

Reformed Foundations Curriculum

Reformed Foundations is a curriculum designed to equip Christ Alone Church to understand and uphold Reformed Theology, and to experience its fruit in Christian worship and daily life.

Introduction Lesson: Welcome to Reformed Theology

Lesson Summary: The term *Reformed* seems to have a fluid definition; everyone has a different understanding of what it means and how it applies personally to the Christian & to the corporate Church overall.

This lesson aims to answer the big-picture questions regarding the Reformed Faith: *What is Reformed Theology, & how does it impact my life & walk with the Lord?* As we will discuss in a future lesson, other churches may define & identify Reformed Theology differently. The aim of Reformed Foundations is to introduce you to the historic Reformed faith as it is believed and practiced by the elders of Christ Alone Church. This first introductory lesson aims to help us answer these questions.

I. Reformed Tradition

A. Lesson #1: Eternally Secured

Lesson Summary: Before diving headlong into Reformed Theology proper, it is important first to establish theological truths & presuppositions rooted in Scripture & reality to better comprehend the Reformed Tradition. John Calvin said that nearly all wisdom we possess consists in knowledge of God & of ourselves. Thus, we are starting with a proper knowledge of God; namely, in how He has faithfully chosen & preserved His people, that they may always be reforming into the image of Christ until the Day of Christ. This is our hope & standard as we seek Him by faith.

B. Lesson #2: Historically Preserved

Lesson Summary: Because God has eternally purposed to redeem a people for Himself and faithfully preserve them in Christ, we can see the evidence of His faithfulness throughout history. As we survey the history of the Church, we will witness Christ continually preserving His people and reforming them according to His Word. Though false teaching, corruption, and error have often arisen, God has never abandoned His Church. Rather, throughout the centuries He has faithfully raised up men, movements, and confessions that called His people back to the truth of His Word and the beauty of His gospel.

C. Lesson #3: Progressively Sanctified

Lesson Summary: While a large portion of this Reformed Foundations series focuses on doctrinal distinctives that speak to the character & nature of God & saving faith in Christ, this must not be pursued outside of or separately from heart reform. A Christian who is Reformed in doctrine but not in personal holiness is not truly *Reformed*. Instead, they come dangerously close to Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees: *"This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me" (Matthew 15:8)*. *This is not a lesson about* using spiritual manipulation to make us all moral Christians. Rather, it will highlight the natural means God provides His people to grow in personal holiness & love for God & His people. This lesson will be instructional in introducing believers to the various instruments God uses to strengthen & mature believers in Christ.

D. Lesson #4: Tracing The Meaning of Reformed

Lesson Summary: As a final lesson providing historical & theological background for Reformed Theology, we will consider the historical and modern use of the term *Reformed*. Its meaning has not been fixed in stone, & in recent decades especially, it has often been used in ways that create theological confusion. We will examine its use during the Reformation, as well as how various Protestant & evangelical traditions understand the term today. Our goal is to use the term with clarity and sincerity, understanding both in mind & heart.

II. Reformed Theology: The Gospel

A. Salvation by Grace Alone: Guilt & Grace

Lesson Summary: This lesson will explore our salvation by the grace of God, highlighting our guilt before the Holy Righteous God, & how we inherited our sinfulness from our Federal Head, Adam. Because of this great guilt, we rely solely on the undeserved favor of God.

B. Salvation by Faith Alone: Total Depravity & Faith

Lesson Summary: The Bible teaches us we are all born into sin. Whereas the last lesson covers man's culpability in sin, this lesson covers man's inability to be righteous in God's sight. Being totally depraved, our sinful nature does not desire to submit to God's Law; it cannot (**Romans 8:7-8**)! Not only depraved but also spiritually dead, we can only please God by being covered with Christ's blood, which is applied by faith. The instrument of our justification, this faith is a gift of God & not of ourselves, so that no man may boast.

C. Salvation in Christ Alone: Jesus Christ the Righteous

Lesson Summary: Because we are guilty of breaking God's Law, and we are unable to reconcile ourselves or pay the full penalty of our sins without being subjected to eternal damnation, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to come in the form of the perfect God-Man to live a righteous life & die a righteous death, not for any sins He incurred, but for the sins of the elect, God's chosen people. Jesus, the more perfect High Priest, stood in our place, became the perfect sacrifice for us, & mediates on our behalf before the Father, covering us with His righteous blood, imputing on us His righteousness because He has taken our guilty sins upon Himself.

