

WHY STUDY THEOLOGY

Lesson One

- I. Why Study Theology?
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 - A. Creeds
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TOP TEN QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK ABOUT WHY STUDY THEOLOGY?

1. What reason would you offer if asked, “Why study theology?”
2. In your own words, why is Systematic Theology referred to as the “Queen of the Sciences?”
3. What prompted the “church” to write CREEDS and CONFESSIONS?
4. What resources does the Christian have for determining what is or is not orthodox?
5. What is the relationship between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology and why knowing the difference is important?
6. Is theological study something the believer can take or leave? Explain your answer.
7. What happens if a local church abandons theological precision and study?
8. What NT passages would you use to prove the need to study theology? Find one to explain your answer.
9. What order would you put orthopraxy [right doing], orthopathy [your feeling], and orthodoxy [right thinking]? What is the right order or is there one and does it matter? Please explain your answer.
10. If asked, would you be able to answer the following questions?

The top 101 questions people ask about God, Christianity, and apologetics based on Google search queries with links to Biblical answers – updated with 2019 data.

	Question*	Monthly Search Volume*
1	What is love? (love)	3,350,000
2	What is the Bible? (bible / scripture)	1,830,000
3	Who is Jesus? (Jesus)	1,500,000
4	What is the church? (church)	1,000,000
5	What is the Salvation Army? (salvation army)	1,000,000
6	Who is God? (god)	823,000

*Monthly search volume is based on global search volume for all languages for the exact query typed from January 2019. Numbers are estimates based on data Google shares with its advertisers.

WHY STUDY THEOLOGY?

Lesson One

¹³**Retain** the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴**Guard**, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you” (2 Tim. 1:13, 14).

“Only the professor whose mind and heart have been transformed by the living Christ can effectively teach theology. **Orthodoxy and orthopraxy go hand in hand**. Only such a professor can instill in his students the theistic mentality that will prepare them to preach the Word of God.”¹

“Remember, that the great business of your life is to be **the exegesis of the holy Word**.” [John Hall in his Beecher Lectures, 1875]²

An Introduction

“**Theology** offers the opportunity to focus on the Christian faith in detail, through the study of the Bible, the history of Christianity, its key thinkers and its influence on ethical debates and the actions of its believers.”³

The systematic study of the Bible’s sweeping Story enables the student to clearly identify the structure and intent of this special revelation. Through a systematic study, the topics and themes of the Bible are catalogued into coherent categories. Such a study, guides the student in right thinking [orthodoxy] producing right doing [orthopraxy] and right feeling [orthopathy].

“The disconnect between theology and the church and between theology and the Christian has had disastrous results.”⁴ One only need look at what is popular among Christians to see how inept Christians are in discerning what is right and biblical.

I. Why Study Theology?

What we call “doctrine” is simply our attempt at **systematizing** common confessions of faith. Historically, doctrinal statements were the means used by the Church to defend itself against variant thinking. It is important to note how, “Doctrinal precision does divide.” Truth is singular and objective, but it is contained in minds that are finite, fallen, and fractured. Because of this, as Christians we must have humility, teachability, and charity when approaching any doctrinal study.

A. The Hebrew Scripture [Doctrine - Deut. 32:1, 2; Prov. 1:7, 4:1-9, 9:9, 10; Isa. 29:22-24]

B. The New Testament [didaskalia – doctrine]

“Although it is ‘the study of God,’ theology has a reputation for being dry, abstract, and irrelevant for daily living. Many Christians assume that we can just experience God in a personal relationship apart from doctrine, but that’s impossible. **You cannot experience God without knowing who He is, what He has done, and who you are in relation to Him.** Even our most basic Christian experiences and commitments are theological.”⁵

As we pursue the study of Systematic Theology, it is important to keep in mind several initial thoughts.

First, B.B. Warfield calls Systematic Theology “the crown and head” of all theological studies. In showing the relationship of theology to all sciences he provides the reader with this powerful conclusion.⁶

“It is only in theology, therefore, that the other sciences find their completion. Theology, formally speaking, is accordingly *the apex of the pyramid of the sciences by which the structure is perfected.*”⁷

“Christian theology, or dogmatics, as it is technically called, is that branch of theological sciences which aims to give systematic expression to the doctrines of the Christian faith.”⁸

For further study as to the relationship of theology to all other areas of study see, *How Theology Stopped Being Regina Scientiarum—and How Its Story Continues* by Gijsbert van den Brink, First Published August 13, 2019 Research Article.⁹

Second, to know what is false, one must first know what is true. Historically, “**The Church seldom knows what it believes until someone gets it wrong.**”¹⁰ Almost without exception, every New Testament Letter is a response to a problem. The Bible as truth, must be correctly understood and carefully guarded.

