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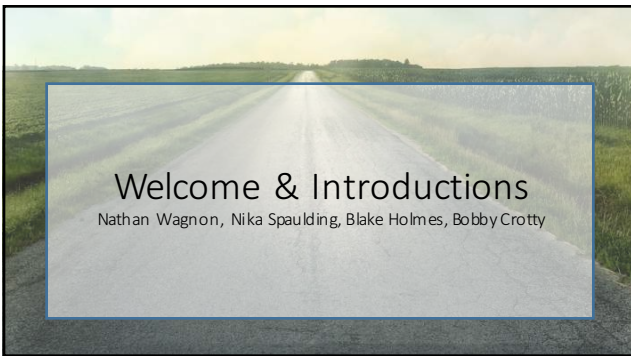
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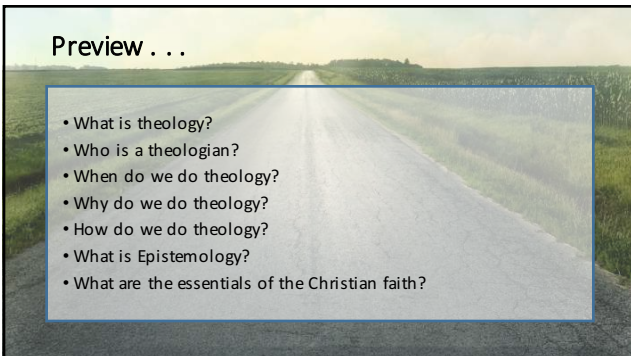
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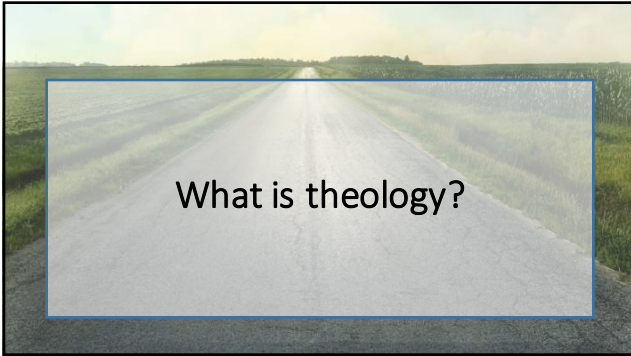
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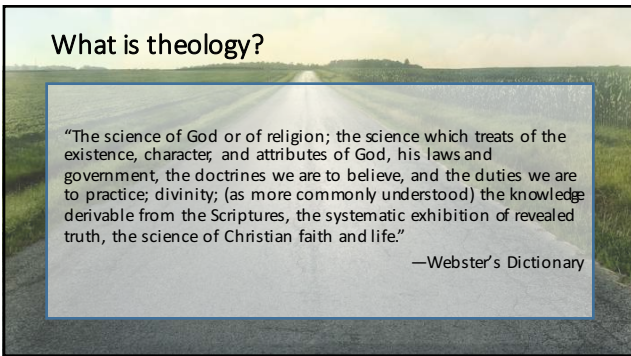
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What is theology?

“The science of God or of religion; the science which treats of the existence, character, and attributes of God, his laws and government, the doctrines we are to believe, and the duties we are to practice; divinity; (as more commonly understood) the knowledge derivable from the Scriptures, the systematic exhibition of revealed truth, the science of Christian faith and life.”  
—Webster’s Dictionary

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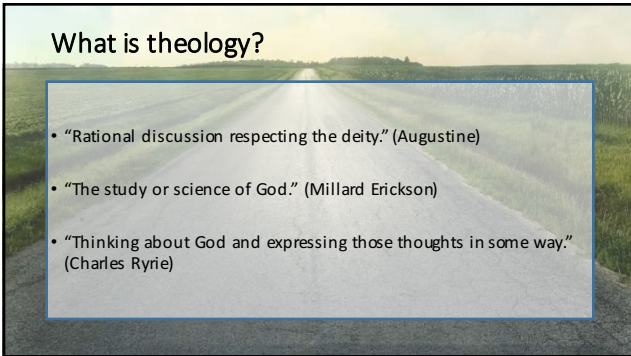
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What is theology?

