



Metro Baltimore Seminary

**Research, Writing,
and Style Guide**

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INTRODUCTION

We are so excited that you are part of the MBS community!

Over the next few years, you will produce multiple papers and complete other kinds of assignments for your B.Th. or M.Div. degree. Remember that the goals of every assignment and paper that you complete are first to nurture your faith in Christ and second to help equip you as a thoughtful minister of the Gospel in pastoral ministry, church planting, urban ministry, Biblical counseling, and a host of other Gospel ministries!

During your seminary career, you will discover that assignments come with a variety of expectations depending on the type of course that you are taking. Even the same course taught by different professors may involve nuances unique to each professor and his or her objectives for the course.

To help you flourish as a disciple and a student, this *MBS Research, Writing, and Style Guide* was produced to help you navigate the skills and tools required to produce quality papers.

This *Guide* is designed to complement the “Introduction to Research, Writing, and Style Workshop” providing MBS students with guidance in researching, writing, and formatting seminary assignments. While it is not necessary for you to take the Workshop to understand this *Guide*, you are encouraged to take the workshop so that you are as prepared as possible to follow the guidance in this *Guide* as you complete assignments.

The *Guide* is structured to walk you through:

1. essential research skills and tools,
2. writing guidance and tips, and
3. style and citation requirements.

The following are key concepts to note:

1. **Syllabus requirements.** Unless otherwise stated in a course syllabus, this *Guide* details the style and formatting standards for all assignments you will submit in MBS courses. Always defer to the syllabus requirements.
2. **Types of assignments.** There will be two general types of assignments that you will encounter in seminary. This *Guide* provides guidance for both types of assignments.
 - a. Research, Exegetical, Theological, and Other Academic Papers.
 - i. These assignments require you to interact with multiple academic sources and to synthesize your research into a well-articulated, theologically sound paper.
 - ii. There are more style and citation requirements for these papers.
 - b. Sermons, Bible Studies, Reflection Papers, and Similar Papers.
 - i. These have less style and citation requirements than those above.
 - ii. These assignments must still follow the general MBS style and citation requirements found in the “Style” section of this *Guide*.

3. **Give it time.** The demands of theological research and writing require much prayer, research analysis, and reflection. Add to all of this the seminary style and citation requirements, and it can be quite overwhelming! Give it time. Be patient with yourself and keep putting in the work. Your ability to research and write quality papers will increase from quarter to quarter, semester to semester, and year to year!

You will likely return to this *Guide* periodically throughout your seminary career, so do not feel like you must master everything in this *Guide* right away. Also, keep in mind that MBS has a Writing Guide page on our website with even more resources. There is a link to the “Writing Guide” page located under the “Current Students” tab on the main page.

We are so excited to join you as you pursue the vocation to which you are called by our Lord Jesus Christ!

Grace and peace,

Rev. Dr. Adam L. Feldman, D.Min.
Academic Dean
Metro Baltimore Seminary

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.” – 2 Timothy 2:12

Research

During the “Introduction to Research, Writing, and Style Workshop” you read selections in *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research* by Michael Kibbe. You are encouraged—although not required—to read the entirety of the book and also to consult it as you write your first few research papers.

This section on research is designed to complement the Workshop and *From Topic to Thesis* by offering additional guidance on research skills and tools.

In this section, you will find:

1. Identifying Resources
2. MBS List of Helpful Resources
3. List of Commentaries

1. IDENTIFYING RESOURCES

Course Textbooks

As a general rule of thumb, you should always consider citing your course textbook(s) in your papers. This demonstrates to your instructor that you have read the text and that you are engaging it in conversation.

Scholarly resources

Sometimes your professor will require a minimum number of “scholarly,” “academic,” and/or “reference” (“scholarly”) sources for your assignment. This will be indicated in the course syllabus under the assignment description. Sometimes the syllabus will require a minimum number of scholarly sources cited in the paper. It is usually the case that such scholarly resources are required for research, exegetical, theological, and other academic type papers.

What does your professor mean by “scholarly” sources?

Scholarly sources include...

- ...primary, secondary, and tertiary sources. See the Introduction in *From Topic to Thesis* for what is meant by these three terms and representative works for each type of source.
- ...resources like commentaries, Bible dictionaries, academic and research journals, encyclopedias, lexicons, and Greek and Hebrew dictionaries.

Scholarly sources do not include...

- ...books on Christian living, discipleship, church growth, pastoral ministry, etc..
- ...webpages (unless linking to a journal article accessed online), Wikipedia, blogs, and videos (unless the video is a lecture or other form of teaching).

Remember that *all* sources cited in the paper—regardless of whether or not they are scholarly—must be listed in the Works Cited.

Assignments with no “scholarly” source requirement

Sermons, Bible studies, reflection papers, and similar papers typically have no required minimum number of cited scholarly sources. Unless the syllabus states otherwise, you may consult, quote, and cite any resource necessary to complete the assignment.

Bible translations and original language texts of Scripture

English translations of the Bible, the Greek New Testament, and the Hebrew Old Testament *do not count toward or against* a required amount of sources.

For example, if the syllabus requires 4 scholarly sources for an assignment, the English Standard Version of the Bible *does not count* as one of those 4 sources. As another example, if the syllabus requires 4 scholarly sources for an Exegetical Paper, the Greek New Testament *does not count* as one of those 4 sources. In both cases, you must cite 4 additional sources to the ESV and the Greek NT.

That said...

Remember that all quoted English translations of Scripture and original language texts of Scripture must be cited in the Works Cited even though they do not count toward a scholarly source count.

2. MBS LIST OF HELPFUL RESOURCES

The following is a reproduction of sections from the MAS/MBS document *Explanation of Helpful Study Reference Works*.

ATLAS. A good Bible atlas has more than maps. It shows the lands and location of biblical events, physical and historical geography and information on cultural and timelines. Examples to consider: *New Moody Atlas of the Bible* (Moody, 2009); *NIV Atlas of the Bible* (Zondervan, 2006); *ESV Bible Atlas* (Crossway, 2010). Some of these offer abbreviated versions.

COMMENTARIES. The purpose of a commentary is to explain the meaning of the biblical message by giving an introduction, analyzing the words, theology, background, cultural context, grammar and syntax, and the relation of that book to the rest of the Bible. They give explanatory notes and interpretations related to the text of a particular Bible book or section of the Bible.

Commentaries can be divided into classifications such as:

Devotional Commentaries are generally shallow works not focusing on the details of the text, but rather move the reader being inspired. These will include stories that may not always have to do with what the Bible says. Inspiration and application should come as the final and necessary step in Bible study.

