

Doing a Dissertation

by Vern S. Poythress, Feb. 21, 2008

I. Understanding your goal

- A. Serving the Lord
- B. A contribution to knowledge
- C. A well-defined topic
- D. Doable
- E. Cogently argued
- F. Clear
- G. Inform yourself
 - 1. Read your Ph.D. committee's description
 - 2. Look over some past WTS dissertations in your field

II. Hazards

- A. Breakdown with your advisor
- B. Wearing out

III. Finding your topic

- A. Interesting to you
- B. Pleasant and edifying for you
- C. Doable
- D. Begin now
- E. Look around
 - 1. In your classes
 - 2. In your reading
 - 3. Professors' suggestions

IV. Refining your topic

- A. Particularize
- B. Find a perspective (intersecting two fields is good)

V. Researching your topic

- A. Expect to spend lots of time refining
- B. Finding what has been done
- C. Your thesis
- D. Your method

VI. Writing your proposal

- A. Expect rewrites
- B. Five pages of proposal, plus five of bibliography
- C. Structure
 - 1. Your thesis
 - 2. What has been done
 - 3. Elaboration of thesis
 - 4. Method
 - 5. Chapter outline

VII. Doing it

- A. Persevere by the Lord's strength
- B. The value of the edge
- C. Be realistic before the Lord

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