**What You Should Know from CM3 Practical Theology**

Lakeside Institute of Theology

1. What is meant by the term “Practical Theology?”
	1. The discipline that is concerned with understanding and applying religious beliefs and practices to our daily lives.
2. Practical Theology seeks to provide practical answers to what question?
	1. “How do we apply our beliefs to our daily lives?”
3. What are some of the several sub-fields related to Practical Theology?
	1. Pastoral theology
	2. Missions and evangelism
	3. Church growth
	4. Church administration
	5. Spiritual direction
	6. Theologies of justice, peace and liberation
	7. Homiletics (preaching)
	8. Spiritual formation and discipleship
4. What is meant by the term “spiritual formation?”
	1. The growth and development of a person’s spiritual and interior life.
	2. As a discipline, it is all attempts, means, instruction and disciplines intended towards deepening of faith and furtherance of spiritual growth.
	3. According to Dallas Willard, spiritual formation refers to the Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of a human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself.
5. What are some of the spiritual practices associated with spiritual formation?
	1. Prayer
	2. Study of Scripture
	3. Fasting
	4. Worship
	5. Solitude
	6. Confession
	7. Simplicity
	8. Spiritual direction
6. Why do we say that spiritual formation happens to everyone?
	1. Spiritual formation is the forming of our spirits and hearts, which happens to everyone *in one direction or another*, whether the person is a saint or a terrorist.
7. What is the focus of Christian spiritual formation?
	1. The focus in Christian spiritual formation in on Jesus, as it is the lifelong process of a believer becoming more a disciple of Jesus and so becoming more like Him.
8. What is meant by the term “Stewardship?”
9. “The conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially, the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care.”
10. What is a “steward?”
	1. A steward is someone who cares for something that belongs to someone else. (Like the manager of a business that is owned by someone else.)
11. What is the principle behind our understanding of Christian stewardship?
	1. We know that all things are made by God and still belong to Him, and we are called to be stewards of everything God places (or entrusts) into our lives
12. What is “The Law of Rightful Ownership?”
	1. The accepted principle that nothing truly belongs to us, and everything actually belongs to God.
13. What two facts give God a legitimate claim to all that is?
	1. God is the Creator, who made everything that is.
	2. God is the Redeemer, who paid a great price in Jesus to redeem the world from sin.
14. What, then, is the principle question we must ask about everything in our lives, if we are to be good stewards of God’s creation?
	1. “What does God want us to do with His stuff?”
15. What is meant by the expression “Whole Life Stewardship?”
	1. Christian stewardship has to do with every aspect of our lives and with every choice we make. This is our call as disciples of Christ, and responding well to this call to stewardship is our most fundamental act of obedience.
16. What is the first way in which we must respond as stewards of Jesus’ call on our lives?
	1. By fully accepting our election to salvation, without equivocating or trying to go half-way. It is to go “all-in” for God.
17. In practical terms, after accepting salvation, what does it mean to recognize the call of God on our lives?
18. It means to live a life of holiness before God, and in service to others.
19. To recognize and use the gifts, energy and power God has given us to fulfill His Call and purpose for us and for our lives.
