

**THE DIFFERENCES GREATLY IMPACT YOUR  
PERSPECTIVES, PREACHING, PRACTICE, & PASTORAL COUNSELING**  
{Understanding the Importance of Dispensational Truth}

**Some Introductory Comments**

1. A caveat to remember: not all the following statements apply to every reformed church though much of the following does apply to most reformed churches {though dispensationalists can be guilty of some of these deficiencies & practices as well}. But keep in mind that your doctrinal beliefs do impact your daily practice & ministry.
2. I believe that the Dispensations \_\_\_\_\_ the plan of God over the ages, while the Covenants \_\_\_\_\_ the plan of God over the ages with the exception of the Mystery of the Church in the Dispensation of grace. In addition, I am convinced that there is a definite \_\_\_\_\_ between understanding Dispensational truths and Free Grace theology.

**The Differences between Dispensational Truth {DT} vs Reformed Theology {RT} impact almost every area of theology & practice including ...**

**A. Evangelism & Missions ...**

1. Regarding the content of the \_\_\_\_\_ you preach. How is this done? (1 Cor. 15:1-4; Gal. 1:6-9; John 3:16; 1 John 2:1-2) What does RT teach?
2. Regarding the redefining of the right response to the Gospel which is \_\_\_\_\_ alone in Christ alone & His finished work alone apart from works, law, and ritual. How does RT address this? (Ephesians 2:8-9; Rom. 4:3-11; John 8:24, 30-46)
3. Regarding the lack of an \_\_\_\_\_ for the unsaved to believe in Christ alone. (Acts 16:30-31; Revelation 22:16; 2 Cor. 5:20-21) Why in RT is this not done?
4. Regarding the \_\_\_\_\_ to evangelize the lost. (2 Cor. 6:1-2) Why is this missing in RT?
5. Regarding the \_\_\_\_\_ of children in RT, as well as how they view their possibility of salvation. Why does this occur?
6. Regarding the possessing of or the annihilation of the \_\_\_\_\_ of salvation (1 John 5:9-13) How does this happen in RT?
7. Regarding the correct understanding of the \_\_\_\_\_ of salvation. What does RT teach?
8. Regarding the eternal security of the believer vs the \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Cor. 3:15, 9:24-27)
9. Regarding the redefining of the Church's \_\_\_\_\_, as it relates to the Great Commission & "social justice" in "advancing the Kingdom in RT." (Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Cor. 5:17-21)

## B. Worship ...

1. Regarding “worship” services - the \_\_\_\_\_ of certain songs. (John 4:20-24)
2. Regarding the meaning and value of the \_\_\_\_\_ of baptism & the Lord’s Supper. (Jn 11:23-26)
3. Regarding a 24/7 worshipful lifestyle, RT results in a very \_\_\_\_\_ view of God. (Rom. 8:18-30)

## C. The Christian Life ...

1. Regarding the lack of teaching on \_\_\_\_\_. (Col.3:1-4)
2. Regarding the denial of believers still having a \_\_\_\_\_. (Rom. 7:15-20)
3. Regarding the denial of the \_\_\_\_\_ Christian. (1 Cor. 3:1-4)
4. Regarding the proper place of future \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Cor. 3:11-15; 4:1-5)
5. Regarding the proper \_\_\_\_\_ for Christian living. (2 Cor. 5:8-15)
6. Regarding placing \_\_\_\_\_ on the back of the Church-age believer for either justification before God or sanctification in time. (Gal. 3:1-5, 5:1-4)
7. Regarding a correct understanding of the ministries and enabling power of the \_\_\_\_\_ vs a legalistic approach to Christian living through various means. (Gal. 5:16-25)
8. Regarding robbing believers of their \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ’s imminent return. (Titus 2:11-15; 1 John 2:28, 3:1-3)
9. Regarding a biblical worldview on the \_\_\_\_\_ and its prophesied direction. (2 Thess.2)

**D. Pastoral Ministry & Counseling ...** When dealing with the unsaved, or with those struggling with the security & assurance of salvation, or with those with marital problems, or with various trials & physiological maladies, or with the legalistic believer, or with the licentious believer, or with believers in bondage to mysticism, etc. there is a vast difference between HOW a dispensational vs reformed pastor perceives the problem(s) & counsels another. In fact, a number of the problems people face are not remedied by RT but actually are caused by them! Consider the numerous doctrinal issues addressed earlier in this handout and what a Grand Canyon of difference in scriptural counsel a dispensationally established pastor would explain vs the RT covenant pastor, especially as it relates to the Gospel of salvation and the grace of God in all 3 tenses/phases of salvation.