D. Salvation According to Scripture Alone: The Sufficiency & Authority of Scripture

Lesson Summary: At Christ Alone Church, we emphasize both the ultimate authority & sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures. This means that it serves as our inerrant means of knowing Who God Is, & what God requires of man (*Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A #3*). In light of this, we order our faith & practice according to the Word of God. Our worship, teaching, obedience, & belief all submit to the authoritative Scriptures. The sufficient & authoritative Scriptures provide for us redemptive revelation, peace, stability, & a means of hearing directly from God.

E. Salvation to the Glory of God Alone: Sanctification for the Sake of God's Name

Lesson Summary: God works out all things for His glory, including our salvation. Using **Ezekiel 36:22-38** as a foundation, we will teach that we have profaned the holy name of God in our uncleanness, & His salvation & sanctification are accomplished by Him for His glory. He saves us, but also purifies us with new hearts, not because of our righteousness, but so that He may glorify the name we have profaned. Just as Christ came to accomplish redemption & reconciliation for us for the glory of the Father, so our walk of evangelical obedience is for the glory of God. Both our salvation & subsequent sanctification are fueled by & purposed in the glory of God.

III. Reformed Theology: The Three C's

A. Calvinism (The Doctrines of Grace)

1. Total Depravity
2. Unconditional Election
3. Limited Atonement
4. Irresistible Grace
5. Perseverance of the Saints

Summary of Lessons: These individual lessons will cumulatively provide us with the biblical teachings of sin, salvation, & the sovereignty of God. It will be pointed out that while a Calvinistic view of salvation & God's sovereignty is a key distinctive of our Reformed Theology, it alone does not embody the full scope of it. By noting this low view of man & high view of God, we will see the futility of placing confidence in the flesh, we will have great joy in God's glorious grace, & we will have a lasting hope, knowing that He works out all things according to the counsel of His will, for our good & His glory.

B. Covenant Theology: Covenant Theology As Biblical Theology

Lesson Summary: We will seek to define in this lesson(s) Biblical Theology, Systematic Theology, & Covenant Theology. Their relation to one another in understanding how God works in history to redeem His people and glorify His name has a great impact on the Church in how we read, preach, & apply the Scriptures to our lives & corporate worship. Covenant Theology guides how we read & understand the Bible. Because God is consistently working out His history of redeeming His people in the Scriptures, we can then read them with this understanding. We do not see many unconnected stories & values; instead, we see God's unified plan of redemption from Genesis to Revelation.

Relationally, Covenant Theology provides us with the confidence that God has always worked in history to reconcile His people to Himself, looking to the Day of Christ where we will see Him face to face.

Practically, Covenant Theology reminds us to frame our Christian lives within God's redemptive story, taking our marching orders & values from God's redemptive story, not the world's trends or expectations.

C. Creeds, Confessions, & Catechisms: Legitimacy, History, & Use of

1. Legitimacy of Creeds, Confessions, & Catechisms

Lesson Summary: There is a concept today in the modern Church that believes that harkening back to old historical creeds, confessions, & catechisms has no value and may even be detrimental to the Body of Christ. In this lesson, we will refute this & argue for holding to these historic documents & orthodox confessions of the faith, echoing with 2,000 years of church history what the Word of God says concerning our faith. This lesson will promote the legitimacy of the Church in holding to historic creeds, confessions, & catechisms as confessional documents and as tools to promote instruction, sound teaching, & godly worship.

2. History of Creeds, Confessions, & Catechisms

Lesson Summary: This is more of an educational/instructive lesson for the Church. Starting with the biblical examples of God's people in the Old & New Testaments & moving forward in history, we will briefly survey numerous ecumenical creeds, confessions, & catechisms the Church has used. We will see the origins & contextual reasons for their existence & promotion, and know that the doctrines we can articulate today are because we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us to see the vast beauty & truth of the Holy Scriptures. This survey will help us see how we stand with one voice in proclaiming the truth of God's Word throughout history.

3. Use of Creeds, Confessions, & Catechisms

Lesson Summary: Here we will explore the various purposes for holding to specific creeds, confessions, & catechisms, and how they are tools to promote instruction, sound teaching, & godly worship in the Body of Christ, both privately & corporately.