- “Rational discussion respecting the deity.” (Augustine)
- “The study or science of God.” (Millard Erickson)
- “Thinking about God and expressing those thoughts in some way.” (Charles Ryrie)

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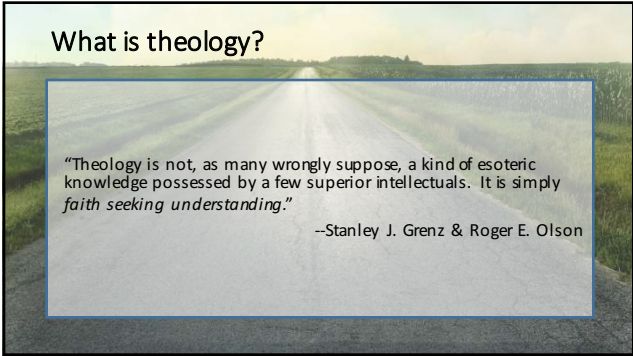
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**What is theology?**

“Theology is not, as many wrongly suppose, a kind of esoteric knowledge possessed by a few superior intellectuals. It is simply *faith seeking understanding.*”

—Stanley J. Grenz & Roger E. Olson

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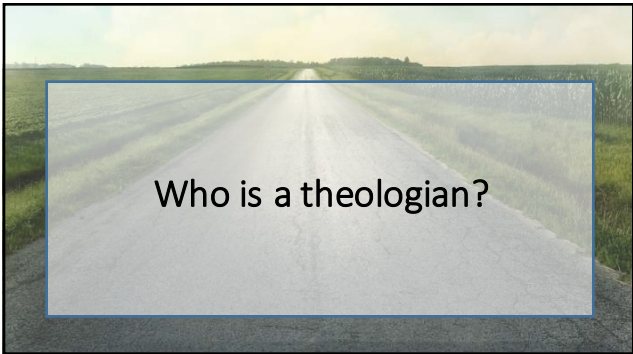
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**Who is a theologian?**

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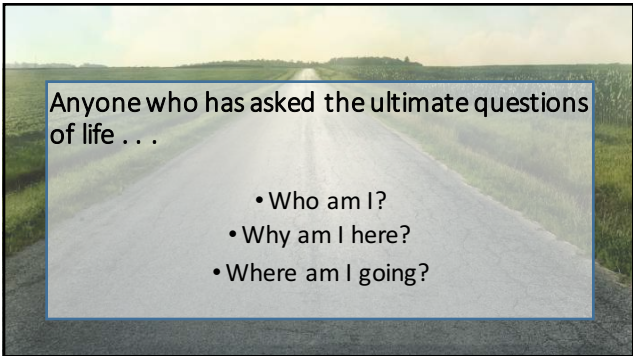
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**Anyone who has asked the ultimate questions of life . . .**

- Who am I?
- Why am I here?
- Where am I going?

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### Who is a theologian?

“The question is not, ‘Who is a theologian?’ but ‘What kind of theologian am I going to be?’ Are you going to be a good theologian or a bad theologian? This is a more accurate question because, as one writer put it, ‘not all theologies are equal.’”  
--Source unknown

Discuss C.S. Lewis’ article

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### Who is a theologian?

Five Types of Theologians:

1. Tabloid theologian
2. Folk theologian
3. Lay theologian
4. Ministerial or Professional theologian
5. Academic theologian

Adopted from Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson in *Who Needs Theology?* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1996).

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### Who is a theologian?

- **TABLOID THEOLOGIAN:** The tabloid theologian doesn’t think about what they believe. They’re enthusiastic about what they believe, but it’s largely made up from sayings on t-shirts, coffee mugs, and pop culture. They are likely to believe what they read on Twitter or BuzzFeed.

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### Who is a theologian?

