

# What Seminary Did Pastor Shane Attend?

by Shane Idleman

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*Pastor Shane discusses the value of life experience and self-education in ministry over traditional seminary training.*

**Duration:** 10:13

**Scripture:** Proverbs 4:7, Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Ephesians 4:14, Colossians 2:8, 2 Timothy 2:15, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, James 1:5, 1 Peter 3:15

**Topics:** "Theological Education", "Sovereignty Of God"

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## Description

This sermon addresses the question of seminary education and emphasizes the importance of diverse learning sources. It highlights the value of life experience, studying Christian history, and engaging with various theological perspectives to deepen understanding of God's Word. The speaker shares insights on different theological beliefs like Calvinism and Arminianism, advocating for a balanced approach rooted in Scripture and the sovereignty of God.

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## Transcript

I get this question a lot, so I'm thinking, you know what, I might as well answer it. What seminary did you attend? I'm glad you asked. Now two questions here, one, or two scenarios, one, I don't mind the question because I'm often curious too where people got their theological education, where their thinking comes from.

There's no harm in that question, it's a good question. I actually had a couple I just talked with two weeks ago, and they haven't been coming because they said, I'm not going to go to a church from a guy who didn't go to seminary. And so you have the two views, okay, I'm interested, I'm curious, where are you coming from? But also this view that, you know, you're stupid unless you went to seminary.

There's a, now, here's what happened, what seminary did I attend? Number one, the school of experience. When you come out of seminary, or at any age, I've got pastors here locally, they're in their 20s, and I try to give them advice such as, I would not have alcohol at your Bible studies. Just throwing it out there, you know, just, I don't know, you know, it might be hip and cool, but it's not a good thing, okay.

So what happens without experience, without life experience, it's hard to talk to people and help people and relate to people. So life experience is vital. Also the school of Christian history, you have to know when the church was born, what happened, what developed, the early church fathers, Roman Catholicism

and Protestant and these different splits, and the Reformation, you even go back farther to Augustine, and you can read debate, or you can read about his debate with Plagian, and Plagianism basically says that we are born without evil.

It's not in our DNA, we kind of, based on our environment, we'll take it, we can become evil later, but it's not, we're really born good. That's Plagianism, and Augustine debated a guy by the name of Plagian. You read about those debates, you read about Calvinism and Arminianism, and you read about all the church history, Martin Luther debated a man by the name of Erasmus, it's a very famous debate on the bondage of the will.

Is our will in bondage, or are we free to choose? So Christian history, so that went to the school of Christian history by reading hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of books on these subjects and biographies. That's the next one, I went to the school of Christian experience from the past. So I read the church fathers, and the interesting thing about the church fathers, I don't think we should elevate them to the degree we do.

I think it's a wonderful volume of history, I read them, I read interesting things, but Origen, I believe it was, believed that even Satan will go to heaven if he repents, or God's plan. You have Justin Martyr, Polycarp, Ignatius, Irenaeus, you read these church fathers and they're not, they're disagreeing on different points, so that's why the Bible is our standard, but we look to them. So I went and read them myself.

Here's what this all boils down to. I could go online and look at Westminster Theological Seminary, I think it's in Pennsylvania, reformed. I can look at John MacArthur's college, I just went down to the Shepherds Conference and bought way too many books that I'll probably never read.

And I looked online and like, okay, here's the books they're reading, Spurgeon's, Lectures to My Students, The Appalling Epistles, Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem, and I just went and bought the books. And I read those books, looked at the professors, looked at the outlines, looked at the questions, did my own research, I've been doing this for 17 years. So to say there's no background, I would submit to you that there might be more of a background because I'm reading it just for the enjoyment to know God, and not wanting to put that PhD on my business card.

And reading the same things, and I think, here's what it really boils down to, if somebody can go to seminary and it helps them, great, but for those who are very self-disciplined, who want to read and read and read and get ahead of the class and read more and read both sides, then it might be an idea if you're very self-disciplined is to read different sides. And that's one part, if you go to a reformed seminary, you'll come out reformed in your thinking, infant baptism, Calvinism, different things. And then if you have Dallas Theological Seminary, a lot of people, I read a lot of their books from there, who's most recent, Adrian Rogers, I believe, or David Jeremiah, Chuck Swindoll, I might be misquoting some of those, but some of those guys came from Dallas Theological Seminary.

