

An Introduction to Theology

What is theology? Why do we study it? What difference does it make?

Let's begin with the basic initial question... *What is theology?*

Θεός (theos) - God λόγος (logos) - Word, Words about (study of).

Theo - ology: The study of God.

There are different forms of theology (Theological Pyramid):

Ethics - Practical Theology, taking what we believe and applying it to our life.

Apologetics - Defending the faith.

Philosophical - Using natural law and God's Word to form theological principles.

Historical Theology - Studying doctrines held throughout church history.

Biblical Theology - Studying a specific part of the Bible for theological understanding.

Exegetical Theology - Our way of interpreting the Bible. Understanding context, pulling principles out.

Systematic Theology (what we are doing in this class) takes each of those and uses them collectively.

We are asking the question, "what does the whole Bible teach us about any given topic?"

"In Christian Theology, the church explains and applies the Bible's doctrine, or teaching, about God. Theology is human reflection on the knowledge and wisdom revealed in God's Word." - Dr. Joel Beeke

Why do we study theology?

I want you to imagine this scenario...

- "You are evangelizing to someone and you tell him that we worship the one true God. He responds by saying, 'if you serve one God, then how do you explain the Trinity? Sounds to me like you worship three gods.'"
- "A homosexual and his partner wants to join your church. You tell them they cannot join the church body. One asks why not since they both have been visiting for weeks. How would you respond or explain your reasoning?"

Have you ever heard someone say, and perhaps you have even said this: "I don't need theology, I just need Jesus"?

- The irony of that statement is it is theological.

What did we establish theology as? Theology is the study of God, His commands, and His ways. Everyone has thoughts about the divine, good or bad, therefore, everyone is a theologian. This

does not mean everyone is a good theologian, however. Nevertheless, we are all thinking about God and talking about God in some way. The question is, are we doing so rightly?

Five Reasons We Should Study Theology:

1. God is a rational being.
 - A. God Himself is a thinker. When you become a Christian, you do not leave your intellect at the door, but rather, your intellect is transformed by God.
2. We are made in His image, therefore, we are rational creatures.
 - A. We are to think and live rationally as His representatives.
3. God has revealed Himself to us.
 - A. God wants you and I to know Him. He has revealed Himself to us in His word. Yes, there are certain things we will never understand, however, what He has revealed to us, He has given to us so that we understand.
4. Studying Theology helps us become more conformed to God's Image as we apply His word to all of life.
5. Combat falsehood and poor thinking with good theology.

Things Working Against Theological Study:

1. Theological Liberalism: Reject the Bible as authoritative Word of God.
2. Anti-intellectualism: Anti-reason. Personal experience is emphasized over commitment to truth.
3. Emphasis on celebrity pastors and church brands: Focus more on church growth over genuine discipleship.

Many Fall Into One of Two Extremes:

- Reason above all: Cold, dead religion.
- Emotionalism above all: headless, senseless religion.

Posture of the Theologian:

- Humility
- Awe
- Hopeful
- Commitment
- Awareness of when to argue.

A Christian Theologian Should...

1. Be marked by a desire to know God more.
2. Be marked by humility.
3. Be marked by worship.

The ultimate goal in Theological Study: "Good Theology leads to Proper Doxology."

In other words... the more I study God, the more I should conform to Him, love Him, understand Him, and worship Him better and rightly.

“I do not seek to understand in order that I believe, but I believe in order to understand.” - Anselm

“Credo ut intelligemment.” (I believe in order to understand) - Augustine.

“To renounce reason is to renounce religion.” - John Wesley

“Reason is a tool for knowing the truth but it is not the source of truth.” - Dr. Walter Johnson

Any questions or thoughts before we close?

Let's Pray.