- **FOLK THEOLOGIAN:** The folk theologian doesn't think about what they believe. They're enthusiastic about what they believe, but it's largely made up of Christian clichés. The folk theologian isn't reflective and their beliefs have often been uncritically inherited from friends, family, and tradition.

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### Who is a theologian?

- **LAY THEOLOGIAN:** The lay theologian thinks about what they believe. They're enthusiastic about what they believe, and despite not having all the skills of one who is seminary trained, they seek to have a whole and coherent understanding of their faith. The lay theologian critically evaluates their beliefs and doesn't simply hold them because they're the beliefs of friends, family, or tradition.

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### Who is a theologian?

- **MINISTERIAL OR PROFESSIONAL THEOLOGIAN:** The ministerial theologian thinks about what they believe. They're enthusiastic about it, and as they're likely involved in pastoral and / or preaching ministry they're practically aware of the value of knowing what they believe so as to pass it onto others. Unlike the lay theologian, they have working knowledge of the biblical languages, the history of theological development, and can find their way around commentaries, lexicons, journals, etc. More than simply critically evaluating their own beliefs, the ministerial theologian also has a strong grasp of other competing theological beliefs.

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### Who is a theologian?

- **ACADEMIC THEOLOGIAN:** The academic theologian thinks about what they believe and beliefs in general. However, their study often remains in the realm of thinking, that is extreme reflection and speculation. The academic theologian's work is often directed predominately to other academic theologians.

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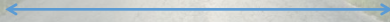
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### Who is a theologian?

Tabloid Folk Lay Ministerial Academic



(Compare to different approaches to medicine.)

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### Who is a theologian?

“Theology is for everyone. Indeed, everyone needs to be a theologian. In reality, everyone is a theologian—of one sort or another. And therein lies the problem. There is nothing wrong with being an amateur theologian or a professional theologian, but there is everything wrong with being an ignorant or sloppy theologian.”

—Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: 1986), 9.

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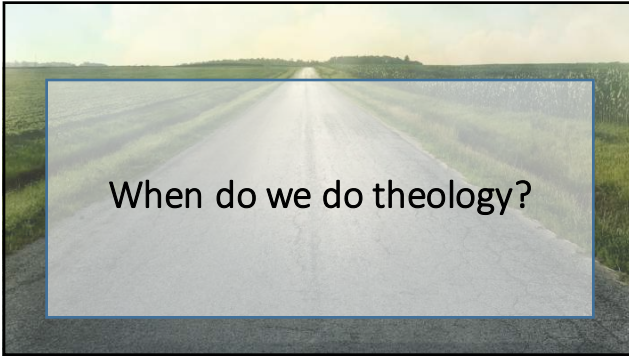
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When do we do theology?

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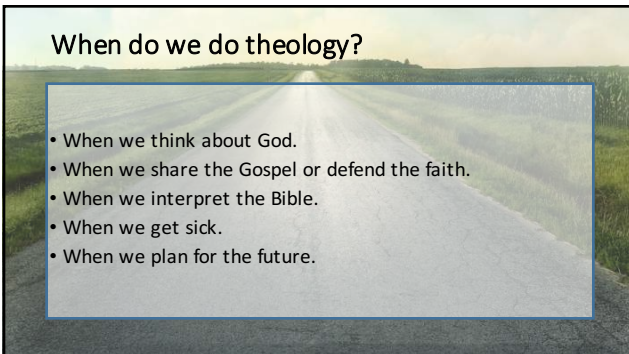
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When do we do theology?

- When we think about God.
- When we share the Gospel or defend the faith.
- When we interpret the Bible.
- When we get sick.
- When we plan for the future.