“Systematic theology is nothing if it not the pursuit of truth, and truth is essential to biblical Christianity.

1. Jesus said the truth will set you free (John 8:32).
2. The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of truth (John 14:17).
3. The work of the Holy Spirit was to guide the apostles into all truth (John 16:13).
4. Eternal life is to know the only true God (John 17:3).
5. Jesus prayed that we would be sanctified in the truth (John 17:17).
6. Paul warned that for those who do not obey the truth there will be wrath and fury (Rom. 2:8).
7. We are to be transformed by understanding the truth (Rom. 12:2).
8. People can go to hell for preaching what is not true (Gal. 1:8).
9. People within the church should be corrected when they believe the wrong things. ‘[An elder] must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it’ (Titus 1:9).

10. People are sometimes to be kept out of your house for believing what is not true (2 John 9-10).
11. The wicked perish because they refused to love the truth (2 Thess. 2:10).
12. The workman of God must rightly handle the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

In other words, no Christian worthy of the name should be indifferent to the pursuit of right doctrine."¹¹ As Louis Berkhof put it, "They who minimize the significance of the truth, and therefore ignore and neglect it, will finally come to the discovery that they have very little Christianity left."¹²

Michael Horton in his short article, "I Just Believe the Bible' Doesn't Make You Orthodox," notes the following.

"Anyone who denies the existence of heresy denies the possibility of a religion having any boundaries. And if a religion doesn't have any boundaries, distinguishing Christianity from Hinduism or atheism is meaningless."¹³

Third, all of creation and God's relationship to it forms the content of His Story. Nothing in life falls outside the one Story of God. If this is true, then we would do well to understand the Story and how it all connects. There is an inter-connectedness to general and special revelation. In all of its "pieces" there is a singular "whole." The Bible enables the reader to "connect the dots" running from point to point.

"Bible doctrine is simply the organized truth about God and His relations with the universe. It is impossible to imagine a circumstance that is not covered or that is outside the parameters of sound doctrine. How can anything be more relevant than God and His relations with the universe? What could be more inclusive?"¹⁴

If, indeed, the Bible tells a single unified Story with Jesus at the center, then the correctly organized cataloguing of biblical theology demands [yes, demands] the study of systematic theology. "All of Scripture is breathed out by God (2 Tim. 3:16). This means that everything in the Bible matters. It also means that everything in the Bible possesses a fundamental unity, coming as it does from the same author (Matt. 19:4-6; Hebrews 3:7; 2 Peter 1:21). Systematic theology seeks to make the comprehensive unity seen and savored."¹⁵

II. What Theology is to be Studied and Taught? [2 Timothy 3:10-17; 4:1-4, Ephesians 4:11-16]

Second Timothy 3:10-17 lays out the idea that Scriptural truth demands study and assimilation. Chapter 4:1-4 again emphasize the need in light of the situation to “Preach the Word.” Ephesians 4:11-16 establishes the thought that our doctrine keeps us from being tossed about by every wind of teaching. A Christ-centered theology provides for us our anchor.

God has given to the local church a mandate. This mandate expresses itself in what we call missions. Missions makes known the revelation through which He is known. Missions intrinsically instructs on theological areas. Missions is content driven. Without knowing truth, missions has no basis for existing. Without the proper content, missions becomes a humanitarian enterprise.

God has entrusted us as a local church fellowship to know Him and to make Him known beginning in our Jerusalem, and in our Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest parts of the earth.

Without a scriptural theology, the church will drift from its divine mission and become a rudderless ship.

As a fellowship there are certain doctrines we hold in common. We believe these doctrines identify us as Evangelical Christians. Not all evangelical Christians hold to the same truths, but there are certain truths that must be maintained in order to be a Christian. [Cf. Our Statement of Faith]

Initially, it is important to keep two thoughts in mind.

