

Wednesdays In the Word



True Theology: Knowing & Loving God



Textbook: English Standard Version Study Bible (ESV)
(Pg 2505-2506) - Biblical Doctrine & Overview

Theology defined: Theos = God / Logos = Word/Study of. _____

Theology is learning to think God's thoughts after him. It is to learn what God loves and hates, and to see, hear, think, and act the way he does. Knowing how God thinks is the first step in becoming godly. _____

The goal of theology is that the student of the Word, becomes hungry for the beloved knowledge of God's holy word. _____

Hebrews 5:11-6:3; teaches that deepening theological understanding equips one to be able to differentiate good and evil, and to exhort believers to mature in their knowledge of God and his ways. _____

Good theology is based in the belief that God exists, is Personal, can be known, and has Revealed Himself. _____

Loving God means Loving Truth.

Considering this relationship between God and Truth; it should be no surprise that the Great Commandment includes loving God with One's Mind. Mark 12:30; quoting Deut. 30:6.

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The second half of the Great Commandment – Love your Neighbor as yourself (**Mark 12:31**). God meets Man’s Greatest need of relationship with him through an understanding of truth. **James 1:18; 1Pet. 1:23; John 17:17; Rom12:2; John 8:31-32**. Therefore, loving others involves having a deep desire that they understand truth. _____

All Three Persons of the Trinity Vitally Related to Truth

<p>FATHER</p>	<p>“What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? By no means! Let God be TRUE though everyone were a liar, as it is written, That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are Judged.” (Rom. 3:3-4.)</p> <p>“For I tell that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God’s trustfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs” (Rom. 15:8).</p>
<p>SON</p>	<p>“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:5</p> <p>“But that is not the way you learned Christ! – assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus” (Eph. 4:20-21).</p>
<p>SPIRIT</p>	<p>“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness of me” (John 15:26.)</p> <p>“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come” (John 16:13).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Graph located in the ESV Study Bible (Pg 2505 Biblical Doctrine & Overview)</p>

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The Theological Method

Systematic theology seeks to summarize biblical teaching on particular topic in order to draw definitive conclusions that intersect with life. How does one apply what they have just learned to be useable in everyday life?

The Theological Process

EXEGESIS	<i>The Process of seeking to determine the correct meaning out of a particular passage of scripture.</i>
BIBLICAL THEOLOGY	<i>The study of scriptural revelation based on the historical framework presented in the Bible.</i>
SYSTEM THEOLOGY	<i>A study that answers the question, "What does the whole bible teach us today about any given question?"</i>
HISTORICAL THEOLOGY	<i>The study of how believers in different eras of the history of the church have understood various theological topics.</i>
PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY	<i>The study of theological topics primarily using the tools and methods of philosophical reasoning and information gained from nature and reason ("general revelation") apart from the bible.</i>
PRACTICAL THEOLOGY	<i>The study of how to best apply theological truths to the life of the church and the world (including preaching, Christian education, counseling, evangelism, missions, church administration, worship etc.</i>
APOLOGETIS	<i>The study of theology for the purpose of defending Christian teaching against criticism and distortion and giving evidence of its credibility.</i>

Graph located in the ESV Study Bible
(Pg 2506 Biblical Doctrine & Overview)

Major Categories of Study in Systematic Theology

AREA OF STUDY	TECHNICAL TITLE
METHOD OF FOUNDATION	Prolegomena
THE BIBLE	Bibliology
GOD	Theology Proper
HUMANITY (OR MAN)	Anthropology
SIN	Hamartiology
CHRIST	Christology
HOLY SPIRIT	Pneumatology
SALVATION	Soteriology
CHURCH	Ecclesiology
LAST THINGS	Eschatology

**Graph located in the ESV Study Bible
(Pg 2506 Biblical Doctrine & Overview)**

What We Believe and Preach

This is a caption of our Statement (Tenants) of Faith. Please study the scripture references for the statements listed below. The letter references correlate to the respective Statement of Faith

WE BELIEVE:

- A** The Old Testament and New Testament are God's divinely inspired words.
- B** In the Triune God - The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- C** Jesus Christ is the true God and true man; that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and are in need of salvation.
- D&G** The church consist of all those who have received Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.
- E & K** In water baptism and observance of the Lord's Supper.
- F** It is the will of God that every believer be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- H** Healing is provided in the redemptive work of Christ and is available to every believer.
- I** In the personal, visible, imminent return of Jesus Christ.
- I & J** There shall be a bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust.

True Theology

Essential Vs Peripheral Doctrine



ESSENTIAL

ABSOLUTES = DEFINE THE CORE BELIEFS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH (SEE RLFC NEW MEMBER'S BOOKLET).