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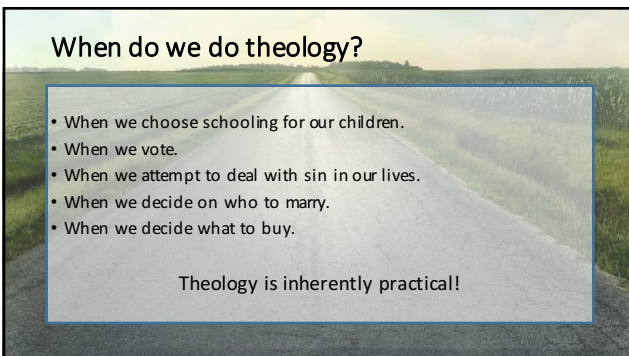
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When do we do theology?

- When we choose schooling for our children.
- When we vote.
- When we attempt to deal with sin in our lives.
- When we decide on who to marry.
- When we decide what to buy.

Theology is inherently practical!

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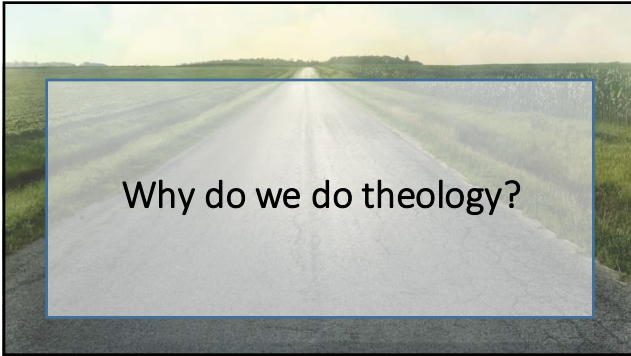
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Why do we do theology?

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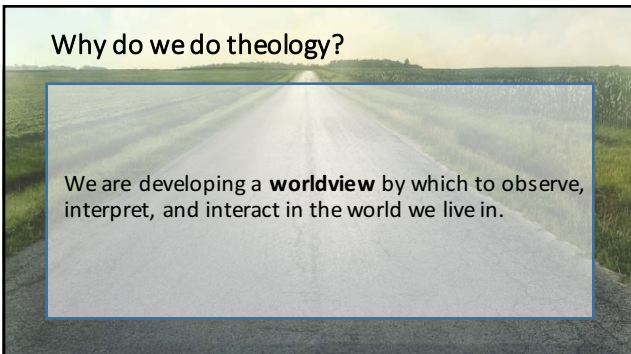
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Why do we do theology?

We are developing a **worldview** by which to observe, interpret, and interact in the world we live in.

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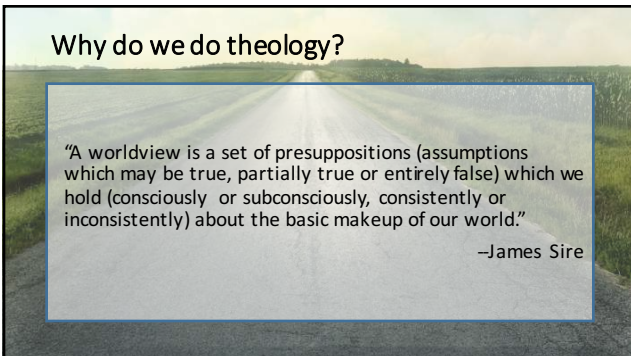
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Why do we do theology?

“A worldview is a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic makeup of our world.”

—James Sire

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Why do we do theology?

"It is simply the sum total of our beliefs about the world, the 'big picture' that directs our daily decisions and actions."  
--Chuck Colson

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Why do we do theology?

"A worldview is like a mental map that tells us how to navigate the world effectively."  
--Nancy Pearcey

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How can we develop a Biblical worldview?

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**Developing a Biblical Worldview**

- We must first think Christianly:

“Thinking Christianly’ means understanding that Christianity gives the truth about the whole of reality, a perspective for interpreting every subject matter”

—Nancy Pearcey

All truth is God’s truth.

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**Developing a Biblical Worldview**

“We must begin by being utterly convinced that there is a biblical perspective on everything—not just on spiritual matters. The Old Testament tells us repeatedly that ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.’ (Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7, 9:10, 15:33). Similarly, the New Testament teaches that in Christ are ‘all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge’ (Colossians 2:3). We often interpret these passages to mean spiritual wisdom only, but the text places no limitation on the term . . .”

