 minutes per day is better than attempting to read 10 chapters every morning and failing!
 - Goal: Just as we would not start off on an unknown journey without first getting out our phone or a map, so we should seek every morning to point our hearts and minds toward God.
 - Practical Tip: in order to combat morning fog, try reading or praying out loud!

Going to Work

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. (Col. 3:23-24)

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Gal. 5:14)

- Diligence: Pastors are not the only ones who serve God at work. Even the most ordinary work – including housework and schoolwork – is important because it is done for God. (Ex: Churchill's janitor.)
- Service. Good work is a way of loving others. We study in youth to be more capable adults. Salespeople don't sell things; they help people buy. Shoemakers make good shoes because these are better for people.
- Practical Tip: "I don't love this task... but I love those for whom I am doing it."

Throughout the Day

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Phil. 4:4-6)

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances... (1 Thess. 5:16-18)

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. (Col. 4:5-6)

- Cheerfulness (Phil. 4:4)
- Reasonableness (Phil. 4:5)
- Prayerfulness (Phil. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:17)
- Thankfulness (1 Thess 5:18)
- Watchfulness (Col. 4:5)
- Graciousness (Col. 4:6)

Facing the Unexpected

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. (Matt. 10:29-31)

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Rom. 8:28)

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (Jas. 1:2-4)

- Your car won't start, an appliance breaks, a child gets injured... or worse! What do we say?
- **"This is a surprise to me, but it wasn't a surprise to You. What do you want me to learn?"**

After Work

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Cor. 10:31)

For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving... (1 Tim. 4:4)

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 Jn. 2:15)

- Many people – especially in the West – are privileged to enjoy significant amount of non-work time.
- The temptation is to see this as “me time,” and give it all over to various entertainments and recreations.

You must therefore zealously guard in his mind the curious assumption ‘My time is my own’. Let him have the feeling that he starts each day as the lawful possessor of twenty-four hours. Let him feel as a grievous tax that portion of this property which he has to make over to his employers, and as a generous donation that further portion which he allows to religious duties. But what he must never be permitted to doubt is that the total from which these deductions have been made was, in some mysterious sense, his own personal birthright. (*The Screwtape Letters*)

- It is not wrong to enjoy good things, but we must never allow them to become “god-things.”
- Danger Signs: When recreations/things disrupt our relationships or divert us from responsibilities!
Ex. unreasonable anger when “me time” interrupted; missing public worship for sports

Before Turning Out the Lights

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deut. 6:6-7)

...from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (2 Tim. 3:15)

- For those with families, it is good to begin or end each day together in Scripture and reflection, prayer and praise. Such “family worship” does not have to be complex; consistency and sustainability is the key!
Example: Each of our kids reads a chapter of the Bible on their own earlier in the day. At family worship time, they shared where they read and one thing they learned about God, man, Christ, or Christian life. After this, we agree on three prayer requests and somebody prays. After this, we sing one verse of a hymn.
- Husbands and wives should also reflect and pray together – without the kids – before turning off the light.