

Introduction (pages 15–23)

1. What is *spirituality*? (9) Is it a New Testament term? Veith writes: “Christianity [is] a religion that is not about God as such, but about God in the flesh, and God on the cross.” Explain his insight. See **1 Timothy 3:16** and **1 Corinthians 1:18–25**.
2. C. S. Lewis speaks of the necessity of “leaving the hallway and entering one of the rooms.” What does this mean in terms of church membership? How are the empty rooms like generic pop Christianity?
3. What is meant by the term *evangelical*. See **Romans 1:16–17**.
4. How is doctrine necessary for genuine *spirituality*?
5. What does Lutheranism have to offer within the American culture of “pop Christianity”?

For Further Study:

- Hamann, Henry. *On Being a Christian*. Northwestern Publishing House.
- Horton, Michael. *In the Face of God: The Dangers and Delights of Spiritual Intimacy*. Word Publishing.
- Veith, Gene. “Religion, Culture, and Our Worship.” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (January 1998): 25–38.
- Wells, David. *No Place for the Truth or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology*. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“Justification: The Dynamics of Sin and Grace” (25–39)

1. Adolf Koeberle (*The Quest for Holiness*) notes three ways in which human beings attempt to “find” God: moralism, speculation (Rationalism), and mysticism. What do these means have in common?
2. “Instead of insisting that human beings attain perfection, Lutheran spirituality begins by facing up to imperfection.” How is this supported by **1 John 1:8–10**.
3. “Koeberle says that the three approaches to spirituality are tied to various faculties of the human mind: moralism exerts the efforts of the will; speculation exerts the efforts of the intellect; mysticism exerts the efforts of the emotions.” What are some contemporary examples of these approaches?
4. How does mysticism come close to the temptation offered by the serpent in **Genesis 3:5**.
5. “But God is no passive force. God is the one who is active, not human beings. The issue is not our ascent to God, but God’s descent to us.” How does God descend to us? See Luther’s Christmas hymn “From Heaven above to Earth I Come” (*Lutheran Service Book*, 358).
6. The words of Jesus in **John 14:6** address all three (moralism, speculation, mysticism) of man’s attempts to reach God. Contrast this with the claim of one “Lutheran” who advertises herself as a “spiritual director”: “A spiritual director can recognize the signs of spiritual burnout—and help a person turn inward to find God within his or her own heart” (*The Metro Lutheran*, July 1999, 10).
7. Faith itself is a gift and not a good work that we do. How is this demonstrated by **Ephesians 2:8–9**.
8. Veith writes: “The Law and the Gospel, the dynamics of repentance and acceptance of Christ, are part of the fabric of Lutheran *spirituality*, not just a one-time occurrence but a pattern entered into again and again throughout one’s life.” See **Ephesians 4:22–24**. How are “the dynamics of repentance and acceptance of Christ” continually repeated in the Christian life?

9. The Christian lives the paradox *simul justus et peccator* (at the same time righteous and sinful). See **Romans 7:7–25**. What does this mean for the way we understand the Christian life?

For Further Study:

Koeberle, Adolph. *The Quest for Holiness*. Augsburg Publishing House.

Preus, Robert. *Justification and Rome*. Concordia Publishing House.

Sasse, Hermann. *Here We Stand*. Openbook Publishers.

“The Means of Grace: The Presence of God” (43–67)

1. “We are saved solely by the action of God: He saved us by performing everything we could not.” How is this truth illustrated by **2 Corinthians 5:18–21**.

2. What is “objective justification”?

3. “If faith is not a decision nor an experience nor some inner work, and salvation is totally the work of God, it would seem that faith too must be the work of God.” God creates and sustains faith through means or instruments, His Word and Sacraments. How does this help us understand the connection between justification and the Sacraments?

4. What do we learn about the Word of God from **Psalm 33:6** and **John 1:1–3**?

5. Note how the following passages describe the efficacy of God’s Word:

Isaiah 55:11

Romans 10:14, 17

Hebrews 4:12

6. God caused His Word to be inscripturated in human language. The Scriptures come from God Himself through human writers that He inspired. Note what the following texts teach us about the origin, authority, and use of the Holy Scriptures:

2 Peter 1:20–21

1 Timothy 3:16

7. How are the Scriptures “sacramental”?

8. How does the distinction between “Law” and “Gospel” help us understand the Bible’s “hard edges”?

9. What does Veith mean when he writes: “Lutheran spirituality is a sacramental spirituality”?

10. “The Lutheran understanding of Baptism is, in fact, the most evangelical of doctrines.” How do **Romans 6:3–5** and **1 Peter 3:21** demonstrate this truth?

11. “The Lord’s Supper is nothing less than the Gospel.” Explain what Veith means by this assertion. How does the Lord’s Supper “bridge the gap between here and Golgotha, now and eternity”?

12. Read **1 Corinthians 11:23–29**. What does this text tell us about the reality of Christ’s body and blood in the Lord’s Supper? Note Veith’s comment: “The Lutherans exceedingly high view of the sacraments derives directly from their exceedingly high view of God’s Word.”