Homiletical/Expositional Commentaries are the sermons in print form, some edited and some not. These vary widely and should be chosen on the basis of knowing the speaker. Examples of reliable commentaries would include the works of James M. Boice and the Reformed Expository Commentaries.

Exegetical Commentaries give the student of the Bible good background to the passage in its historical context. It will also cover the details of the text. This should be the level of commentary every student of the Bible should invest in most heavily. Examples include *Tyndale Old and New Testament Commentaries* (IVP).

Technical Commentaries are for those with some level of study in the original languages and are more able to work with them. Example: *Word Biblical Commentaries* (Thomas Nelson).

One-Volume Commentaries. These cover the entire Bible in one book. They are good for beginners, as they give a lot of good starting helps, but as you grow in your ability to study the Word, these will become too shallow. Examples of one-volume works: *Baker Illustrated Bible Commentary* (Baker, 2012); *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition* (IVP, 1994). While *Matthew Henry* (1710) is a good commentary it is not meant for more serious study.

STUDY BIBLES. Study Bibles first appeared at the beginning of the 20th Century to help people with the understanding of the Bible. Avoid those written by one author, as you will only get his/her perspective on what the Bible means. The best study Bibles will be written by many scholars, and will cover introductions of each book in the Bible, comments on many verses and words in a chapter, timelines, illustrations, charts, cross-references, maps, abbreviated dictionary, and concordance. It is an all-in-one help. Some of the better study Bibles are: *Transformational Study Bible* (ESV, Crossway, 2013); *ESV Study Bible* (Crossway, 2008); *Reformation Study Bible* (P&R, 2005); [*CSB Study Bible* (Holman Bible Publishers, 2017)]. Consider more than one study Bible in a different translation.

CONCORDANCES

EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCES list *every* time *every* word appears in the Bible. Some, like *Strong's*, give an index of the words in the King James with a coding system in the back for the Greek and Hebrew equivalents. Many reference works today use this system. A concordance like *Young's* is easier to use because it gives the Greek and Hebrew word breakdowns throughout. Choose according to the Bible translation you most commonly use, and do not be afraid to use it if you do not know the Greek or Hebrew.

COMPLETE or CONCISE CONCORDANCES give only the most important words found in the Bible. It leaves out words like *the*, *and*, *but*, etc. It is easier to use than the exhaustive but it will not usually give you the Greek and Hebrew helps. Many are available. Choose according to the Bible translation you most commonly use as each offers its own concordance.

DICTIONARIES

DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE. Defines, in detail, people, places, words, topics, customs, and traditions **found in the Bible** as well as historical, geographical, cultural, and archaeological information are discussed. There is background material for each book of the Bible, and short biographies of the major characters in both testaments. This

is another work that is a *must* to have for Bible study. Examples to consider: *New Bible Dictionary* (IVP, 1996).

DICTIONARY OF THEOLOGY. Gives definitions of theological **words and terms not usually found in a Bible dictionary**, such as doctrinal terms and systems of theology (i.e. Reformed, Dispensational, Trinity, etc.). Often there are biographic sketches of leading theologians and philosophers. Examples to consider: *New Dictionary of Theology* (IVP); *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (IVP, 1990); *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Baker, 2017); *Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible* (Baker, 2001).

BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIAS. Contains much of the same information found in a Bible dictionary but in greatly expanded form. Here is the best example: *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia* (5 vols., 2009).

It cannot be emphasized too strongly; owning good Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias can be of greater wealth than commentaries. Writers of commentaries tell you what they think the Bible says, whereas, these works will help YOU discover for yourself what the Bible says. This is not to say commentaries are of no value, for that would be far from true. But as you grow in your ability to study the Bible you should depend on commentaries less and less. Only after you have done your own study should you seek out a commentary to find additional thoughts or material.

HANDBOOKS. This tool is a combination dictionary and commentary in very concise form. It is used for quick reference while reading through a particular book of the Bible. It includes historical background, brief commentary on the major sections, maps, charts, archaeological notes, and more. Example: *Ryken's Bible Handbook* (Tyndale, 2005).

BIBLE SURVEYS. A Bible survey will take you through the Bible book-by-book. Though not a commentary, it will comment on major passages. Its purpose is to give you an overview of the entire Bible in one volume. Consider: *A Survey of the Old Testament* by Hill and Walton (Zondervan, 2009) and its counterpart, *A Survey of the New Testament* by Robert Gundry (Zondervan, 2012); *Old Testament Survey* by House and Mitchell (Broadman/Holman, 2007). *Survey of the Bible* by William Hendriksen (Evangelical Press, 1995) is available in one volume.

WORD STUDIES. These tools offer easy access to the subtle nuances and layers of meaning behind the original Greek and Hebrew words. ... Classic works on the subject are Vine's *Expository Dictionary* (updated by Stephen Renn (Hendrickson Publishers, 2005); *Word Studies in the NT* by M. E. Vincent (Eerdmans). A newer work is by William Mounce, *Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Zondervan, 2006).

TOPICAL BIBLES. Whereas a concordance takes you to every verse a particular word is used, a topical Bible does this for topics. *Nave's Topical Bible* is the classic work in this area.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY BOOKS. The purpose of these works is to provide a deeper knowledge of the doctrines of the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. If you want to study the doctrine of God, it will give you all kinds of information, and the places in the Bible where you can find it. Consider: Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Zondervan, 1994). Grudem is one of the only authors to present theology in a devotional way, and not just a theoretical way. It is both readable *and* enjoyable. Also consider John Frame's *Systematic Theology* (P&R, 2014).

HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS. Have you ever wanted a way to reading what each of the Gospel writers said about the same event in Jesus' life? These works put them right next to each other for comparison. Examples: A.T. Robertson's, *Harmony of the Gospels*; *The NIV Harmony of the Gospels* by Stan Gundry (HarperOne, 1988).

WEBSITES

There are all kinds of free helps available on the internet. But, like anything there, be careful. Here are a few good sites to get to know:

app.logos.com – access your Logos library online
www.biblegateway.com
www.bible.org
www.esvbible.org
www.biblestudytools
www.blueletterbible.org
www.teknia.com - for Greek & Hebrew helps

3. LIST OF COMMENTARIES

It is recommended that for preaching or teaching a book of the Bible you consult 1-2 technical and semitechnical commentaries and 1-2 devotional, homiletical, expositional, and exegetical commentaries.