CONVICTIONS = WHILE NOT CORE BELIEFS, CONVICTIONS MAY HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE HEALTH AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CHURCH

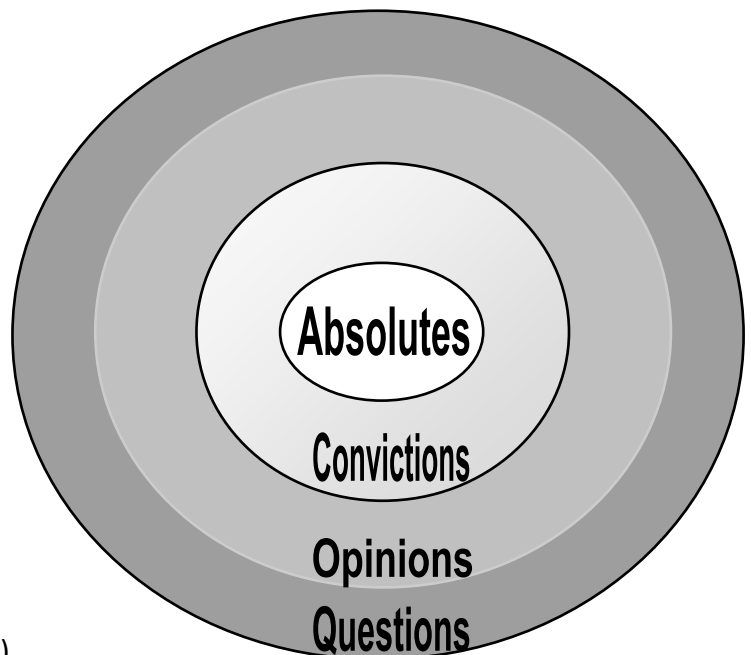
PERIPHERAL

OPINIONS = ARE LESS –CLEAR ISSUES THAT GENERALLY ARE NOT WORTH OF DIVIDING OVER

QUESTIONS = ARE CURRENTLY UNSETTLED ISSUES

Note: Where an issue falls within the categories should be determined by weighing the cumulative force of at least 7 considerations:

1. BIBLICAL CLARITY
2. RELEVANCE TO THE CHARACTER OF GOD
3. RELEVANCE TO THE ESSENCE OF THE GOSPEL
4. BIBLICAL FREQUENCY AND SIGNIFICANCE
(How often in the scripture it is taught, and what weight Scripture places upon it.)
5. EFFECT ON OTHER DOCTRINES
6. CONSENSUS AMONG CHRISTIANS (Past & Present)
7. EFFECT ON PERSONAL AND CHURCH LIFE.



ESV STUDY BIBLE, Pgs. 2506-2507

The English Standard Version (ESV) Bible is free online and on mobile devices everywhere worldwide including a selection of free bible resources at esv.org

Statement (Tenants) of Faith

A. THE SCRIPTURES. The Bible is the inspired word of God. It is the product of holy men of old who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. We accept the New Covenant, as recorded in the New Testament, as our infallible guide in matters pertaining to conduct and doctrine (II Timothy 3:16, I Thessalonians 2:13; II Peter 1:21).

B. THE GODHEAD. Our God is one, but manifested in three persons – God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Philippians 2:6; Matthew 3:16-17).

C. MAN, HIS FALL & REDEMPTION. Man is a created being made in the likeness and image of God. Through Adam's transgression and fall, sin came into the world. *"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one."* Jesus Christ, the Son of God was manifested to undo the work of the devil. He gave His life and shed His blood to redeem and restore man back to God (Romans 5:12; Romans 3:23; Romans 3:9-10; I John 3:8; Galatians 3:13-14). Salvation is the gift of God to man. It is separate from works and the law, and is made operative by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and produces works acceptable to God (Ephesians 2:8).

D. ETERNAL LIFE AND NEW BIRTH. Man's first step toward salvation is godly sorrow that works repentance. The new birth is necessary to all men, and when it is fulfilled, it produces eternal life (II Corinthians 7:10; I John 5:12; John 3:3-5).

E. WATER BAPTISM. Baptism in water is by immersion and is a direct commandment of our Lord. It is for believers only. This ordinance is a symbol of the Christian's identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12; Acts 8:36-39). The following recommendation regarding the Water Baptismal formula is adopted: "On the confession of your faith in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost and in Jesus Name. Amen"

F. BAPTISM IN THE HOLY GHOST. The baptism in the Holy Ghost and with fire is a gift from God and promised by the Lord Jesus Christ to those who are believers in this dispensation, and is received subsequent to the new birth. This experience is accompanied by the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Holy Spirit, Himself, gives utterance (Matthew 3:11; John 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:38-39; Acts 19:1-7; Acts 2:3-4).