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**Developing a Biblical Worldview**

“ . . . Most people have a tendency to read these passages as though they say that the fear of the Lord is the foundation of *religious* knowledge,’ writes Clouser. ‘But the fact is that they make a very radical claim—the claim that somehow *all* knowledge depends upon religious truth.’”

—Nancy Pearcey

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**Developing a Biblical Worldview**

- Secondly, we must recognize that “nothing falls outside the scope of the central turning points in biblical history: Creation, Fall, and Redemption.”

--Nancy Pearcey

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**Developing a Biblical Worldview**

We can analyze every philosophy or ideology around these 4 fundamental ideas:

- **Creation:** How did it all begin? Where did we come from?
- **Fall:** What went wrong? What is the source of evil and suffering?
- **Redemption:** What can we do about it? How can the world be set right again?
- **Restoration:** Where are we going?

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**Developing a Biblical Worldview**

- Thirdly, we must take “every thought captive:”

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ ...” (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

**Determine the message behind the message.**

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**Developing a Biblical Worldview**

“Who needs theology?” we ask. The answer is clear: Everyone does. Theology seeks to clarify and articulate Christian doctrine, but its goal is wider. Christians engage in theological reflection so that their lives might be changed. Theological reflection ought to foster godly spirituality and obedient discipleship...”

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**Developing a Biblical Worldview**

“Indeed, good theology will make believers stronger, better informed, and consequently, more effective disciples. Therefore, we must add to our earlier definition of theology: Christians theology is reflecting on and articulating the beliefs about God and the world that Christians share as followers of Jesus Christ *for the sake of Christian living.*”

—Grenz and Olson

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**How do we do theology?**

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**How do we do theology?**

Systematic theology—  
 “What does the whole Bible teach us today about any given topic.”  
 --Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*

“If we look at a whole garden, let’s gather all of the tomato plants and observe, interpret and apply what we learn about just the tomatoes.”  
 --Blake Holmes, Senior Equipping Guru and Master of Metaphors

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**How do we do theology?**

**Historical theology**—study of how Christians in different time periods have understood various theological topics

**Philosophical theology**—studying theological topics largely without the use of Scripture, but using tools of reason and logic to draw conclusions about God

**Apologetics**—making a defense for the truthfulness of the Christian faith

**Biblical theology** (also OT/NT theology)—studying how a particular author, book or testament discusses an idea/concept

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**VIEWPOINT**  
 WHERE LIFE & THEOLOGY MEET

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*Epistemology Defined . . .*

Epistemology is the study or a theory of the nature and grounds of knowledge.

Miriam-Webster

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*Influences on Knowledge*

1. Culture.
2. Spiritual powers (the Spirit vs. the world, the flesh & the Enemy (Eph 2:1-3)).
3. Physiological disposition.
4. Personal background / history.

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*Sources of Authority*

1. Scripture
2. Tradition
3. Reason
4. Experience
5. Emotion

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*AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE*

Strength: Scripture is the final authority for Christian faith and practice.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

*2 Timothy 3:16-17*




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*AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE*

Strength: Scripture is the final authority for Christian faith and practice.

Danger: Isolated hermeneutic. Mistaking emotion for Scripture.




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*AUTHORITY OF TRADITION*

Strength: Provides a stream of orthodoxy and established parameters.

Danger: Placing tradition on the same authoritative level as Scripture.

"Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence . . . Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God."

*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 83, 97*




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*AUTHORITY OF REASON*

Strength: When ordered under God, provides the framework for piecing together reality.

Danger: Reason without God (naturalism).  
Regarding reason as the chief source and test of knowledge.

*cogito ergo sum*, "I think therefore I am."

René Descartes

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*AUTHORITY OF REASON*

"If the solar system was brought about by an accidental collision, then the appearance of organic life on this planet was also an accident, and the whole evolution of Man was an accident too. If so, then all our present thoughts are mere accidents - the accidental by-product of the movement of atoms. And this holds for the thoughts of the materialists and astronomers as well as for anyone else's ..."

