

## COURSE SYLLABUS

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# Spiritual and Ethical Formation: Theology and Practice

Course Lecturers: Richard E. Averbeck, PhD and James Grier, ThD  
Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Distinguished Professor of Philosophical Theology at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary

## Course Description

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Spiritual and ethical formation is a topic of discussion in many circles. We all long for intimacy with God, but how is spiritual growth and maturity developed? What are the dynamics in which God most often works in the heart of believers to make them like His Son, Jesus Christ? In this seminar, Richard Averbeck and James Grier address these and other questions in order to lay a biblical, theological foundation for proper Christian thought. In addition, they identify and describe specific practices that the listener can apply immediately to his/her life of faith.

## Course Objectives

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Upon completion of the course, you should be able to do the following:

- Understand the biblical foundations for spiritual and ethical formation.
- Evaluate your life for areas to become more intentional and open to the work of the Spirit.
- Analyze the ways individuals make decisions in order to identify habits and values that are contrary to the moral will of God.
- Think critically about how to approach life in light of the biblical foundations for spiritual and ethical formation.
- Apply the three dimensions of Christian spiritual formation to your life of faith.
- Apply a biblical model for decision-making that will enhance your moral and spiritual formation.
- Value both spiritual and ethical formation as important aspects of the Christian life (both individual and corporate).

## Course Lecturers

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*Richard E. Averbeck, PhD*

**Education:**

- Annenberg Research Institute at the University of Pennsylvania, PhD
- Grace Theological Seminary, MDiv and MA
- Calvary Bible College, BA

**Teaching Career:**

- Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
- Dallas Theological Seminary (1990-1994)
- Chairman of the Old Testament Department, Grace Theological Seminary (1980-1990)
- Visiting lecturer at the Lutheran School of Theology in Copenhagen and Århus, Denmark
- Preached and taught in China, across Germany, and West Africa
- Expertise in Old Testament Law, Near Eastern Studies, and Semitic languages

**Other Career Highlights:**

- Member of the Evangelical Theological Society, the Institute for Biblical Research, the American Oriental Society, and the Society of Biblical Literature
- Director of the Spiritual Formation Forum
- Licensed therapist in Wisconsin, having studied under his friend and colleague, the world renowned counselor and Christian psychologist, Dr. Larry Crabb

**Publications:**

- Numerous articles for *The Future of Biblical Archaeology*, *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, *The Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care*, and *The Journal of Psychology and Christianity*
- Extensive contributions to *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* and *The Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*
- Entries for *The Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology; Faith Tradition, and History*; and *Cracking Old Testament Codes*
- Chief editor and major contributor to the *Life and Culture in Ancient Near East*



*James M. Grier, ThD (1932-2013)*

**Education:**

- Grace Theological Seminary, ThD
- Westminster Theological Seminary, ThM
- Grace Theological Seminary, MDiv
- Baptist Bible College, BTh

**Teaching Career:**

- Executive Vice President and Academic Dean, Grand Rapids Theological Seminary
- Distinguished Professor of Philosophical Theology, Grand Rapids Theological Seminary (1982-2012)
- Professor of Philosophy, Cedarville College, now Cedarville University (1969-1982)
- Adjunct Professor, Evangelical Baptist Seminary of Quebec (1984-2012)
- Adjunct Professor, Grace Theological Seminary (1978-2012)
- Acting Academic Dean, Grand Rapids Bible College, now Cornerstone University (1985-1986)

- Visiting or adjunct professor at Asia Baptist Theological Seminary, Puritan Reformed Seminary, and London Reformed Baptist Seminary
- Taught and preached extensively in Canada, Hungary, the United Kingdom, and Zambia
- Reputation as one of the finest scholars on a Christian worldview in evangelicalism

### **Other Career Highlights:**

- Chairman of the Evangelical Seminary Dean’s Council (1993-1998)
- Pastor on and off for more than 50 years
- Advised numerous hospital boards on medical ethics
- Various professional memberships, including The Evangelical Theological Society and the Evangelical Philosophical Society
- Philanthropic work at Home of Hope and Blodgett Hospital
- Conference speaker on philosophical theology and worldview at churches across the globe

### **Publications:**

- Contributor to books, including *The Relation of the Law to Christ, Demonstrating Truth in Our Lives*, *Doing Theology in the Context of Church Ministry*, and *Calvinistic Philosophy*

## **Course Methods**

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The lecture content for each lesson is provided in two easy-to-use formats: audio and PDF text (if available). Students can choose the medium (or combination of media) that most closely aligns with their individual learning styles.

## **Course Assessment and Requirements**

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To earn a Certificate of Completion, you must complete the course requirements. Course requirements include:

1. Listening to all 12 audio lectures.
2. Completing a final self-assessment form in which you will reflect on the content in the course and evaluate your life in light of what you have learned. The specifics of this assessment are provided in the course materials.

Course requirements noted in this syllabus will be validated before a Certificate of Completion is awarded to any student.