1NT613 Paul and Personal Relationships

2013 Dr. Hurley

A study of the management of personal relationships in Christian life with particular attention to the neuroscience correlates of them, with a focus on the letters to the Ephesians, the Corinthians and the Philippians.

Prerequisite: Minimal acquaintance with brain science relevant to the course.

- For enrolled MFTC students: Required: 1PSY569.
- For others: Recommended: 1PSY569. Required: Selected readings designed to provide students with a minimal acquaintance with brain science relevant to the course.

This course will examine the ongoing transformational processes involved in sanctification and in the management of personal relationships in Christian life, with foci on the letters to the Ephesians, the Corinthians and Philippians and on contemporary neuroscience relevant to the processes. Other biblical texts will also be considered. Issues such as God’s providential and immediate work in believers and unbelievers, the role of individual believer’s thoughts, experiences, emotions and actions, and the role of larger relationship systems such as marriages, families and the church will be considered. Because all human functioning, including the transformation of our minds in sanctification (Rom. 12:2), involves our brains, neuroscience correlates of personal and relationship functioning described in the Scripture will be examined and their implications for our application of biblical teaching will receive focused attention.

At the end of the course students

- Will have demonstrated an acquaintance with the background, context and content of Ephesians, 2 Corinthians and Philippians
- Will have demonstrated an ability to understand a portion of Ephesians in the context of other New Testament literature
- Will have demonstrated an ability to present a portion of Ephesians in everyday language and to apply its teaching in a real-life setting
- Will be acquainted by lecture with the relational processes of Ephesians and their neuroscience correlates.
Assignments

1. Preparation: Background, context and content of the letters: (30%)

This assignment is due at the first class meeting.

- Background and context: Consult commentaries on Ephesians, on 2 Corinthians and on Philippians and prepare three reports of up to 1,200 words describing the date, authorship and context of each letter.
- Content: Read each letter carefully and prepare an outline of the letter which not only tracks the segments, but communicates what you understand to be the flow/logic of the text. This is not so much a verse by verse commentary as an analysis of the letter and its message. Your outlines should not exceed two pages per chapter.
- A suggested format would be
  - **Bold header** (Identify Text included, e.g. Eph 1:1-1:17)
  - **Perhaps a sub-heading** (Identify Text included) Short narrative paragraph communicating the gist of the section and setting up for the transition to the next section.
  - **Perhaps a second sub-heading** (Identify Text included) More paragraph commentary on the meaning of the text.

2. Paper: Other letters, Other lives (70% Due: 11 AM on Friday of the 3rd week after the course. Turn to Mike Hillerman in the MFTC office. 10 or 12 pt Arial font, )

Each student will select a portion of at least 10 verses of the Ephesian letter for focused study. Using commentaries and journals, the student will look at the text itself and similar passages in other New Testament letters. The student will then prepare a paper of up to 8,000 words in which the content of the passage is

- Presented and explained
- Thoughtfully compared to other New Testament discussions of the central topic of the passage
- Paraphrased in a down-to-earth language expanded paraphrase understandable by contemporary persons
- Applied in three vignettes illustrating real life applications of the passage in a pastoral or clinical setting. The vignettes should be as clear as possible about the work of God, the role of persons as the teaching of the passage is applied and, where possible, how the process described relates to brain process (non-MFTC students will likely be weaker in clinical application vignettes but stronger in use of the original language).
Course process:

The course will meet in 4 3-hour lecture sessions and move through five components. In each we will look at a selected portion of Ephesians, 2 Corinthians or Philippians. The last topic will receive the most attention.

Introduction:
- Context and content of Ephesians.
- Context and content of Philippians
- Context and content of 2 Corinthians

Topic 1:
- God as a secure foundation

Topic 2
- Meaning frame and goals for life

Topic 3
- Relational security in life

Topic 4
- Handling differences