G. SANCTIFICATION. The Bible teaches that without holiness, no man can see the Lord. We believe in the doctrine of sanctification as a definite progressive work of grace, which commences at the time of regeneration and continues until the consummation of salvation (Hebrews 12:14; I Thessalonians 5:23; II Peter 3:18; II Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:12-14; I Corinthians 1:30).

Statement (Tenants) of Faith

H. DIVINE HEALING. Healing is for the physical illness of the human body and is wrought by the power of God through the prayer of faith, and by laying on of hands. It is provided for by the atonement of Christ, and is the privilege of every member of the Church today (Mark 16:18; James 5:14-20; I Peter 2:24; Matthew 8:17; Isaiah 53: 4-5).

I. RESURRECTION OF THE JUST & THE RETURN OF OUR LORD. The angels said, *“this same Jesus... shall so come in like manner.”* His coming is imminent. When he comes, *“... and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.”* (Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:16-17) Following the tribulation, He shall return to earth as King of kings and Lord of lords and together with His saints who shall be kings and priests. He shall then reign a thousand years (Revelation 20:6; Revelation 19:16, Jude 14).

J. HELL & ETERNAL RETRIBUTION. The one who physically dies in his sins, without Christ, is hopelessly and eternally lost in the lake of fire, and therefore, has no further opportunity of hearing the gospel or for repentance. The lake of fire is literal. The terms “eternal” and “everlasting” are used in describing the duration of the punishment of the damned in the lake of fire. These terms carry the same thought and meaning of endless existence as used in noting the duration of joy and ecstasy of the saints in the presence of God (Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 19:20; Hebrews 6:1-2)

K. COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER. We partake of the Lord’s Supper to show the Lord’s death till he comes (I Corinthians 11: 23-31). The bread symbolizes the Lord’s broken body (Isaiah 53:5; I Corinthians 11:24). The cup represents the new covenant in His blood, which provides us forgiveness and relationship with God (Hebrews 9; I Corinthians 11:25).

L. LAYING ON OF HANDS. This is the simple belief that the power and anointing, or any other necessary quality, can be transmitted by one person touching another. Laying on of hands was practiced by the Levitical priesthood. Jesus practiced it in Mark 10:13-16 as a blessing, and it is our procedure for baby dedication instead of baptism. We also practice laying on of hands for: healing (Mark 5:22-23; Acts 28:8); to receive the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:16-18); to believe words spoken, to receive anointing and to cultivate the anointing (I Timothy 4:14); for ordination to consecrate and receive the necessary ministry tools (I Timothy 4:14).

J. SANTITY OF LIFE. The Scriptures reveal that God knows us even before we are conceived. See Jeremiah 1:4 – 5 (“The word of the Lord came to me, saying, ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born, I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.’”). And God’s creative powers are effectively at work while we are yet in the womb. See Psalm 139:13 – 16 (“For you created my inmost being you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”).]

True Theology

The Bible & Revelation

KNOWING GOD IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN LIFE

- God created people fundamentally for relationship with Himself. This relationship depends on knowing who He is as He has revealed Himself.
 - God is personal, which means He has a mind, will, emotions, relational ability, and self consciousness.
 - Because He is personal, and not merely an impersonal object, God must personally reveal Himself to us .
 - He has done this in General Revelation (The World) and Special Revelation (The World of God).
1. **GENERAL REVELATION:** Is Revelation of God given to all people at all times. The Revelation is found both in the external creation. (**Ps 19:1, Rom 1:19-20, Rom 2:14-15**)
 2. **SPECIAL REVELATION:** The Bible is God's written revelation of who He is and what he has done in redemptive history. Humans need this divine transcendent perspective in order to break out of their subjective, culturally bound, and fallen limitations. Through God's written word, His people may overcome error, grow in sanctification, minister effectively to others, and live abundant lives as God intends.
- A. **THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE:** The Bible is God Breathed (**2Tim 3:16**) and gets its true, authoritative, powerful, Holy character from God Himself, who inspired human authors to write exactly what He wanted them to write. Scripture is therefore both fully human and fully divine.
- **John 1:14** And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we behold his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.
 - It is both the testimony of men to God's revelation, and divine revelation itself. (**2 Peter 1:20-21**)

The Bible & Revelation

KNOWING GOD IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN LIFE

B. THE INERRANCY OF SCRIPTURE: The doctrines of inerrancy means that the bible is entirely truthful and reliable in all that it affirms in its original manuscripts. (**Titus 1:2, 2Sam 7:28-29**)

ESV Study bible pgs. 2507-2508

C. THE CLARITY OF SCRIPTURE: The Bible itself acknowledges that some passages of scripture are "hard to understand (**2Pet 3:16**). However in general, with the illumination of the Spirit (**2Tim 2:7**) the teaching of the bible is clear to all who seek understanding with the goal of knowing and obeying God.

D. THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE: Scripture provides all the words from God that we need in order to know God truly and personally, and everything we need him to tell us in order for us to live an abundant godly life. (**Ps 19:7-9, 2Tim 3:15**)

E. JESUS' VIEW OF SCRIPTURE: The most convincing reason to believe that the Bible is inspired, inerrant, clear and sufficient is because this is what Jesus believed! (**Mat 5:17-18, Mat 19:4-6, Luke 24:13-17, 44-47**)

Jesus took scripture to be the authoritative word of God upon which He based his entire life. Those who follow Christ are called to treat scripture (OT and NT together) in the same way. For the Christians, the Bible is a source of great delight and joy.

God is to be diligently sought in His word (**1Pet 2:2**)

- **The word of God is a precious treasure that deserves to be studied, meditated upon, and obeyed.**

Proverbs 2:1-5 My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

True Theology: What It Means To Know God



Textbook: English Standard Version Study Bible (ESV)
(Pg 2509-2510)

In the quest to know God it is vital to understand just what it means to really know HIM. Methods, expectations, and attitudes in studying theology are determined by ones definition of knowing God. Central to understanding this is the important principles that God is both incomprehensible and knowable.

A. The Incomprehensibility of God - Scripture teaches that we can have a true and personal knowledge of God but that does not mean we will ever understand HIM exhaustively.

1. Psalms 145:3
2. Job 26:14
3. Isaiah 55:8-9
4. Romans 11:33-34
5. Job 42:1-6
6. Psalms 139:6
7. Psalms 139:17-18
8. Psalms 147:5

These verses teach that not only is God's whole being is incomprehensible but each of His attributes—His greatness, power, thoughts, ways, wisdom, and judgements are well beyond human ability to fathom.

B. Why Is God Incomprehensible?

1, God is infinite and His creatures are finite. _____

2. The perfect unity of God's attributes are far beyond the realm of human experience. ____

3. The effects of sin on the minds of fallen humans also greatly inhibit the ability to know God. _____

4. A final reason God can never be fully known is that in His sovereign wisdom, God has chosen not to reveal some things. _____

Deuteronomy 29:29 -The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

True Theology: What It Means To Know God

Textbook: English Standard Version Study Bible (ESV)
(Pg 2509-2510)

C. The implications of God's Incomprehensibility

D. The Knowability of God

The incomprehensibility of God could lead to despair or apathy in the quest to know God but the Bible also teaches that God is knowable. _____

1. Knowledge of God in Christ should be our greatest delight.

Jeremiah 9:23-24

1 Corinthians 2:2

Galatians 6:4

2. It is the basis of obtaining eternal life. (John 17:3)

3. It is at the heart of life in the new covenant (Hebrews 8:11-12)

E. Implications of the Knowability of God

We should never grow apathetic in seeking to know God because we are in fact able and equipped to know Him and to please Him with our lives.

True Theology

The Character of God

Hebrews 11:6—Without faith it is impossible to please God.

But it is also impossible to have faith in God without knowing the character of God. Faith is belief in God’s promises which in turn are grounded in His character.

WAYS IN WHICH GOD REVEALS HIMSELF

God has revealed Himself primarily in four overlapping ways.

1. Actions
2. Names
3. Images
4. Attributes

God reveals Himself through actions, names, images because they carry vivid experiential, creative power. Note, however, it is God’s attributes that are the fundamental description of who He is .

Means of Revelation	Examples
ACTION	Creating, Judging, Redeeming,
NAMES	Lord (Heb. <i>Yahweh</i>), Almighty God, El Shaddai, Master (<i>Lord</i> Heb. Adon)
IMAGES	Father, Rock, Husband
ATTRIBUTES	Holiness, Goodness, Love, Grace, Wrath

ACTION OF GOD

God shows who He is in what He does. In creating the world, God shows His Power, wisdom, beauty, goodness, and creativity. After the creation of humanity, God talks to, walks with, and seeks our humans.

True Theology

The Character of God



NAMES OF GOD

God offers His name as a personal introduction and as a window into His character. Psalms 9:10 “Those who know Your name, put their trust in You.”

To know God’s name is to know that HE is trustworthy. God’s act of naming Himself is a profoundly gracious act of accommodation and engagement.

IMAGES OF GOD

Images of God are analogies from daily life that serve to illustrate His attributes. Among many other images, God is Father, King, Consuming Fire, Judge, Husband, Shepherd, Porter, Farmer, Refiner, Land Owner, Lion, Bear, and Lamb.

The strength and stability of the ROCK imagery is beautifully complimented by the tender, compassionate image of God as Husband of His people. Isaiah 54:5 For your Maker is your husband the Lord of hosts is His name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth He is called.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

The attributes of God are the normative descriptions that images, names and actions illuminate from different perspectives. His attributes are His essential characteristics that make Him who He is. God’s attributes are typically classified as either incommunicable or communicable.