The same is true when you are researching a passage of Scripture for a seminary assignment. Sometimes the syllabus will require that you cite 1 or more technical and semitechnical commentaries or devotional, homiletical, expositional, and exegetical commentaries. Be sure to consult the syllabus to make sure that you meet the requirement.

Technical and Semitechnical Commentaries

Technical and semitechnical commentaries feature extensive discussion about textual variants, grammar problems, and word studies. These commentaries also deal with the original languages of Scripture at a technical level. While it is not necessary to have studied the Greek and Hebrew languages, having a basic knowledge of these languages will greatly enhance your ability to understand these commentaries.

Below are some representative technical/semitechnical commentaries:

- Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (BECNT)
- Eerdmans Critical Commentary (ECC)
- New American Commentary (NAC, Broadman & Holman)
- New International Commentary on the New Testament (NICNT, Eerdmans)
- New International Greek Testament Commentary (NIGTC, Eerdmans)
- Pillar New Testament Commentaries (Eerdmans)
- Word Biblical Commentary (WBC, Thomas Nelson)

Devotional, Homiletical, Expositional, and Exegetical Commentaries

These commentaries contain less technical engagement with the Greek and Hebrew languages and textual variants. You will only find what is necessary to understand key words, textual problems, and interpretation challenges.

These commentaries also frequently contain illustrations and examples of contextual applications. These are especially helpful for preachers and teachers when they communicate the meaning of God's Word to a congregation or small group.

The following are some representative commentaries:

- Biblical Commentary (CSBC, Tyndale)
- NIV Application Commentary (NIVAC, Zondervan)
- IVP New Testament Commentary (IVPNTC)
- Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (TNTC, Eerdmans)

4. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (PLAGIARISM)

We take academic integrity and plagiarism seriously at MBS. Since our plagiarism policy is found in the Student Handbook, it will not be repeated here. Instead, we offer a few nuances here so that you better understand what does and does not constitute plagiarism.

“Complete plagiarism” – When you submit another author's work in your own name.

“Direct plagiarism” – When you copy text from another source word-for-word and do not cite the source and author. This also happens when you include a graphic or stock photo without citing the source and creator.

NOTE: Images/graphics/photos are notoriously tricky to cite. Here's a webpage that will help you: <https://fitnyc.libguides.com/citingchicago/images>.

“Self-plagiarism” – When you reuse a major part of your own work without attributing it to yourself.

NOTE: It is the expectation that all assignments you submit are not self-plagiarized. This means that under no circumstance are you permitted to submit an assignment that you previously wrote for another class in the seminary or at any other institution. Likewise, you are not permitted to submit sermons, Bible study lessons, or any other content that you created prior to taking the course. You are permitted to paraphrase or quote small amounts of material from previous assignments, sermons, Bible studies, etc, that you created provided that you attribute the content to yourself in a citation and include a reference on the Works Cited page.

“Paraphrasing plagiarism” – When you paraphrase another's writing with only minor changes to the content, such as changing a word or two.

“Accidental plagiarism” – When you unintentionally paraphrase or copy someone else's work due to neglecting citations.

Writing

Congratulations! You have completed your research! Now it is time to begin writing your paper. When we talk about “writing” a paper, we are talking about the act of composition. This section of the *Research, Writing, and Style Guide* will help you develop your composition skill.

In this section, you will find:

1. How to Write a Quality Paragraph
2. How to Organize Your Paper
3. How to Engage Sources in Conversation
4. Writing Your First Draft
5. Revising Your Paper
6. Paper Revision Checklist (Printable)
7. The Final Review Before Submitting Your Paper

1. HOW TO WRITE A QUALITY PARAGRAPH

A quality paragraph is the basic unit of a well-organized, well-written, quality paper.

- **Paragraph.** A paragraph consists of one main thought or idea (a “topic”) fleshed out in 3-5 sentences.
- **Topic.** The central concept (main thought or idea) addressed in a paragraph.

Structuring a paragraph

Generally speaking, a quality paragraph follows this pattern.

Sentence 1 – *Introduction of the paragraph’s topic.* In your first sentence, state what your paragraph will prove, investigate, describe, or clarify.

Example: “For Christians, spiritual formation is a way of living consistent with the witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Sentences 2-4 – *The exploration of the topic identified in the first sentence.* This includes incorporating ideas from sources, quotes from sources, and your own commentary.

Sentence 5 – *Concluding sentence on the content of the paragraph.* This sentence can be a summary statement of the paragraph. The summary statement leaves the reader with a clear understanding of what the paragraph demonstrated. This sentence could also be a transition statement hinting at the next paragraph’s topic. Transition statements are helpful if you are addressing a concept that requires multiple paragraphs to explore. It signals to the reader that the content is “to be continued.”

Example: “Thus, true spirituality is saving faith in Christ lived out daily.”

Sample paragraph incorporating the introduction sentence and concluding sentences above.

For Christians, spiritual formation is a way of living consistent with the witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In *True Spirituality* Francis Schaeffer argues that true spirituality is actively conforming one's entire being to the reality of the "rejected, slain, raised" paradigm presented in the Gospel. The three-fold paradigm is informed by Christ's life, death, and resurrection as relived in the believer's experience of the three-fold nature of salvation: justification (rejected), sanctification (slain) and glorification (raised). Faith is central to true spirituality such that Schaeffer can say: "To believe him, not just when I accept Christ as Savior, but also at also at every moment, one moment at a time: this is the Christian life, and this is true spirituality."¹ Thus, true spirituality is saving faith in Christ lived out daily.

Paragraph length

Your final paper should not be submitted if it contains one or more paragraphs that are not 3-5 sentences in length.

A paragraph consisting of less than 3 sentences should:

- a. be expanded to a full paragraph of 3-5 sentences,
- b. be edited into the preceding or following paragraph, or
- c. be removed from the paper.

A paragraph consisting of 6+ sentences should either:

- a. be edited down to 5-6 sentences, or
- b. be expanded into 2 paragraphs.

Discover your voice

Your professor reviews your paper for evidence that you understand your research and can articulate your own position on the subject at hand. To this end, paragraphs should rarely conclude with a quote or citation. This is because the concluding sentence to a paragraph is the best place for you to summarize your position. This does not mean that you should never conclude a paragraph with a quote or citation, but why waste such a good opportunity to conclude a paragraph with your own commentary or position statement?

2. HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR PAPER

When organizing your paper, follow *any and all* instructions for the assignment in the syllabus. Check the syllabus for specific instructions pertaining to sections or required content for the paper. Before contacting your professor to ask them a question about an assignment, check the syllabus. More than likely, you will discover the answer to your question in the syllabus.

If the syllabus does not contain specific instructions about sections or required content for the assignment, adopt the following paper structure.

This paper structure can be utilized for any assignment from 2-3 pages in length to dozens of pages in length. If your assignment is shorter—perhaps 3-5 pages in length—you will either have fewer supporting arguments in the body of your paper or you will address each supporting

¹ Francis A. Schaeffer, *True Spirituality* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2001), 22, 80.

argument in only 1-3 paragraphs. If your assignment is longer—perhaps 6-20 pages in length—you can address more supporting arguments, address each supporting argument with multiple paragraphs, or a mixture of both. There are tips on adapting this structure according to paper lengths below.

Structuring a paper

Generally speaking, a quality paper follows this structure.

Introduction Paragraph(s) – *1-3 paragraphs depending on the page requirements for the assignment.*

- Introduce the problem addressed in the paper, state your thesis in one sentence, and identify the type of paper to follow: such as, a book review, a personal reflection, or an exegetical paper.
- Identify the 2-5 supporting arguments that your paper will explore in defense of your thesis. State them as clearly and as simply as possible. Example, “This thesis is demonstrated by first [argument #1], then [argument #2], and finally [argument #3].”

Body of Paper – *2-5 supporting arguments, page length varies according to the page requirements in the syllabus.*

Supporting argument #1

- **Paragraph 1:** Identify the supporting argument and any subpoints to the argument that you may explore. This helps the reader know what you will state in your supporting argument and cues the reader to look for the subpoints to follow.
- **Paragraphs 2+:** Flesh out the argument and defend it with well-organized paragraphs.
- **Final paragraph:** Summarize how you explained and defended your supporting argument.

Supporting arguments #'s 2–5

- Follow the same structure and process as for your first supporting argument.

Concluding Paragraph(s) – *1-3 paragraphs depending on the page requirements for the assignment.*

- Briefly summarize the flow of the paper by restating the thesis and identifying the supporting arguments that defended or proved the thesis.
- Optional: Identify future research topics. Often in the research process you end up with more information than you can include in your paper. This is a great way to honor that research by identifying topics that intrigued you but did not fit in the paper.

The building blocks of a quality paper

Did you notice that the paper structure above is basically an expansion of a quality paragraph?

Supporting arguments function to an expansion of a quality paragraph as well. This is one reason why learning how to compose quality paragraphs will enhance your ability to produce a quality paper!

The following demonstrates how quality paragraphs, paper structure, and supporting arguments all follow a similar pattern.

Paragraph	Paper Structure	Supporting Argument (SA)
Introduction Sentence	Introduction Paragraph(s)	Paragraph 1: Identify SA
Sentences 2-5	Body of Paper (2-5 SAs)	Paragraphs 2+: Defend
Concluding Sentence	Concluding Paragraph(s)	Final Paragraph: Summarize

Adaptions to the paper structure

The following are 4 possible adaptations of the above paper structure.

Adaptation 1: Shorter papers of 2-5 pages in length

1. Introduction Paragraph(s): 1-2 paragraphs
2. Body of Paper
 - a. 2-3 supporting arguments
 - b. 1-3 paragraphs for each supporting argument
3. Concluding Paragraph(s): 1-2 paragraphs

Adaptation 2: Longer papers of 6+ pages in length

1. Introductory Paragraph(s): 1-3 paragraphs
2. Body of paper
 - a. 2-5 supporting arguments
 - b. 1-5 paragraphs for each supporting argument
3. Concluding Paragraph(s): 1-3 paragraphs

Adaption 3: Exegetical papers

When writing an exegetical paper, you must slightly adapt the structure of your paper to accommodate the unique requirements of the assignment. The exegetical paper will require different sections, and some of these sections will be as short a 1 paragraph while other sections—such as the commentary and analysis portion of the exegetical paper—will require dozens of paragraphs.

Follow this guidance when adapting the structure above to write your exegetical paper:

- For sections that require only 1 paragraph, write a well-organized paragraph.
- Treat each verse as a “supporting argument.”
 - Address each verse in 1 paragraph or less...
 - For long passages (12+ verses)
 - For exegetical papers with shorter page restrictions
 - Address each verse in 1-5 paragraphs...
 - For shorter passages (less than 12 verses)

- For exegetical papers with longer page restrictions
- In both cases: treat at least 3 verses in-depth in 2+ paragraphs.

Adaptation 4: Assignments with sections and other assignments

If the syllabus requires specific sections or content for your assignment, you can adapt the above structure for each section in the paper. Remember, some sections may only be 1 paragraph in length. In that case, just write a well-organized paragraph for such sections.

Note: *In general, unless the paper has a minimum requirement of 12 pages or the syllabus specifically calls for several sections (or headings), **do not include section headings in your paper.***

3. HOW TO ENGAGE SOURCES IN CONVERSATION

Citing sources

MBS takes acts of plagiarism very seriously. The Student Handbook states: “The student must avoid the sin of plagiarism by acknowledging sources used by the use of quotation marks, footnotes, and bibliographies, as appropriate.”² Follow these three rules to help ensure that you avoid the sin of plagiarism:

1. Footnote *every* source that you quote.
2. When paraphrasing an author’s thought or argument, footnote the source that you are paraphrasing.
3. List every source quoted, cited, or paraphrased in your Works Cited or Bibliography.

In general, when you state *any* information that you discovered in the process of research or when you state *any* idea that is not original to yourself and which came from a source that you consulted during research... *cite it.*

Introduce your sources

You must introduce your source the first time that you cite it. Each subsequent citation just requires the author’s last name. If you cite multiple sources by the same author in your paper, identify the title of the work.

Example of 1st citation: “In *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster describes fasting as...”

Example of subsequent citation using author’s name: “Foster explains the benefits of prayer in the life of the believer as...”

Example of subsequent citation using the title because there are more than 1 work quoted in the paper by the same author: “In *Celebration of Discipline*, Foster further describes the benefits of prayer as...”

² *MBS Student Handbook: 2020-2021*, 14.

Paraphrase and commentate

Your default should be to paraphrase and offer commentary on ideas and concepts from the sources you consult in your research. On this point, Michael Kibbe offers this advice: “If you can say it in your own words, do so. . . . If you can’t say it in your own words, study it until you can.”³ When you paraphrase a source, remember to footnote and cite your source!