First, “In the Protestant system, the authority of symbols [i.e., **creeds, confessions, and doctrinal statements**], as of all human compositions, is relative and limited. It is not co-ordinate with, but always subordinate to, the Bible, as the only infallible rule of the Christian faith and practice. The value of creeds depends upon the measure of their agreement with the Scriptures. In the best case a human creed is only an approximate and relatively correct exposition of revealed truth, and may be improved by the progressive knowledge of the Church, while the Bible remains perfect and infallible. The Bible is of God; the Confession is man’s answer to God’s word.”¹⁶

Second, not all theology, or doctrine operates on the same level of significance. “Valid Christian beliefs – those that are considered true – are not all on the same level of importance.”¹⁷

FOR EXAMPLE:

To be wrong on the virgin birth and the blood atonement, will damn your soul.

To be wrong on the second coming of Jesus Christ, will confuse your mind.

The two are both true, but both operate on a different level of significance.

Theology divides into two broad areas of study: Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology.

We will explore this area further under IV. However, for now, let us note the following thoughts.

In defining biblical theology, it is necessary to examine it in light of its sister studies. Biblical theology falls within the larger scope of exegesis, historical, and systematic theology. To understand biblical theology is to see it in light of its place within the larger flow of theological study. Biblical theology studies God in the context of His activities in time, progressive revelation.

Biblical theology, however, is not an end, but a means to an end. Biblical theology is the stepping-stone to Systematic theology. **Without Systematic theology, Biblical theology becomes myopic and cultic. Without Biblical theology, Systematic theology becomes subjective and erroneous. Both are necessary partners in the pursuit of truth.** Biblical theology provides the various pieces while Systematic theology shows us the bigger picture. The two are never to be at odds with one another. "Biblical theology is the raw material, as it were, with which systematic theology works."¹⁸

Therefore, it must be stressed that biblical theology though able to work *outside* of systematic *cannot remain outside* of systematic.

Biblical theology is the outgrowth of exegesis, which culminates in systematic. F.F. Bruce's preface to *Vine's Expository Dictionary* provides the following statement:

"There can be no true Biblical theology unless it is based on sound Biblical exegesis, and there can be no sound Biblical exegesis unless a firm textual and grammatical foundation has been laid for it."¹⁹

As we consider the question, "What theology is to be studied and taught," we need to take a step back in order to see the bigger picture.

Primarily on Sunday mornings we are engaged in biblical theology. We study a book of the Bible and endeavor to understand it in its context. What we discover through the process is a piece of a much larger picture. The larger picture is seen as the various pieces come together. Our systematic theology is an attempt at seeing the big picture.

When you look at our doctrinal statement, it is important to remember that the statement is not an exhaustive listing. It is a summary of what is believed collectively by the fellowship. Our doctrinal statement is not all that is believed by the fellowship. We do believe, however, that this is what we hold in common.

We will spend several lessons looking at each individual doctrine, but for this study let us endeavor to see the big picture. Again, it is important to note how everything studied fits into the overall

categories listed below. **First**, not all categories carry the same weight. **Second**, there is a logical or sequential order to the study. And **finally**, the part must always be studied within the whole. Theology is interlocking.

- Bibliology – The Study of the Bible
- Theology Proper – The Study of God
- Christology – The Study of Jesus Christ
- Pneumatology – The Study of the Holy Spirit
- Anthropology – The Study of Man
- Hamartiology – The Study of Sin
- Soteriology – The Study of Salvation
- Ecclesiology – The Study of the Church
- Angelology – The Study of Angels
- Eschatology – The Study of Last Things

In light of this, there are six concluding statements.

First, every study of the Bible is doctrinal or theological. You cannot escape it.

Every time you pick up your Bible and read its content and hear His voice, you are engaged in a doctrinal or theological study.

Second, we must guard against being infected with a spirit of pragmatism.

