

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

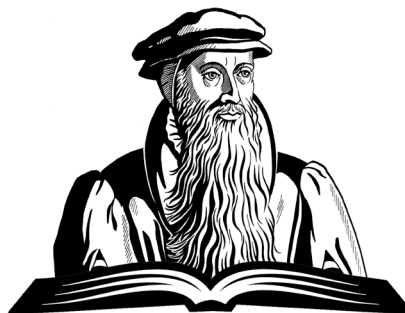
Video Lecture Series

by Robert D. McCurley, ThM

STUDY GUIDE

Module 5:
**SOTERIOLOGY—
THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION**

Lecture 4:
**THE DOCTRINE OF
SAVING FAITH**



The John Knox Institute
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Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version.

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STUDY GUIDE

Module 5

Soteriology—the Doctrine of Salvation

1. Introduction to Soteriology
2. The Doctrine of Union with Christ
3. The Doctrines of Effectual Calling & Regeneration
- 4. The Doctrine of Saving Faith**
5. The Doctrine of Repentance
6. The Doctrine of Justification
7. The Doctrine of Adoption
8. The Doctrine of Sanctification
9. The Doctrine of Good Works
10. The Doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints
11. The Doctrine of Assurance of Grace and Salvation

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Module 5:

SOTERIOLOGY—THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

Lecture 4:

The Doctrine of Saving Faith

Introduction

Faith includes a knowledge of the gospel. You cannot believe in something that you know nothing about. The truth of Christ crucified comes to us through the Scriptures, but faith is more than mere knowledge. We also must be led to affirm the truthfulness and reliability of Christ's ability to save sinners such as ourselves. But faith is still more. True saving faith leads the sinner to putting the full weight of their soul in Christ's person and work. They must actually receive and rest in Christ, and Christ alone, depending entirely upon him to save their souls. They must personally apply the gospel to themselves, and actually put their whole trust in the Redeemer.

Theme: *The doctrine of Saving Faith*

I. Scriptural Basis

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8–10)

1. The Apostle Paul, in Ephesians 2, is describing how the believers in Ephesus came to salvation in Christ.
2. God brought the dead to life.
3. Grace is God giving unmerited favor to a sinner.
4. Faith is the instrument by which sinners lay hold of Christ, and receive the benefits of his saving work.
5. Faith is a gift from God.
6. Faith bears fruit to God's glory.

Questions:

1. What characteristics of Faith can we derive from Ephesians 2:8–10?

2. How does true Faith in Christ bring humility to believers and give glory to God alone?

3. Explain how Faith is in contrast to human works, merit, or deeds.

II. Doctrinal Overview

As summarized in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*,
chapter 11, paragraph 1: “*They receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.*”
chapter 14, paragraph 2: “*But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.*”

1. Faith within the broader theological context.
 - a. Faith comes after Regeneration.
 - b. Faith comes before Justification.
 - c. Faith and Repentance are connected, yet distinguished.
2. The characteristics of Saving Faith.
 - a. *Westminster shorter Catechism*, question #86.
 - b. The object of Saving Faith is the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - c. Faith is an act of man.
 - d. Threefold aspect of Saving Faith.

3. Means of grace and their relationship to Faith.
 - a. The Word of God.
 - b. The ministry of the Word.
 - c. The sacraments.
4. Degrees of Faith.
 - a. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 14, paragraph 3.
 - b. Weak or strong Faith.
 - c. Faith grows.
5. False or counterfeit Faith.
 - a. Temporary or false conversions.
 - b. Temporary Faith.
 - c. Dead Faith doesn't produce true and spiritual fruit.
6. The fruit of Faith.
 - a. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 14, paragraph 2.
 - b. The fruit of obedience.
 - c. The fruit of submission to the Lord and to his Word, the fruit of trust.

Questions

1. What is the place of Faith in the Order of Salvation? What is Faith's relationship to regeneration and justification? What is the difference between regeneration and conversion (faith and repentance)?

2. What is the biblical relationship between Faith and repentance? How should we understand that they are connected yet distinguished? Are we justified by repentance?

3. What are the characteristics of Saving Faith? What is the object and fountain of this Faith? Is Faith an act of man? What does it mean, “to exercise faith”?

4. What are the three components of Saving Faith? Why are all three necessary in Saving Faith?

5. What is the relationship between the means of grace, and Faith? What implications do you see in this relationship?

6. How are we to understand the term, “degrees of Faith”? How does the *Westminster Confession of Faith* instruct us about this?

7. What are the typical types of false Faith? Can false Faith bring forth true and spiritual fruits? Why?

8. What are the true and spiritual fruits of Saving Faith?

III. Polemical Exposition

1. *The relationship between Faith and works.*
2. *Faith is never a blind leap in the dark.*
3. *Resist the idea of those who would teach that Faith is merely a knowledge and an ascent to the truth.*

Questions:

1. What is the relationship between Faith and works in terms of Justification?

2. Is Faith irrational or is it reasonable? Why? Please prove this from Scripture.

3. Why do we say that trust is absolutely necessary in Saving Faith? How do you answer those who claim that Faith is merely knowledge?

IV. Practical Exposition

1. It's not the amount of Faith that saves, it is only true Saving Faith that appropriates all that is found in Christ.
2. There is a need to grow in Faith. How do we do that?
3. Self-examination is necessary.
4. The fruit of Faith relates to things like obedience, love for Christ, hope, joy, etc.

Questions:

1. What helps are there for those who are struggling with their small or weak Faith?

2. How can Faith grow? What are the practical applications?

3. What is biblical self-examination? How does Scripture teach us about self-examination? What should we look for in ourselves?

4. What are more fruits of Saving Faith? How can we bring forth these fruits?

V. Self-Reflection

Meditate on John chapter 15. What does the Lord Jesus teach us about the way of bringing forth good fruit in this parable? Are you abiding in Christ by a living Faith? How can you cultivate a deeper life of abiding in the vine? What is the pathway to honoring God in this parable?