The following is selectively excerpted from Dr Luther Smith’s helpful multi-part series titled: *The Reformed (Covenant) Approach vs. The Dispensational Approach*. <https://www.1024project.com/biblical-counseling-reformed-covenant-approach-vs-dispensational-approach>

*I noted although there were some similarities between the two theological systems, and there were also vast differences. The Reformed counselor observes problems, and solutions, from a Biblical and confessional worldview, and the Dispensational counselor observes troubles one experiences, and the resolution to those*

*experiences, from a Biblical worldview only. These differences affect the way one observes how problems develop, and the solution to how these problems would be resolved.*

*To the Reformed counselor, they observe problems, and solutions in a “one size fit all” perspective (i.e., active sin and public or personal repentance). The Dispensational counselor, due to their Biblical worldview, observes problems in their unique context and therefore is able to give solutions that assist in this particular context.*

*Why do Reformed counselors only observe problems, and solutions, in a “one size fits all” perspective? This is due to the historical nature of the Reformed confessions (i.e., the Westminster Confessions, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canon of Dort). The Dispensational approach does not look to confessions but looks to the sacred Scriptures alone to resolve issues to problems. In addition, a Dispensational counselor uses the applications, or indicatives, in the Bible to address various problems that one has in their life.*

*Now we turn our attention to the Reformed (Covenant) and Dispensational approach concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, specifically the area of sanctification in Biblical counseling. Those who adhere to a Reformed approach believe the Holy Spirit works in what is known as the “means of grace.” The Westminster Confession states this:*

*I. Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and His benefits; and to confirm our interest in Him: as also, to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to His Word.*

*II. There is, in every sacrament, a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified: whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.*

*III. The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither does the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that does administer it: but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.*

*IV. There are only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord: neither of which may be dispensed by any, but by a minister of the Word lawfully ordained.*

*V. The sacraments of the Old Testament in regard to the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the new.*

*The Westminster Confession states that the Holy Spirit works within the sacraments, specifically baptism and the Lord’s supper. The Westminster confession also references the practices of the Old Testament. Specifically, circumcision. One who holds to the Westminster Confession also believes the Holy Spirit does mysterious things through these sacraments. Ligonier, a website committed to the Reformed (Covenant) theological position states below:*

*Question and answer 65 of the Heidelberg Catechism emphasize the role of the sacraments in confirming our faith. They bless us as we receive them in faith, and if we neglect them, we weaken our trust in God’s work. The sacraments are mysteries in that we cannot explain fully what God accomplishes through them. We do know, however, that they are more than memorial observations. They become effectual means of grace to those with faith by the working of the Holy Spirit (WLC , Q. 161). To downplay their importance is to desupernaturalize our holy religion, so let us have a high view of the sacraments as confirming signs of God’s Word. (Ligonier Ministries. Means of grace. Retrieved February 25, 2017 from: <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/means-of-grace/>).*

*Why is this important to Biblical counseling? The treatment for a Reformed counselor that will be promoted in this particular theological approach will include, in some way, the means of grace in their counseling plan. The problem is the “means of grace” is a confessional instruction, not a Biblical instruction.*

*The Dispensational approach observes the working of the Holy Spirit, not through a confession, but by means of sacred Scripture only. A Dispensational approach knows the Holy Spirit convicts mankind of sin and unbelief (Jn. 16:5-11). It is His Holy Spirit that baptizes us into the church (Acts 2:4; Acts 2: It is being filled and walking by the Holy Spirit that one exhibits the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:15-21; Gal. 5:13--25) A Dispensational approach would not mention the Holy Spirit working through water baptism and the Lord’s Supper because the word of God does not explicitly state the Holy Spirit works through these ordinances. However, the Holy Spirit works, not through the substance of water baptism and the Lord’s supper, but through believers as they submit themselves to the Holy Spirit in their daily living. It is here the Dispensational approach operates with the Christian in terms of Biblical counseling.*

*This is not to say that the Dispensational approach minimizes or disregards water baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Christ told them to conduct the Lord’s supper in remembrance of Him (Matt. 26:26-29; Lk. 14:22-23). Christians take the Lord’s Supper because they are to remember and proclaim the death of Christ Jesus until He returns (1 Cor. 11:23-26) Water baptism represents the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer as the Christian identifies with the death of Christ, and cleansing the conscience by pointing a Christian to Jesus’s resurrection (Rom. 6:1-6; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21) The Dispensational approach could use this in the counseling session to point to the significance of the death of Christ, and how this is important for reconciliation, and forgiveness. The Dispensational approach could also bring up how being baptized in the Holy Spirit is important to being a new creature, having a new identity in Christ, and how this new identity looks for the Christian (2 Cor. 5:17-19). Yet, the Dispensational approach would not promote the Holy Spirit working through the “means of grace,” because it is not explicitly taught in Scripture.*

*The Reformed approach operates from a worldview underscored in the Westminster Confession. This approach has a specific way it views the process of sanctification. A Reformed counselor, in an attempt to work with their counselees, would mention the “means of grace” and how it is important for one’s sanctification in counseling. The Dispensational approach does not look to confessions along with the Scripture but observes the Holy Spirit’s work in positional and progressive sanctification from what God has revealed in sacred Scripture alone.*

*Colossians 1:28-29 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.*