Sometimes it is best to quote your source. Kibbe advises: “Never quote a secondary source when you can paraphrase. You should only quote when you value *how* a scholar says something; if only the content itself is valuable, paraphrase.”⁴ In other words, quote your source when the author conveys the concept much better than you could paraphrase it.

Use large block quotes of 3+ sentences sparingly. Kibbe warns of two ways excessive quoting—like large block quotes—can be detrimental for a research paper.

Excessive quoting will cause trouble in two ways. First, it will lead you to believe that something is true simply because a certain prominent scholar says it is true. The value of a secondary source is its interaction with the primary source, not the pedigree of its author. Second, it will lead your professor to believe that you did not actually *think* about the issues at hand. You simply collected some opinions and put them into paragraph form. That is not the impression you want to leave!⁵

Quoting? Paraphrasing? Summarizing?

Q: How are “paraphrasing” and “summarizing” different from “quoting?”

A: “Paraphrasing” and “summarizing” involve you, the writer, including an idea or argument from a source in your own words. “Quoting” is just as it sounds: you include (“quote”) the exact wording from the source in your paper. All 3—paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting—require citation in footnotes.

Q: What’s the difference between “paraphrasing” and “summarizing?”

A: Paraphrasing: Shorter ideas rephrased in a sentence or two.

Summarizing: Much bigger concepts and longer rephrasing in your own words.

It is in your best interest as a student and as a minister of the Gospel to wrestle with the content until you understand it. Avoid block quotes—like the one above—unless absolutely necessary!

A few tips for when you do use a block quote in your paper:

1. Did you do your best to understand the quote and paraphrase it?
2. Always introduce the block quote giving a reason “why” you are including the quote. For example, before the block quote above, the sentence introduces the quote: “Kibbe warns

³ Michael Kibbe, *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016), 74.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

of two ways excessive quoting like large block quotes can be detrimental for a research paper.”

3. Third, after the quote, include 1-2 concluding sentences with your commentary on the quote. Note the concluding sentences after the block quote above.

Online Resources to Help You Develop Paraphrasing Skills

- Ashford University (click on the links for dropdowns to quoting, paraphrasing and summarizing): <https://writingcenter.ashford.edu/quoting-paraphrasing-summarizing>
- Incorporating quotes and paraphrases into your writing (crediting verbs): https://services.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/706946/Incorporating_Sources_100113_ST.pdf
- Integrating quotes into your writing: https://awc.ashford.edu/pdfhandouts/integrating_quotes.pdf
- The steps of paraphrasing with examples: <https://library.csc.edu/c.php?g=126538&p=828845>

Remember these 2 words regarding quotes: ***paraphrase and commentate!***

Bring sources into conversation with one another

Make it your practice to bring sources into conversation with one another. You can do this by contrasting different viewpoints in your sources. When the viewpoints are similar, you can flesh out nuances unique to each source when exploring the viewpoint. In either case—contrasting or comparing viewpoints—you can build a strong supporting argument in one or more paragraphs. Just remember to offer *your own viewpoint* in agreement with or in disagreement with your sources. If you disagree, defend your position.

Quoting Scripture

Unless required by your professor, Scripture quotes require in-text citation but do not require footnotes. The first time that you quote Scripture in your paper, identify the translation with an in-text citation of the abbreviation of the translation *even if* you are using footnotes.

Example of the first quote of an English translation of Scripture in a paper: “Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh” (Ecclesiastes 12:12, ESV).

Subsequent Scripture quotes from the same translation do not require translation identification. This is because it is assumed that the first translation that you reference is the one used throughout the paper. For example, if you intend to quote Scripture from the ESV throughout your paper, you do not need to identify future Scripture quotes as ESV. You will only identify translations other than the ESV.

Example of subsequent quote from the ESV in a paper: “Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all” (2 Thessalonians 3:16).

To summarize, follow the following rules when quoting Scripture:

1. Rule 1: Scripture quotes require in-text citation, but not footnotes.
2. Rule 2: The first time you quote Scripture, reference the English translation.
3. Rule 3: Subsequent Scripture quotations do not require identification of English translation *unless* you use a different translation.
4. Rule 4: While Scripture quotes do not require a full footnote citation, you must still include a citation of the English translation in your Works Cited.

4. WRITING YOUR FIRST DRAFT

Unless you waited until the last minute to write your paper, by now you have a lot of research completed and are ready to write your first draft. Remember, this is your *first draft*. You must give yourself enough time to appropriately revise your paper *at least once* before turning it in.

Sometimes it can be difficult to begin writing. Here are a few tips to help you get started and to keep the momentum going.

1. Pray. Every assignment is an opportunity to know God more intimately and clearly. Don't miss this opportunity to ask the Holy Spirit to guide your writing process!
2. Don't wait until the last minute to start writing.
3. If you have difficulty starting, relieve yourself of the anxiety of writing that "perfect" first sentence by writing a paragraph about something completely unrelated to your assignment. Write about your day, write about what you recently read in Scripture, or write a nonsensical story. The act of writing—writing anything—can give you the inertia that you need to start writing your paper. (Remember to delete your pre-write later!)
4. Stop writing before you complete a section of your paper. Return to that section the next day (or a few hours later) and pick up where you left off. This does two things. First, it gives your brain a chance to rest and to mull over "what's next." Second, you won't have to struggle with figuring out where to start (see #2 above) as you already know what you need to write next.
5. Cut out as many distractions as possible—especially electronic and digital distractions! Turn your phone off *and* put it into a different room. Unless absolutely necessary, turn off the WiFi on your computer while you are writing so that you are not tempted to check the internet or email. Ask your family to give you an hour (or however long you need) of uninterrupted time.
6. Lastly, don't wait until the last minute to start writing. (Sound familiar?)

5. REVISING YOUR PAPER

In this section you'll find a few tips for revising your paper. There is also a revision checklist that you can print out as you do your revision(s).

In general, you should revise your paper at least once. Two or more revisions are necessary to ensure a solidly written, well-articulated paper.

Before your first revision: read the paper

Before you begin revising, read through the paper *without editing it*. Consider reading it out loud. As you read, ask yourself...

- Is the flow of argument clear?
- Do I repeat myself at any time? Note repetitions to remove.
- Are any sentences or paragraphs too wordy or too long?

Once you've read your paper through, it's time to begin editing and revising.

Each revision

Make it your practice to do the following with each revision of your paper.