"There are those who despise any kind of quest for theoretical knowledge of God, insisting instead on being 'practical.' The spirit of America has been defined as the spirit of pragmatism. Pragmatism may be defined simply as the approach to reality that defines truth as 'that which works.' The pragmatist is concerned about results and the results determine the truth. The problem with this kind of thinking, if left uninformed by the eternal perspective, is that the results tend to be judged in terms of short-range goals."²⁰

Third, there exists today the idea that God is more concerned with my activity of obedience, than with my knowledge of the truth. As one author wrote, "Theological study must not be a barren academic search for ultimate truth. God is not nearly so interested in what I know as He is in what I *am* and how I *behave*."²¹ I am not so quick to draw the dichotomy between the two. **Sincere ignorance is still ignorance.** In addition, you cannot love a God you do not know. Most cultic behavior is commendable in practice, but damnable in doctrine (i.e. All major world religions). Do we not hear echoing within our minds the words of the apostle Paul in Romans 10:2? "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." Let us be careful not to divide our doctrinal creed from our daily conduct. The two, to be truly biblical, cannot be separated. But, there is a proper sequence.

There should be no isolation between orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and orthopathy. In addition, the order cannot be reversed.

Fourth, thinking theological must become a way of life. It is not something we do behind closed doors in dark corners. It is the grid through which all things must pass.

"No Christian can avoid theology. Just as everyone who picks up the Bible to read is an interpreter so also every Christian is a theologian. The issue for Christians is not whether we are going to be theologians but whether we are going to be good theologians or bad ones. A good theologian is one who is instructed by God."²²

"All of us are systematic theologians. The poor theologian is one who has an inadequate or limited view of God because he is aware of only some of the elements of revealed truth, or he is one who has a distorted view of God because he lacks an overall biblical perspective. A good theologian, on the other hand, is one who has taken into account all revealed truth about God and has related each part to a consistent whole."²³

Fifth, "a lack of doctrine leaves the preaching of the Church (which naturally will go on) without re-examination and therefore without possible correction."²⁴ "The study of doctrine is God's system of 'checks and balances' in His Church. No man or system of theology is an island unto itself. To insure sound doctrine, it must be studied."²⁵

The crying need in our churches today is the preaching of the Word. "Technique can only make us orators; if we want to be preachers, theology is what we need."²⁶ We must be driven back to a proper theology. Without theology the church will die in a world of pluralism (everyone is okay) and relativism (everything is okay).

Finally, "the Church pays for its lack of theology with the loss of a substantial part of its own young generation."²⁷ If the leaders of the Church for lack of doctrinal integrity cannot answer the questions of the youth, then it will "lose its own children." "The church must ever be committed to the study, the preaching, and the teaching of the Word of God. The church must reflect deeply on the truth of God's Word and frame what it finds . . . in order better to engender in its members a clear conception of their faith and to convey to outsiders a definite understanding of its doctrines."²⁸

"**The church** is duty bound to provide for the training of successive generations of its sons as ministers to perpetuate the proclamation of the truth of God's Word. This means in turn that **the church** must enable its sons and daughters to engage in the intellectual discipline of theological study based upon the Holy Scriptures by founding and supporting training schools and seminaries and then supporting them in their pursuit and propagation of biblical truth."²⁹

"Be well instructed in theology, and do not regard the sneers of those who rail at it because they are ignorant of it. Many preachers are not theologians, and hence the mistakes which they make. It

cannot do any hurt to the [liveliest] evangelist to be also a sound theologian, and it may often be the means of saving him from gross blunders."³⁰

"It has been my observation that much of our contemporary church is made up of people who are, for all intents and purposes, theological illiterates."³¹

We believe the local church exists to glorify God through the teaching ministry. **Without the teaching ministry, the present is in peril of leading the future into extinction.** We believe this is the consistent message of the New Testament revelation (2 Timothy 2:2).

- 2 Timothy 2:2 "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

The disciple-making process depicted in Matthew 28:18-20 is very specific. We as a fellowship are to be multiplying ourselves in the lives of others. This spiritual transfer takes place intentionally. We are endeavoring to train up the next generation. In fulfillment of the promise of Matthew 16:18 and Revelation 5:9, God will multiply His work in and through this church both locally, nationally, and globally.

Social media and an overabundance of biblical teaching available has created a platform for ever wolf in sheep's clothing to prey on biblically illiterate sheep and sleeping shepherds.

III. Primary Passages

“When students of the Bible speak of Paul’s letters as ‘occasional,’ they do not mean that they were infrequent or sporadic. They mean, rather, that in most cases they were written on specific ‘occasions,’ perhaps to combat a particular error (as in Galatians), or to ask someone for something specific (as in Philemon), or to respond to a church’s questions (as in large parts of 1 Corinthians).”³²

A. In the Hebrew Scripture | The Idea of the “False Prophet” Old Testament | Deut. 13:1–5; 18:15-22; 1 Kings 22:19-23

Church, if there are false teachers, then there are true teachers.

