The purpose of this paper is for you to formulate a theological theoretical framework for marriage and family counseling practice in either the pastoral or clinical arenas. Base your paper on your coursework thus far in the DA program and further research that you do in the literature on family systems, counseling psychology, and pastoral counseling. The paper should be 30-50 pages in length using APA style.

The formulation of a theology of marriage and family should take into account biblical exegesis, biblical theology, and the history of Christian thought with reference to marriage, family, and personhood (self) and take into account perspectives from systems and psychological research and theories on these issues. At all points, the paper is to bring both biblical and psychological/systems concepts into creative interaction with a view toward a comprehensive framework.

Use the traditional Christian theological conceptualization of human history as a structure for your paper: Creation, Fall, Salvation/Redemption, and Consummation.

The paper should consider marriage and family issues in six sections:
- Section One: Introduction
- Section Two: Creation
- Section Three: The Fall
- Section Four: Salvation (Incarnation, the Cross, the Resurrection/Redemption)
- Section Five: Consummation (Christ’s return)
- Section Six: Conclusion

The content of the paper will address most of the following themes:
- Your hermeneutical point of departure
- The nature of human persons
- Human growth and development
- The nature of human relatedness including human sexuality, gender, multi-cultural issues
- The nature of Christian marriage
  - Its purposes (exclusiveness? permanence?, etc.)
- Sin and the nature of brokenness/repair in marriage and family systems
- The nature of Christian family
  - Its purposes (context for nurture, shaper of identity or view of self, promoter of spirituality, parenting, etc.)

Note: your paper is expected to show that using both these sources of knowledge (theology and behavioral sciences) can provide a more whole understanding of marriage and family than is possible when either discipline is used alone.
You will be having both online and discussion forum sessions to begin to generate thoughts on the various sections of the paper and to be able to offer and receive input from your peers regarding possible theological or psychological principles, helpful references, and suggestions. You will be individually responsible for identifying, analyzing, and incorporating literature from the field to support your formulation in your paper. Also be sure that you properly cite your sources in your paper using APA style. This paper is a major project of your doctoral study and, as such, it is expected that your literature review will include former course work and extend significantly beyond those readings. You may want to refine your theological reflections to a certain school of thought: Reformed, Anabaptist, Catholic, etc., but you are not required to do so. You will also be encouraged to choose a specific psychological concept or approach in order to narrow your focus and make the project manageable.

Your paper is due on the date indicated in the course syllabus. Your paper will be evaluated according to the grading rubric. Your faculty Reader will determine if your paper is accepted or contains sections that must be rewritten or needs total revision. You will have the opportunity to rewrite the paper, or some aspect of it, one time. All papers that are deemed unacceptable after their second submission will receive a review by a second Reader. If the paper fails to be acceptable after revisions, the student’s future in the program will be considered by the January semester start date.

IF YOUR PAPER NEEDS ANY MEASURE OF REVISION YOU ARE REQUIRED TO RETURN THE CRITIQUED DRAFT OF THE PAPER CONTAINING THE READER’S COMMENTS ALONG WITH YOUR REVISED PAPER.