1. Address grammar issues. Identify any formatting and grammar issues. Address them immediately.

2. Address punctuation errors. Punctuation marks for quotes can be tricky. Remember this rule: the punctuation mark falls *inside* the quotation mark.

“This is an example of correct punctuation *inside* the quotation mark.”
(CORRECT)

“This is an example of incorrect punctuation *outside* the quotation mark”.
(INCORRECT)

There is an exception to this rule. When the source quoted concludes with either a question mark or an exclamation point, include the original punctuation mark inside the quotation mark and a period outside of the quotation mark.

“This is an example of the original punctuation *inside* the quotation mark followed by a period!”. (CORRECT)

Footnotes are superscripted and placed *after* the quotation mark.

“Footnotes looks like this.”²⁴ (CORRECT)

3. Address spacing errors. There should be only one space between sentences. If you find 2 or more spaces between sentences, address the error during your revision.

4. Remove hyperlinks. Occasionally hyperlinks show up in electronic sources that you copy/paste into your paper. This can happen when quoting a resource from Logos or an ebook app such as Kindle. Remember to remove all hyperlinks from sources you quote.

If you need help learning how to do this, do a simple Google search for “how to turn off hyperlinks in [Word / Google Docs / Pages].”

5. Remove subjective descriptors. In research, exegetical, and academic papers, you must avoid using subjective descriptive statements. I might think that John Calvin is one of the most brilliant theologians to ever live, but what I think about Calvin must not appear in my paper.

Thus, if I introduce Calvin as source, I must not write something like, “As the brilliant theologian John Calvin stated... .” Instead, I must write something straightforward like, “As theologian John Calvin stated... .”

The same is true about your feelings regarding an argument or a group of people. Arguments and groups of people are not “good,” “bad,” “stupid,” “lazy,” etc. just because I *feel* this way about them. If you think an argument is stupid, do the hard work and either disprove or discredit the argument with solid research. Let your research and argumentation do the talking.

6. THE FINAL REVIEW BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR PAPER

Ask someone else to read your paper

If you have the time and someone willing to do you a favor, invite someone to read your paper and give you feedback before you submit it. Ideally, you should present them with a paper that has been revised by yourself at least once so that they do not get bogged down in matters of grammar, style, and flow of argument.

Before submitting your paper: read the paper

Just as you did before your first revision, read through the final version of your paper before you submit it. If anything needs to be addressed, this is your last chance!

Utilize the revision checklist

Once again, print out the revision checklist above and work through the paper one final time.

7. PAPER REVISION CHECKLIST

The following checklist can be printed as a guide for revisions.

Syllabus

- Does the paper address everything in the syllabus? (Take the time to read the syllabus again at this point. The last thing you want to do is accidentally miss something!)
- Is the paper within the stated minimum and maximum pagination as per the syllabus? (Remember: neither the Title Page nor the Works Cited page count toward or against total page length.)
- Does the syllabus require a minimum number of scholarly sources, and does the paper meet this requirement?

Formatting and style

- Are page numbers added to the paper correctly?
- Is the Title Page formatted correctly?
- Does the paper have only 1 font throughout? (If not, correct all variations.)
- Is the font size for the paper 12-point throughout? (If not, change it to 12-point.)
- Is the font size for footnote citations 10-point throughout? (If not, change it to 10-point.)
- Are footnote #'s superscripted both in the paper and in the footnote?
- Are there any hyperlinks that need to be removed?
- Are quotes punctuated correctly, and are footnote citations in the correct place?
- Are there any sentences with more than 1 space between them?
- Review all Turabian formatting and style helps in this *Guide* and in other resources to ensure that your paper is formatted correctly and that citations are correctly formatted.

Content and grammar

- Are there 1st person references that need to be removed? (For research, exegetical, and other academic papers only.)
- Are there subjective descriptors of people or concepts? (If so, remove them.)
- Are there repeated phrases or concepts that can be cut?
- Are there sentences that are too wordy and need editing?
- Are Hebrew and Greek words formatted and referenced correctly?

Sources

- Are all sources introduced?
- Are there long block quotes that should be paraphrased and commentated on?
- Are there any quotes that lack citation?
- Are all footnote citations correctly formatted?
- Are subsequent footnote citations of sources correctly identified (i.e. author last name, source title, or *ibid.*)?
- Are all sources cited in the paper listed in the Works Cited? (If not, add what is missing.)
- Does the Works Cited list a source that was not quoted? (If so, remove it.)

8. TIP: CREATING A BIBLE STUDY OR SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Several courses require you to create a Bible study or Sunday school lesson. The following is a simple guide for how to create a lesson.

1. **Warm-up** – How will you get your students’ attention and engage them in the lesson?
Also, will you open with prayer?
2. **Introduction** – How will you introduce the topic?
3. **Learning activities** – What activities will be utilized to teach on the topic?
 - a. **Organize** your activities so that the lesson has a logical flow to it.
 - i. Activities might include:
 1. Reading Scripture aloud
 2. Discussion questions
 3. Small group discussions (groups of 2 or 3 people)
 4. Class brainstorming using a whiteboard
 5. Showing a video clip
 6. Teaching
 - ii. Be sure to incorporate illustrations / applications in your teaching activities.
 - b. Allocate enough time for each activity so that you can fit everything into the allotted time for your lesson.
4. **Conclusion** – How will you conclude your lesson? Is there a call to action response to the lesson so that it is applied during the week? Also, will you close with prayer

Style

Unless otherwise stated in the syllabus, MBS utilizes Turabian style and citation because it is the standard for most seminaries and theological publications.

Turabian is a version of the Chicago Manual of Style. M.Div. students whose undergraduate degrees were in other disciplines than theological studies might discover a learning curve to Turabian citation and style. I (Adam) certainly did when I was in seminary!

When I pursued a major in English for my B.A., I learned the MLA (Modern Language Association) style and citation format. It was somewhat jarring when I began working on my M.Div. and discovered that I must learn a new method of style and citation. The good news is that over time I became familiar with Turabian and could format my papers without consulting the style guide for most projects.

Why should you care about formatting, style, and citation?

In response to this question, Michael Kibbe writes:

[You] need to know your audience. A research paper is a communicative act directed toward those who have spent years staring at scholarly literature to the point that a misplaced punctuation mark in a citation sticks out like a sore thumb and a misspelled publisher's name is nails on a chalkboard. So format your citations properly for the same reason you use the same font throughout your paper: to keep relatively meaningless details from being a distraction from what is important (your thesis). What do you want your readers to remember? Your inability to follow simple directions, or your thesis?⁶

Take the time to familiarize yourself with Turabian and to learn MBS's citation style so that your professor is not distracted from the content of your paper. Following citation and style guidance can be laborious, but it will come easier over time the more you do it!