For Further Study:

Sasse, Hermann. “The Lord’s Supper in the Life of the Church.” In *Scripture and Church: Selected Essays of Hermann Sasse*. Concordia Seminary Press.
Scaer, David. *Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics: Baptism*. Luther Academy.

“The Theology of the Cross: The Hiddenness of God” (69–86)

1. How does Veith compare the “ordinariness” of what happens in the means of grace with the “ordinariness” of Christ?

2. Read **Isaiah 45:15**. How does God “hide” Himself?

3. In 1518, Luther produced his Heidelberg Theses. Luther distinguishes between the “cross theologian” and the “glory theologian” in Theses 20–21:

“He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross.” (Thesis 20)

“A theologian of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theologian of the cross calls the thing what it actually is.” (Thesis 21)

How does Veith suggest that a “theology of glory” is at work in much of what passes for “spirituality” today?

4. How does the theology of the cross cut against the grain of all natural religion?

5. Veith cites the following biblical texts. How do these passages demonstrate the theology of the cross? (60)

Philippians 2:6–8

Isaiah 53:2–6

6. What is implied in **Luke 9:23** and **14:27** about the theology of the cross in the life of the Christian?

7. How is the theology of the cross illustrated in Paul’s life according to **2 Corinthians 12:7–10**?

8. What does Veith mean by this statement, “Our cross, Luther taught, is never self-chosen, self-imposed”?

9. What is God’s purpose in imposing the cross on His people? See **2 Corinthians 5:7**.

10. How is the Christian life itself hidden? See **Colossians 3:3–4**.

11. Read **Galatians 5:16–26**. How does the theology of the cross help us understand the conflict between the “old man” and the “new man” in the Christian life?

For Further Study:

Sasse, Hermann. “The Theology of the Cross.” In *We Confess Jesus Christ*.
Concordia Publishing House.

“Vocation: The Spirituality of the Ordinary Life” (91–114)

1. What are the “masks of God”?
2. How does Veith describe the “spiritual significance” of good works?
3. Veith notes that God’s providence stands over the whole of His creation. See **Hebrews 1:3** and **Matthew 10:29**. How does God exercise His providence over His creation?
4. How is God’s governance of the spiritual realm and His governance of the earthly realm similar and dissimilar?
5. How is God at work behind our work?
6. What does it mean “to have a calling”?
7. Comment on this quote from Gustaf Wingren: “God does not need our good works, but our neighbor does.”
8. How does God use even our selfish motivations to accomplish His purposes?
9. How do we know what our vocations are?
10. Provide examples of a person “acting out” of his vocation. See **Romans 12:19–13:4**.
11. How is the pastoral office a mask for God?
12. How does the theology of the cross apply to vocation?
13. What place does prayer have in vocation?

The Spirituality of the Cross: The Way of the First Evangelicals
Gene Edward Veith

For Further Study:

Wingren, Gustaf. *Luther on Vocation*. Augsburg Publishing House.

“Living in the Two Kingdoms: The Sacred and the Secular” (117–135)

1. How is the “two kingdoms” teaching a paradox?
2. How does the “two kingdoms” teaching serve as a “blueprint for Christian activism” while safeguarding against worldliness?
3. What possibilities identify the Christian’s relationship to culture?
4. How does **John 17:14–18** help us understand the Christian’s relationship to this world?
5. How does Veith describe the lordship of God in both kingdoms?
6. What does Veith mean by his assertion that “a Lutheran perspective on politics . . . will be profoundly realistic”?
7. How does Veith answer those who claim that Christians are trying to “impose their morality” on others? Note his use of **Romans 2:14–15**.
8. What happens when the two kingdoms are confused with each other?
9. How do freedom and slavery characterize the Christian life?

For Further Study:

McCain, Paul. “Receiving the Gifts of God in His Two Kingdoms: The Development of Luther’s Understanding.” *Logia* (Trinity 1999): 29–40.

“Conclusion: Worshiping God” (137–143)

1. What things especially impressed Veith the first time he attended a Lutheran church service?
2. What is “holiness” and how is it expressed in the liturgy? See **Exodus 3:5–6**.
3. Veith says “Lutheran worship is God-centered, not human-centered.” What are the characteristics of God-centered worship? How are these characteristics evident in the church year? in Lutheran church architecture? in Lutheran hymnody?
4. Quoting John Kleinig, Veith writes that liturgy is “heaven on earth.” How is this illustrated by the following passages from the Book of Hebrews:

10:19–25

12:1–2

12:18–24

13:15–16

For Further Study:

Kleinig, John. “The Biblical View of Worship.” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (October 1994): 245–54.

Kleinig, John. “Sharing in God’s Holiness.” *Lutheran Theological Review* (Fall/Winter 1995): 105–18.

Pless, John T. “Liturgy and Evangelism in Service of the *Mysteria Dei*.” In *Mysteria Dei: Essays in Honor of Kurt Marquart*. Concordia Theological Seminary Press.

Precht, Fred. *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*. Concordia Publishing House.