



John Calvin's *Institutes in the Christian Religion* (1541)

A PPA Seminar: Winter/Spring 2018

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Study 17: Chapter Seventeen: The Christian Life

Read pgs. 785-822

Prayer: "Heavenly Father, we offer you eternal praise and thanks that you have granted so great a benefit to us poor sinners, having drawn us into the communion of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, whom you delivered to death for us, and whom you give us as the meat and drink of life eternal. Now grant us this other benefit: that you will never allow us to forget these things, but having them imprinted on our hearts may we grow and increase daily in our faith, which is at work in every good deed. Thus may we order and pursue all our life to the exaltation of your glory and the edification of our neighbors, through the same Jesus Christ, your Son, who in the unity of the Holy Spirit lives and reigns with you, O God, forever. Amen."

Scripture Reading: Leviticus 19:1-2; Matt. 16:24; Rom. 12:1-2, 10; 1 Cor. 13:4-8; Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:1-4; Phil. 2:1-4; Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 11:13-16; 1 Peter 1:13-16; 2 Peter 1:3-11; 1 John 2:14-17

1. What method does the Holy Spirit use in two specific ways to make Christians more like Christ? List and define each one of these. [pgs. 786-87]
2. What is holiness? Why is it important for believers to possess? Give scriptural support for your answer. What are counterfeits to true holiness? How does the Gospel particularly help us to be holy? In your best estimation, are you growing in holiness before the Lord and the world? [pgs. 786-89, 96-97]
3. Should Christians make progress in holiness? How specifically? Should Christians aim for perfection? Will Christians reach perfection in this life? Explain. [pgs. 789-90]
4. What "golden rule" does Calvin teach us? How can this rule motivate us to serve God and neighbor? [pgs. 789-98]
5. What are some of the liberties, blessings, and benefits of self-denial? List as many of these as you can think. Why do you think it is so difficult for us to realize that self-denial brings deep and lasting happiness? [pgs. 792-94]

6. What is a steward? How can realizing that we are stewards of God's blessings help us to deny self, serve our neighbors, and glorify God? Give scriptural support. [pgs. 792-95]

7. How specifically does God grant us grace in our troubles as Christians? What attitude should we take toward all hard and difficult circumstances in our lives? How specifically should we think of God in hard times? Why is this very important for growth in Christ? [pgs. 799-800]

8. Are Christians to expect to live carrying Christ's cross in suffering? What are three specific blessings that the cross brings to true believers, though it can be deeply painful? [pgs. 800-805]

9. How does Calvin teach us to balance a gratitude for this wonderful world and the dangers that can come from loving it too much? How are you doing in this? What are the specific benefits of knowing you're a pilgrim who has yet to arrive home? What is the purpose of seeking to meditate and think on things above? [pgs. 810-22]

10. What is the coming hope of all believers? Can believers experience this partially now while living in this present life? If yes, what are some specific ways? [pgs. 816-21]

11. Thoughtful Reflection: Throughout church history, some believers have withdrawn completely from the world ("Fortress Mentality Christians"). How is there some truth in their aims? Dangers in this thinking? How might Calvin balance this? Some believers have become too involved and enamored with the world ("Reclaim the world for Christ" mentality). How is there some truth in their aims? Dangers in this thinking? How might Calvin balance this?