In this section, you will find:

1. General MBS Style and Citation Requirements
2. Style and Citation for Research, Exegetical, and Other Academic Papers
3. Style and Citation for Sermons, Bible Studies, Reflection Papers, and Similar Papers
4. Example of Style and Citation

1. GENERAL MBS STYLE AND CITATION REQUIREMENTS

You will submit different kinds of assignments in seminary. Some of them will be more heavily researched—such as an exegetical paper—whereas others will be more reflective or application oriented—such as a reflection paper.

Regardless of the type of paper submitted, the following guidance applies to all papers.

⁶ Ibid., 96.

(1) Turabian Citation Style

Unless otherwise indicated in a syllabus, all MBS assignments must be submitted following the current Turabian citation style. The following three resources provide guidance on following Turabian citation style.

Turabian Citation Quick Guide

<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian/turabian-notes-and-bibliography-citation-quick-guide.html>

This should be your first stop for style and citation guidance. It's free and very thorough. This site is also listed on the MBS Writing Guide page:

<https://www.metrobaltimoreseminary.org/writing-guide>.

Turabian, Kate L.. *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 9th Edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.

This resource includes in depth research tools, research tips, writing tips, and formatting guidance. For these reasons, a student might consider investing in purchasing the Manual, but it can also be borrowed from a local library.

Houghton, Timothy J. and Peggy M. Houghton. *Turabian: The Easy Way!* Ann Arbor: XanEdu Publishing, 2019.

This brief and inexpensive resource addresses additional research and writing topics as well as provides beneficial formatting instructions for MS Word documents.

(2) Title Page and Works Cited (or Bibliography) page

Unless otherwise indicated in a syllabus, all MBS assignments must be submitted with a Title Page and a Works Cited page (or a Bibliography page). When counting the pagination for your paper, keep in mind that the Title Page and the Works Cited page do not count toward or against total pagination. For example, if your professor requires a 5-7 page paper, the actual pagination will be a 7-9 page document with the Title Page and Works Cited page accounting for the 2 additional pages.

During your research process you will often create a Bibliography. Your research Bibliography is a list of sources that you may consult, did consult, and/or quote.

Your research Bibliography is not the same thing as your research paper Works Cited page. Your Works Cited page is a list of only those sources that you cited in your paper.

It is helpful to familiarize yourself with the differences between the two:

- **“Bibliography”** is a list of resources consulted in researching the paper—whether or not they are cited in the paper.
- **“Works Cited”** is a list of resources that are cited in the paper.

Before you submit your paper, confirm in the syllabus if your assignment requires a Bibliography or a Works Cited page.

(2.a.) Title Page format

Every paper must include a Title Page regardless of the type of paper being submitted.

Do not submit a paper with your name, paper title, or other identifying features on the first page of the paper proper.

The Title Page does not include a number—even though it is “page 1” of your paper. The Title Page includes the following elements, centered, equally spaced on the page, and in this order:

[Center the page vertically and horizontally.]

TITLE OF THE PAPER IN ALL CAPS

[All text must be double spaced.]

A Paper Submitted to

[Name and title of instructor]

of the

Metro Baltimore Seminary

[There should be 2 spaces between each section on the Title Page. Because the Title Page is double spaced, this is actually 4 spaces.]

In Partial Fulfillment

for the Course [or Workshop]

Course name and number (if applicable)

Student name

List prior degree earned, institution, and year earned

Additional degrees, institutions, and years are treated on additional lines

Date the paper is submitted

See the sample Title Page below for an example of element spacing.

(2.b.) Works Cited (or Bibliography) page format

The words “Works Cited” (or Bibliography) must appear centered and in all caps at the top of the page. If there is more than 1 page to your Works Cited, you do not need to reproduce the “WORKS CITED” title.

Sources are listed **alphabetically by last name** and follow Turabian citation style for the respective type of source (reference material, journal article, a volume in a series, etc.).

Sources are listed single spaced with one space between each source. If a source requires more than 1 line, the 2nd line is indented .5” from the first line. See the example of Works Cited below.

(3) Margins, spacing, and alignment

All papers must be submitted with 1” margins.

All papers must be **left aligned** and **double-spaced**. There are some exceptions to this rule as you will see below.

(4) Spacing and paragraphs

There must be only **one space between paragraphs**, not two or more. The **first sentence** in a paragraph must be **indented .5”**.

(5) Fonts

Papers must be **12-point** font throughout using either the **Times New Roman** or **Helvetica** font. The same font must be used throughout the entirety of the paper—the body of the paper, footnotes, Works Cited, Appendices, etc..

(6) Footnotes must be **10-point** and the same font as the paper body. Footnotes are indented .5” on the first line only. See example of footnotes below.

(7) Page numbers

The Title Page does not have a page number. The first page *after* the Title Page is page #2. The following is additional guidance on page numbers found in Peggy Houghton and Timothy Houghton’s *Turabian: The Easy Way!*⁷

- Page numbers are located .5” down from the top of the page (or top of the bottom margin if in the footer).
- Page numbers can be placed:
 - Centered in the footer,
 - Flush right in the footer,
 - Centered in the header, or
 - Flush right in the header.

⁷ Peggy M. Houghton and Timothy J. Houghton, *Turabian: The Easy Way!* (Ann Arbor: XanEdu Publishing, 2019), 3.

(8) Formatting Hebrew and Greek Words and Citations

Follow this pattern when incorporating Greek and Hebrew words into your paper:

- Original language word in Greek or Hebrew
- Transliteration into English *italicized* and in (parentheses)
- Translation into English

Examples:

בָּבֶל (bābel) translated as “Babel, Babylon, gate of gods”

ἀγάπη (agapē) translated as “love, generosity, kindly concern, devotedness”

(9) Submit papers *only* in Word Doc (.doc / .docx) format

Unless otherwise directed by your professor, submit your papers in MS Word format (.docx or .doc). Most word processors like Pages and Google Docs can export your paper in MS Word format. If you need assistance converting a Pages or Google Docs file into MS Word, do a quick Google search and you will find a wealth of tutorials to assist you.

2. STYLE AND CITATION FOR RESEARCH, EXEGETICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND OTHER ACADEMIC PAPERS

Research papers, exegetical papers, and other academic papers will require you to interact with multiple sources. The following style and citation guidance apply to such papers.