20. To accept God’s objectives for our lives as *our* objectives, so that our lives will be both productive and fulfilling in ways we cannot imagine.
21. What is meant by “spiritual vision” and where does it come from?
	1. Spiritual vision is the ability to see something that does not yet exist in the physical realm, but which God can make possible.
	2. God does not give us tasks without also giving the vision to see how that task may be fulfilled.
	3. Spiritual vision is a gift from God.
22. Why do Christians need the gift of spiritual vision from God?
	1. It allows us to move ahead with confidence to the completion of God’s will.
	2. To find our way on life’s journey and to have assurance of God’s provision and protection.
	3. To keep our focus on God-given goals.
	4. To set our hearts on the true reward God promises.
23. What should be the end result of spiritual vision?
	1. Vision *from* God should lead to action *for* God.
24. In what ways does God speak to us, confirming our spiritual vision?
	1. Through the instruction and direction given in His Word, the Bible.
	2. Through prayer, as we meet and spend time with Him.
	3. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our minds and hearts.
25. What is the meaning of the word “faith” and from where does it come?
	1. According to the Book of Hebrews, “…*faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”*
	2. *“An act of trust and self-abandonment by which people no longer rely on their own strength and policies, but commit themselves to the power and guiding word of Jesus Christ, in whom they believe.” (New Jerusalem Bible)*
	3. It comes from the biblical Greek word ***pistis***, which means “to trust, have confidence, to be persuaded.”
26. From where does faith come?
	1. It is a gift from God.
27. What was Soren Kierkegaard’s understanding of faith?
	1. Kierkegaard described faith as a blind leap into the dark, with no clear direction and no assurances.
28. What was Francis Schaeffer’s corrective to Kierkegaard’s understanding of faith?
	1. Schaeffer agreed that faith was a leap into the dark, but that it was an *informed* leap, based on evidence found both in the testimony of Scripture and in the presence and witness of the Church in the world.
29. Why do we insist that true faith is both rational and informed?
	1. No one can have true faith unless they are called by the Holy Spirit and taught the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But to *accept* that offer, the new believer must understand in whom and in what they are called to have faith. So there must be *understanding* – built on the testimony of Scripture, the Church community, and the personal experiences of the believer, as affirmed by the Holy Spirit.
30. What are we called to do with our faith??
	1. Receive it.
	2. Hold onto it; be sure of it.
	3. Practice it – meaning apply faith in practical ways to all aspects of our lives.
	4. Be prepared to explain and defend it, especially if someone asks.
	5. Share it with others.
31. What is meant by the term “commitment?”
	1. the determination to do what needs to be done, whatever the cost.
32. According to Charles Spurgeon, how did Jesus show his commitment to fulfill his sacrificial mission for us?
	1. Despite his suffering and slow death, Jesus never utters a single word or sound that makes it appear he wanted to go back on his commitment to sacrifice himself to save us.
33. Beyond any feeling or affection for Jesus, what must a love of Christ mean in our lives?
	1. A commitment to follow Jesus all the way and to obey His commandments.
	2. A commitment to go where he sends us, to do what he tells us to do, and to say what he tells us to say.
34. What does obedient commitment to Jesus in our lives show others?
	1. That we love, trust and rely on God only.