They teach that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not valid today. It's ceased with the canonization of Scripture, we don't need the gifts of the Holy Spirit. So if you come out of there after four years, you might be persuaded to embrace that position.

You go to a Pentecostal college, you come out of there, you might need some theological grounding. You might need to come back to theology, it's not just all about experience. So what I did is I read all of those, Jack Hayford, John MacArthur, Wayne Grudem, Norman Geisler, Calvin, John Calvin.

I've got his whole commentary set to people who would not necessarily embrace him. John Wesley's journals. And I just read and continue to read all these people.

At the Shepherds Conference, I picked up books on pastoral ministry, on leadership skills from D.O. Moody to Charles Spurgeon. John MacArthur just came out with a new huge book on systematic theology. And I'll read it.

So that's what people I don't think understand is, yeah, of course I didn't go to a seminary and earned a degree from a certain area, but I've been reading and studying all these areas, so I'm prepared when I go into the Word of God. If I have questions, then I look to commentaries and the Word of God, and of course relying on the Holy Spirit. So that's why you'll hear me talk about pneumatology, eschatology, soteriology, ecclesiology.

All those big terms mean study of the church, study of the Holy Spirit, study of salvation, study on the work of the Holy Spirit, the depravity of man. And then big things like systematic theology. What is that? It's just talking about how God is systematic in what He does.

From creation, to order, to the fall, to redemption, to His will, to the character, to the attributes of God, to now the church, the sacraments, baptism, communion. You just read systematically how God works, theology, the study of God. That's all it is.

So when people ask, actually I might just make this into a short clip. Here's my experience at seminary. It's reading from all, and I think that's healthy.

I don't think it's, because what happens is, well I went to this seminary, all these guys are bad. No, they're not bad. They just read the Bible differently.

For example, if somebody was raised in a Reformation type setting, Calvin, Luther, Swingly, Knox, when I mention those names, these are all Reformers. And we look to them, so they'll take on that denominational setting. But then when you get to another group that believes that the Holy Spirit is evident today, that when they gave their life to the Lord, and one day they just submitted everything, they were worshipping, they start to just worship God in this unknown language.

They have these types of sometimes a word of wisdom for somebody, and they're humble about it. And you see the Holy Spirit working. Then you read 1 Corinthians, like that's what I've experienced.

So they're going to agree with that. They're not going to think that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not valid today. So they're going to have a hard time going to a church that doesn't believe that.

And that was one argument. Somebody said, why are there so many denominations? Well, that's why. Because people, they want more of a hymnal, hymns, quiet, piano, and just more of a hymnal type setting and very conservative.

Then there's other groups that are more expressive, and people, they go to a church way out on 40th East. You know, here in Landhoef, they want to be conservative and choir. And Pastor Paul, I met with him at city council.

We talked for four hours addressing the city on marijuana. We're brothers. Chris at Grace Chapel, text him off and talked him off and built up.

We're brothers. Calvary Chapel, it's all, but it's different types. But the enemy will come in here and cause division.

Now there are some churches I do have concerns with. But for the majority of churches in this area that are Bible teaching, and there are churches I can name just west of here that will say, well, they're not Calvinistic. You know, is Leo Naval, is Westside Christian Calvinism? Well, then they're not really going in a healthy direction.

I would encourage you not to go there. So they take to that doctrine pretty, pretty, they hold to it pretty closely. For those who are interested, Calvinism, Armenianism, basically Calvinism is, and I love John Calvin, but actually he wouldn't subscribe to the five points of Calvinism.

He would subscribe to the four points. And they break it down, total depravity, irresistible grace, unconditional election, perseverance of the saints, and limited atonement. And basically, you have this group that God only chooses certain people to heaven, the elect.

So if you're not chosen, you're, you know, sorry, you weren't part of God's plan. Now God, the Bible teaches election, but then there's this side who says that man does have the ability to repent and believe. And then people say, well, what side are you on? I say, well, what does the Bible say? That's what I talked about.

I don't like these isms here. What does the Bible say? God is sovereign. Yep.

Their election's true. Yep. But man is commanded to repent and believe so much so that he'll be held accountable for his choices.

So Shane, what do you believe? I believe both. You can't. You've got to jump on this camp or this camp.

No, I don't. The Bible teaches both. He's sovereign.

I'm resting in that, but I'm calling people to repentance until the day I die. It's very healthy balance. I love that tension.

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