Spacing and paragraphs

Do not include additional spacing between paragraphs or section headings. There must be only one space between paragraphs, not two or more.

The **first sentence** in a paragraph must be **indented .5”**.

When you include a block quote in a paragraph, the sentence that follows the block quote is not indented.

The following must be single-spaced:⁸

- Block quotations (see below for more about block quote formatting)
- Table titles and figure captions
- Outlines and lists

These single-spaced items must include a blank line between items:⁹

- Lists of figures and tables
- Footnotes or endnotes
- Bibliographies, Works Cited, or reference lists.

⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁹ Ibid., 2.

Footnotes

Most word processors (MS Word, Pages, Google Docs) will format your footnotes for you. However, sometimes the formatting is not consistent with Turabian. Be sure your footnotes follow the following format guidelines:

- Footnote numbers in the paper and in the footnote are in superscript.^{superscript}
- Footnotes are all single-spaced with no spacing between footnotes.
- The first line of the footnote is indented .5" from the margin. (This can be accomplished by tapping the "tab" button on your keyboard.)
- Footnotes are 10-pt font.
- Unlike Works Cited, footnotes list the author's first name first. This is reversed on the Works Cited page where the author's last name comes first.

Subsequent citations of sources are abbreviated following these rules:

- Use the last name of the author followed by a comma, the page number, and a period.
- If you cite more than one work by the same author in your paper, use the title of the work instead of the last name of the author.
- Whenever you quote the same source in succession, use the word "Ibid" followed by a period, comma, and the page number.

Block quotes

Block quotes are **single-spaced** with **one space** between the block quote and the sentences before and after the block quote.

Block quotes must be **indented .5"** on **both the left and right side**.

Block quotes must be **justified**.

See the example below for block quote formatting.

Section headings

Some assignments, like Exegetical Papers, may necessitate or require section headings. **However, the vast majority of your assignments will not require section headings.** You should not include section headings in a paper unless the syllabus calls for multiple sections for the paper. If in doubt, consult the syllabus and ask your professor.

Section headings must be in **bold and centered**. As per the note above under *Spacing and paragraphs*, there is only 1 space between the heading and the items before and after the heading.

Avoid 1st person references

For research and other academic papers, replace first person references ("I think..." "My belief...") by referring to yourself in 3rd person ("It is the author's conviction that..."). Note: 1st person is appropriate in papers or in sections of academic papers where the nature of the content requires personal reflection ("This study of John 1:1-14 impacted the way I disciple teenagers...").

3. STYLE AND CITATION FOR SERMONS, BIBLE STUDIES, REFLECTION PAPERS, AND SIMILAR PAPERS

Some papers that you submit will have less style and citation requirements because of the nature of the paper. These include sermons, Bible studies, reflection papers, and similar papers. These papers still follow the general MBS style and citation requirements above. The following are differences between these papers and research, exegetical, and other academic papers.

Use 1st person references

Unlike research, exegetical, and other academic papers, usage of 1st person pronouns (I, me, we, us) is encouraged and may even be necessary. This is especially true when an assignment requires personal reflection. Unless the syllabus says otherwise, use personal pronouns.

Assignments that do not follow standard format

Some papers will not follow the standard format of research, exegetical, and other academic papers. For example, if an assignment requires you to take notes on a sermon and offer reflections on your notes and the sermon, you need the flexibility and freedom to organize your paper accordingly. In such a case, organize the paper in whatever way makes the most sense.

4. EXAMPLE OF STYLE AND CITATION

The next several pages include examples of a Title Page, paper body (including quotes and block quotes), footnotes, and Works Cited page.

Try to make the content on the Title Page equally spaced.

No page #s on Title Page.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT AS SPIRITUAL FORMATIVE TEXT:
AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF MATTHEW 5-7 [Title in all caps, Centered]

A Paper Submitted to

Dr. Francis Scott Key [Name and title of instructor]

of the

Metro Baltimore Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

for the Course

New Testament Exegesis 1 – The Gospel of Matthew [Course title]

Adam L. Feldman [Student name]

B.A., Carson-Newman College, 1999 [List all degrees earned, institutions, & graduation years]

M.Div., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003

D.Min., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2012

December 12, 2019 [Date that your paper is submitted to your instructor]

What is meant by the word “spiritual?” In contemporary Western culture that word might mean anything from practicing Buddhist meditation to a thoughtful walk in the woods. Within Christian circles the word might refer to an emotionally moving worship gathering or the monastic practice of contemplative prayer. The discussion on “spirituality” is complicated by the veritable smorgasbord of spiritual paths and experiences in the West that has generated a large spectrum of what is meant by the term “spiritual formation.” [Double-spaced, left aligned.]

Jesus Christ’s Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew 5-7 contains a Christocentric theology of spiritual formation unique among the many spiritualities of contemporary Western culture precisely because its locus and goals are informed by the gospel. Christian spiritual formation begins with spiritual bankruptcy, death, and a bloody cross, so it is apropos that the very first words out of Jesus’ mouth in his Sermon are, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” They set the tone for the Sermon’s description of a life no person can bring about by sheer effort and will.

Jesus’ expectations of his disciples in the Sermon demand spiritual transformation:

“For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20, **ESV**). [List the primary Bible version used throughout the paper in the first reference. If using another version, indicate the different version with each occurrence.]

→ “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt 5:48). [Quotes 2+ sentences from the same source are single-spaced and indented on left and right by .5” as in this example.] ←

In *Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount*, D. A. Carson reflects on this reality:

The more I read these three chapters—Matthew 5, 6, and 7—the more I am both drawn to them and shamed by them. Their brilliant light draws me like a moth to a spotlight; but the light is so bright that it sears and burns. No room is left for forms of piety which are nothing more than veneer and sham. Perfection is demanded. Jesus says, ‘Be perfect...as your heavenly Father is perfect.’ (5.48).”¹

¹ D. A. Carson, *Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount And His Confrontation with the World: An Exposition of Matthew 5-10* (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 2006), 11.

Righteous perfection like the heavenly Father's is impossible without the complete spiritual transformation that comes at the moment of salvation.

Context

Section headings are **bold and centered**.

When quoting from the same source immediately following your previous quote, shorten the citation using "Ibid." See this footnote for an example.²

When quoting from a source that was previously quoted but is not immediately following the source, use the author's last name. See this footnote for an example.³

² Ibid., 50.

³ Feldman, 7.

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Schaeffer, Francis A.. *True Spirituality*. Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2001.