For example, there are prophecy videos taught by an author who I would deem a “false prophet.” They claim their material as never available until now, that they are using only the Bible, that they have been divinely commissioned to receive this information and are predicting a very specific season for the return of Jesus which is either this past Spring or this current Fall season. That individual is a false prophet.

A good and wise friend of mine says that all of these preachers preaching end time truth have one thing in common, they are always wrong.

B. New Testament [pseudoprophetes | Acts 13:6; Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10]

Each New Testament Letter is a response to a situation that exists within the New Testament Church.

1. Acts 20:17-35

In Acts 20:17-35, Paul calls the Elders of Ephesus to “be on the alert.”

- ²⁸ **Be on guard** for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore **be on the alert**, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. ³² And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

In verse 28, on guard is **prosecho**. It is the same word choice in 1 Timothy and Titus.

- [negative] 1Tim. 1:4 nor to **devote** themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.
- [negative] 1Tim. 3:8 Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, **not addicted** to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain.
- [negative] 1Tim. 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by **devoting themselves** to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,
- [positive] 1Tim. 4:13 Until I come, **devote yourself** to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.
- [negative] Titus 1:14 not **devoting themselves** to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth.
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In verse 31, alert is **gregoreuo**.

It is the word our Lord uses on the Mt of Olivet discourse (Matt. 24:42, 43; 25:13). It is the word He uses in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:38, 40). Paul uses it to exhort the Corinthians (1 Cor. 16:13) and the Colossians (4:2) and the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 5:6). Peter uses it to keep us alert to the devil (1 Pet. 5:8). John uses it to keep the church alert in the End Times (Rev. 3:2, 3; 16:15).

2. Jude 3

If we are to proclaim the message, we must know what that message is. Jude calls us to “**contend earnestly** for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3).

- Jude’s word choice for “contend earnestly” is **epagonizomai**. It is our English word “agonize” with an intensifying prefix. It is the only time the compound word occurs in the New Testament. If the church is to keep the truth for the next generation, then it must “contend earnestly” which requires intense labor.
- The word “**agonizomai**” occurs in 1 Tim. 6:12 and 2 Tim. 4:7 where Paul exhorts Timothy and speaks autobiographically of his own “fight.”

3. 2 Timothy 1:13, 14

Paul calls Timothy to ¹³**Retain** the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴**Guard**, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you” (2 Tim. 1:13, 14).

- The idea of guarding in verse 14 occurs for soldiers guarding a prison (Acts 12:4). It carries the idea of watching over so as to keep and protect. It is the same word Paul uses in 1 Timothy 6:20.

In speaking to Titus concerning the selection of Elders for the church in Crete, Paul says such men should be marked as those who are ⁹“**holding fast** the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict” (Titus 1:9).

- The word for “holding fast” is **antechomai**. It is the same word for retain [echo] in 2 Tim. 1:13 for “Retain.”
 - Mt 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will **hold** to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. [See also Luke 16:13]
 - 1Th 5:14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, **support** the weak, be patient toward all men.
- The thought is holding fast to faithful words in contrast or opposition to unfaithful words.

4. Romans 6:17

Romans 6:17 “But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that **form of teaching to which you were committed,**”

- The word “form” is **tupos**. It carries the idea of “die, stamp, pattern.” There is a legitimate or genuine template that reproduces itself.
- “In the world of printing, a **Die** refers to a thin, razor-sharp steel blade that has been formed into a specific shape or pattern (sort of like a heavy-duty cookie-cutter). Consequently, **Die-Cutting** refers to the act of using this sharp die to cut paper, cardstock, label stock, or other substrates into various shapes. Just like the printing process, die-cutting is an automated operation. This allows multiple pieces of the same shape to be created in an efficient and uniform manner. Also, most printers have a selection of standard dies readily available for common cuts and shapes.”³³

It becomes apparent that the church is the recipient of truth and must carefully guard the truth for the future generations. This requires a careful examination of the text and the requirement of “drawing lines” and a willingness to be ostracized by others.

