

Course Overview

WEEK 1: Introduction to Theology, The Bible, and Sources of Authority (*Know What You Believe*, chapter 1)
 WEEK 2: The Trinity (*Know What You Believe*, chapters 2-3, 6)
 WEEK 3: Man and Sin (*Know What You Believe*, chapter 5)
 WEEK 4: Salvation (*Know What You Believe*, chapters 4, 7)
 WEEK 5: The Church (*Know What You Believe*, chapters 8-9)
 WEEK 6: The End (*Know What You Believe*, chapter 10)

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

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)

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

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

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

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

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).

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.
- When we choose schooling for our children.

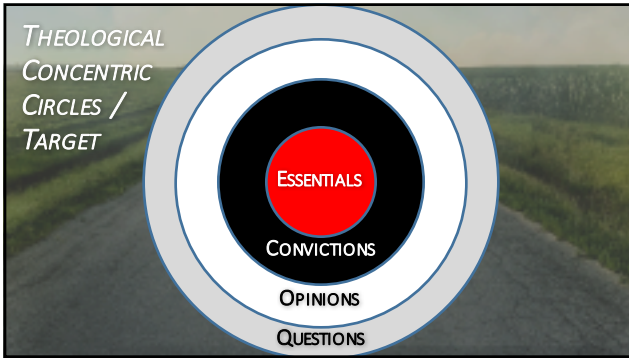
When Do We Do Theology?

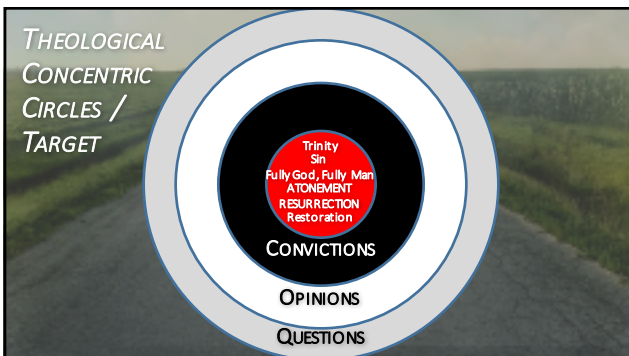
- When we vote.
- When we attempt to deal with sin in our lives.
- When we decide on who to marry.
- When we decide what to buy.
- Basically, all the time. Therefore . . .

Theology is inherently practical!

Why Do We Do Theology?

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





Where Do I Begin?

The beginning and end of all orthodox Christian doctrine is Jesus Christ.

Where Do I Begin?

"The center of all theology, of the entirety of the Christian faith, is Christ himself. The Christ-event – in particular his death and resurrection – is the center of time: everything before it leads up to it; everything after it is shaped by it. If Christ were not God in the flesh, he would not have been raised from the dead. And if he were not raised from the dead, none of us would have any hope. My theology grows out from Christ, is based on Christ, and focuses on Christ."

Daniel B. Wallace, "A Bibliology Grounded in Christology"

Where Do I Begin?

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life."

Jesus (Jn 5:39-40)

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

Jesus (Matt 5:17)

Where Do I Begin?

"In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe."

Hebrews 1:1-2

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

John 1:14

Where Do I Begin?

"For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For *Christ is the end of the law* for righteousness to everyone who believes" (italics mine).

Romans 10:2-4

Where Do I Begin?

Inductive reasons to hold to a high view of the Bible:

1. The books of the Bible are recognized as historical, even if one does not grant inerrancy.
2. The biblical writers are a reliable source and held a high bibliology themselves.
3. The criteria of authenticity show that Jesus held a high view of Scripture.

Where Do I Begin?

"The reason I hold to a high bibliology is because I hold to a high Christology . . . Jesus had a high view of the text, and it strikes me that I would be unwise to have a view different from his. Indeed, I believe I would be on dangerous ground if I were to take a different view of the text than Jesus did. Thus, my starting point for a high bibliology is Christ himself!"

Daniel B. Wallace, "A Bibliology Grounded in Christology"

Where Do I Begin?

"If Christ is at the core of our beliefs, then the incarnation has to loom large in our thinking about the faith. When God became man and invaded space-time history, this served notice that we dare not treat the Bible with kid gloves. The incarnation not only invites us to examine the evidence, it requires us to do so. The fact that our religion is the only major religion in the world that is subject to historical verification is no accident: it's part of God's *design*. Jesus performed miracles and healings in specific towns, at specific times, on specific people. The Gospels don't often speak in generalities. And Paul mentioned that 500 believers saw the risen Christ at one time, then added that most of these folks were still alive . . ."

Where Do I Begin?

" . . . These kinds of statements are the stuff of history; they beg the reader to investigate. Too often modern evangelicals take a hands-off attitude toward the Bible because of a prior commitment to inerrancy. But it is precisely because I ground my bibliography in Christology rather than the other way around that I cannot do that. I believe it is disrespectful to my Lord to not ask the Bible the tough questions that every thinking non-Christian is already asking it."

Daniel B. Wallace, "A Bibliology Grounded in Christology"

The Bible

1. Authority = all the words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21; 3:15-16; 1 Tim 5:18 with Lk 10:7).
2. Infallibility = the Bible is true about what it teaches.
3. Inerrancy = the original manuscripts (the original copy of a book of the Bible) was free from error in all that it teaches (dates, times, words spoken, etc.).

The Bible

4. Inspiration = "God so superintended the writers of Scripture that they wrote what he wanted them to write, disclosing the exact truth he wanted conveyed" (Little, 21).
5. Illumination = the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal the truthfulness and veracity of Scripture (1 Cor 2:6-16).

The Bible

1. It testifies about Jesus and the salvation found in him (Jn 5:31-47).
2. The Spirit uses it to protect, nourish and grow his children (Matt 4:4).
3. It connects us to the human story and shapes our worldview (creation, fall, redemption, restoration).
4. It is our guide and authority for faith and practice (2 Tim 3:14-16).

The 5 P's Handout

1. Profession
2. Production
3. Preservation
4. Prophecy
5. Personal Testimony

On Knowledge

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

Merriam-Webster

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.

Sources of Authority

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

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



AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

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

Danger: Isolated hermeneutic. Mistaking emotion for Scripture.



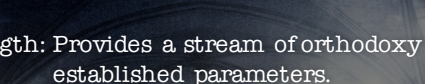
AUTHORITY OF TRADITION

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, 82, 97



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

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 ..."

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 ..."

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

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

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.

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."



WHICH IS LOUDEST?

Scripture?

EXPERIENCE?

Emotion?

Reason?

Tradition?