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*AUTHORITY OF REASON*

"But if their thoughts - i.e. of materialism and astronomy - are merely accidental by-products, why should we believe them to be true? I see no reason for believing that one accident should be able to give me a correct account of all the other accidents. It's like expecting that the accidental shape taken by the splash when you upset a milk jug should give you a correct account of how the jug was made and why it was upset ..."

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*AUTHORITY OF REASON*

"If naturalism were true then all thoughts whatever would be wholly the result of irrational causes. Therefore, all thoughts would be equally worthless. Therefore, naturalism is worthless. If it is true, then we can know no truths. It cuts its own throat."

*C. S. Lewis*

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*AUTHORITY OF EXPERIENCE*

Strength: When Scripture is integrated with the Spirit's work in real life, experience can be a vehicle to grow in the knowledge of God.

"We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God..."

*Colossians 1:9-10*

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*AUTHORITY OF EXPERIENCE*

Strength: When Scripture is integrated with the Spirit's work in real life, experience can be a vehicle to grow in the knowledge of God.

Danger: Empiricism. Believing that all knowledge originates in experience.

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*AUTHORITY OF EMOTION*

Strength: When ordered under God, can serve as an integral aspect of knowing God and can instigate and drive appropriate action.

Danger: Emotionalism. Believing emotion is the most reliable basis for interpreting reality and making decisions . . . i.e., “Do what feels right to you,” “Be true to yourself.”

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*WHICH IS LOUDEST?*

Scripture?

Emotion?



EXPERIENCE?

Reason?

*Tradition?*

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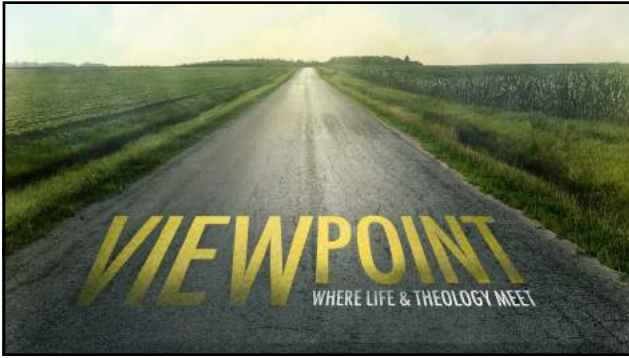
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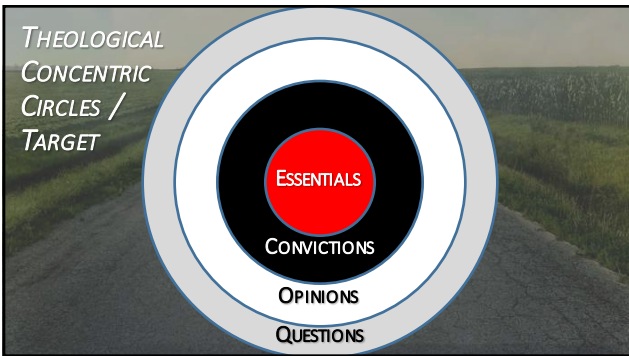
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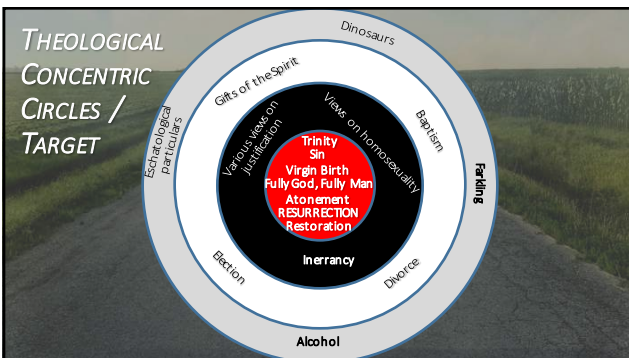
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