It is not enough to simply say one believes the Bible. The Bible teaches a single unified Story with Jesus at the center. That statement must be carefully examined, clearly identified, and shamelessly

proclaimed. In so doing, not only are we standing in open opposition to the doctrine of devils as set forth and proclaimed by the world around us, but it also requires us to stay in-step with the legacy of the collective church. Remember, we have fought for decades to preach Jesus first and systems second. But there are legitimate and proper systems that are closer to center than other systems. The ideal is working to benefit from both sides all the while working to guard the gospel.

“We owe it each other, we owe it to other churches, and we owe it to the world to give a clear articulation of our faith. “An open statement of the truth” is what Paul called it (2 Cor. 4:2). “The Church of Jesus Christ,” Berkhof observed, should never seek refuge in camouflage, should not try to hide her identity.’³⁴ Clarity requires carefulness, carefulness requires precision, and precision requires systematic theology.”³⁵

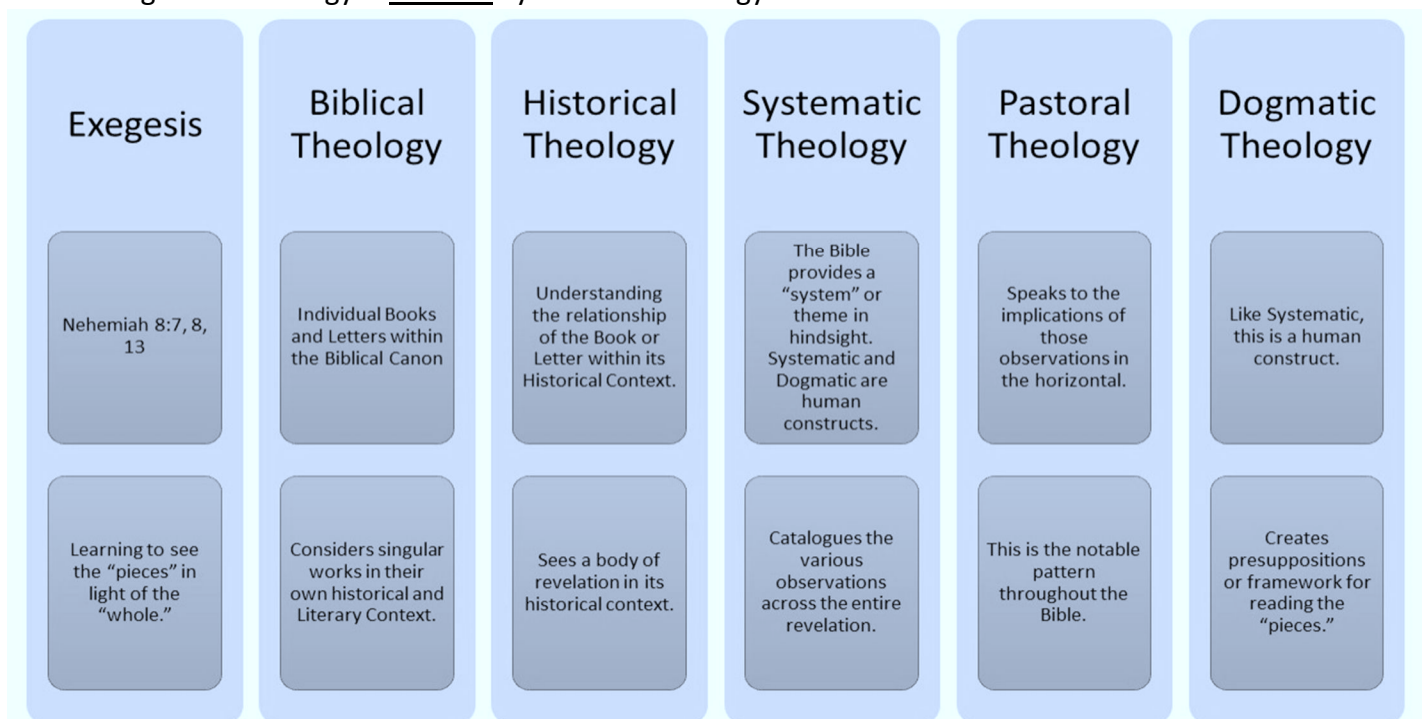
IV. What Is the Relationship Between Exegesis, Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology?