1. What four aspects of commitment does God expect in our lives?
	1. Commitment to Christ, to love and serve Him above all else.
	2. Commitment to people, to love and serve them as Jesus did.
	3. Commitment to prayer, as our means of relationship with God.
	4. Commitment to Christian principles of morality and righteousness.
2. From our perspective, what is the Christian understanding of “time,” and from where did it come?
	1. *Time* is the duration of our existence in this world before we enter eternity.
	2. Time was invented by God at the Creation.
3. Why do we say that “time is the great equalizer,” and what primary questions does that raise for us?
	1. Because we are all given the same amount of time each day – 86,400 seconds – between our births and our deaths.
	2. The real questions are: ***How do we spend time?*** and ***How do we* decide *how to spend it?***
4. What do we mean when we say, “God does not experience time as we do?”
	1. God is outside time, not limited by it, and so is able to experience and be present in any and all moments of time. To God there is no past, present or future – everything is an immediate “now” from God’s perspective.
5. What is our task as we seek to be good stewards in our use of time?
	1. We must always try to determine how best to use the time God has allotted to us– to use time wisely, living in a way that pleases God and accomplishes his purposes.
6. Who is our primary model on how best to use our time?
	1. Jesus, during his earthly ministry.

1. In what ways did Jesus exemplify the right use of time during his life on earth?
	1. He never hurried and never worried.
	2. He never expressed a sense of panic or remorse for time lost.
	3. He spent time in ways others might have seen as a waste (such as the years as a carpenter in Nazareth), but which he knew were important.
	4. He showed no sign of obsessive drivenness, despite the importance of his mission.
	5. His focus was on people, even when that was inefficient.
	6. Even when hard pressed with demands, he went away to spend time with his Father in heaven and with his friends.
	7. He never fixated on the activity to the expense of having the right attitude, towards the Father and the people he served.
2. What does it mean in Philippians 2:12, when it tells us that we must use our time to “*work out our salvation*?”
	1. It means *“to work to full completion,”* to apply the effects of our salvation more fully to our lives *–* similar to “working out” to get healthier, or “working a field.”
	2. It does NOT mean that we must work to achieve our salvation, which is completed and guaranteed in Christ.
3. What does it mean in Philippians 2:13, when it tells us “*for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose*?”
	1. That, if we will let him, God will direct our time and how we spend it, to grow us in our spiritual service to Him.
	2. This – along with many of the metaphors for believers in the New Testament (*clay*, *branches*, *soldiers, watchmen, servants*, etc.) – emphasizes the theme of stewardship: that we are in the service to someone else (God), and so we are not our own, as reflected in how we spend our time.
4. As we go through our lives and make decisions about how we will spend our time, what makes it possible for us to stand against evil?
	1. God has given us his Word – in the Incarnate Christ, in the written Scriptures, and in the strengthening presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives – so we may go in the name of Jesus and transform the world.

1. Rather than efficiency (as in business), what is the purpose for managing our time as Christians?
	1. To gain spiritual effectiveness as we honor God.
2. Regarding being a good Christian steward of my time, what two questions do I need to consider?
	1. How does God want me to spend my time in ways that will both honor him, and will effectively share him with others?
	2. What is really going to have mattered when I come to the end of my earthly days?
3. When we consider what will be the *measure* of our lives, what matters and what does *not* matter (though many people think it does)?
	1. **Depth** is what matters – the depth of our devotion to God, as reflected in how we spend our time on earth. Even the most mundane of tasks are made sacred and have eternal value when they are dedicated to God and his glory (rather than simply for our own gratification).
	2. **Length** of our lives does not matter – God has done miraculous things with those who died young but were committed to Him.
4. What is a primary reason people do not accept opportunities that come into their lives, and why is this especially a problem for Christians?
	1. Most of us have a natural tendency (inertia?) to do the expected and comfortable, rather than the risky and potentially adventurous.
	2. But as Christians we are commissioned servants of the Most High God, and that job can be an inherently adventurous business!
5. What kinds of opportunities does God regularly place before all Christians?
	1. Opportunities to evangelize – to tell others about Jesus and His love.
	2. Opportunities to empathize – to identify with the experiences, feelings and suffering of others; to be compassionate.
	3. Opportunities to act for others – too help in real and practical ways.
6. What are the two “tangible resources” that God entrusts to us?
	1. Money – all our liquid financial assets.
	2. Material possessions – everything else we own that has value.
7. What are some basic principles we must realize in order to be good biblical stewards of money and possessions?
	1. Christians are called to view money and possessions differently than the world – knowing that acquiring them is not the real goal and that they will not bring happiness.
	2. Our call is not to despise or reject money, but to have a right relationship with it, so we may use it in correct, God-honoring ways.
8. Related to stewardship of tangible resources, what may we say is a primary evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives?
	1. Generosity.
9. What ultimately are the three things we can properly do with our money?
	1. Give it cheerfully to achieve God-honoring purposes.
	2. Spend it reasonably to meet personal needs and fulfill personal desires.
	3. Save it strategically in order to continue meeting needs in the future.
10. What are the three keys we need to follow regarding material possessions?
	1. Enjoy things, but don’t cherish them. (Don’t love anything that can’t love you back*.*)
	2. Share things joyfully, not reluctantly.
	3. Think like a pilgrim, not like a settler.