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Spirituality According to Paul: Imitating the Apostle of Christ
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Imitating Paul

In Spirituality According to Paul, Rodney Reeves charts out the Pauline themes of spiritual life based on Paul's initial invitation to "imitate" him as he follows Christ. In examining the arc of spiritual union with Christ through his crucifixion, burial and resurrection, Reeves connects our contemporary lives to the life of Paul, and challenges readers to follow the apostle's spiritual path.

What makes Pauline spirituality so unique?

Paul was the only [New Testament] author to suggest that, somehow, we participate in the burial of Christ through baptism. So I explore what it means to experience the full sweep of Paul's gospel. For Paul, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ is the essence of the gospel—a narrative of spirituality. Paul believed that every experience in his life was an opportunity to participate in the cross of Christ, the burial of Christ and the resurrection of Christ—lessons he tried to pass on to his converts.

What made you want to write about Paul's unique ways of practicing spiritual discipline?

The motivation for this project came from student questions in class regarding how Paul's advice in his letters should be applied today. Critical issues in Pauline studies do not excite college students today. Rather, they want to know whether Paul's view of the world in Ephesians—we are "seated in heaven" with Christ in order to overcome malevolent powers—is true today. Often, Paul's instructions are based on his experience of the gospel, and he expected his converts to have the same experiences. Therefore, students want to know if Paul's experience should be our experience. Does Paul's invitation to "imitate him as he imitated Christ" apply to us as well?

What are three things your text provides to help students understand more clearly who Paul was and what his goals were?

1. A description of Paul's spirituality as participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.
2. An exploration of the implications of Paul's view of baptism as a way to join Christ in his burial.
3. A demonstration of why and how Paul's spirituality should inform our spirituality.