Initially, we desire to place **SYSTEMATIC** Theology in its *proper* place.

1. Exegesis Is An **Analysis** Of The Biblical Text According To The Literary-structural [grammatical]-historical context.
2. Biblical Theology Examines Doctrine In Its **Historical Context** As It Relates To The Words And Statements Of **A Particular Writer**.
3. Historical Theology Notes The **Development** Of Theology Within The Context Of The Church Throughout The Ages.
4. "Pastoral Theology is concerned both with the theory and with the practice of Christian ministry, because right practice proceeds from right belief."³⁶
5. Systematic Theology Gathers, **Arranges**, Compares And Integrates The Collective Data Produced By Biblical Theology.

"The focus of systematic theology remains different: it focuses on the collection and summary of all biblical passages on a subject, and attempts to summarize the teachings of Scripture in brief, understandable, and carefully formulated statements."³⁷

6. Dogmatic Theology Is **Labeled** Systematic Theology.



“Doctrine severed from practice is dead; practice severed from doctrine is just another form of self-salvation and self-improvement.”³⁸

In our pursuit of understanding the Bible’s single Story, there is a proper method for building our understanding.

1. We must base doctrine on a sound exegesis of each text. Systematic theology, by its very nature, is topical. In addition, topical material has a greater tendency toward eisegesis. Thus, it is imperative we build our theology on sound exegesis.
2. We must base doctrine on the entire Bible. Theology must be integrated. We cannot afford to study theology in isolation.
3. We must base the doctrine solely on the Bible. We cannot afford to build doctrine on inference, tradition, or other extra biblical sources.

V. Understanding the Development of Systematic Theology in Historical Theology

“Systematic theology is the study of God organized around pre-selected principles that highlight the relationships between various elements of biblical and natural truth, and in turn, the study immerses these truths within a specific cultural context. The term ‘systematic theology’ originated in the 16th century with the work of German theologian Bartholomäus Keckermann (1572–1609); however, the idea goes back to the very beginning of Christianity. ‘Theology’ is the study of God, or more accurately from its Platonic origin, a conversation or discussion about God. ‘Systematic’ describes the parameters of the discussion — it is not simply an attempt at an all-encompassing method, but more importantly, a structured development of the conversation about God. Since systematic theology studies God in relationship to and alongside of truth revealed in the arts and sciences, it is often considered the pinnacle of theological scholarship.”³⁹

“In Origen’s time, Christianity as a religion had not yet developed a system of theology as a basis of orthodoxy; therefore, in addition to a wide variety of opinions regarding the faith, there were also various sects, each claiming to possess the truth of the Christian faith.”⁴⁰

VI. Conclusion | Summary

“[Christianity] must give closer attention to doctrinal correctness. The Bible has a whole network of interrelated truth, a self-consistent mosaic of doctrine that has come from God. This pattern of truth will never be mastered fully by a finite mind, but constant study and work are required. This is known currently as ‘doing theology,’ the formulation of a systematic theology based on the correct exegesis of the biblical material. *Correlation* is perhaps the greatest asset or ability one can acquire in Bible study whether it is at home, college, or seminary. Correlation is the ability to relate one truth to another, to integrate the teaching and message of one passage or book into the whole. Too many preachers and Bible students have a hodge-podge or ‘brush pile’ theology; i.e., a series of isolated, sometimes contradictory and non-related, beliefs. They forget that good biblical interpretation is grammatical, historical, and *theological*. The exegesis and interpretation of one passage must not contradict the clear meaning of the bible elsewhere. Scripture interprets Scripture. [Christians] in general need to avoid the danger of thinking non-theologically. We must not allegorize away the Bible in search of a ‘blessing’ with some sort of horseback interpretations that violate the context or offend the plain teaching of Scripture elsewhere. Mere dogmatism and a string of illustrations will lose the day. The battle of ideas is a gigantic struggle that demands a thorough biblical education and training. No amount of hillbilly evangelism or flurry of church activity will make them go away if we [Christians] want to be God’s messengers to modern man in the 1990s and beyond.”⁴¹

- ¹ https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/gtj/06-2_361.pdf Grace Theological Journal 6.2 (1985) 361-371, "Are Seminaries Preparing Prospective Pastors to Preach the Word of God?" Nickolas Kurtaneck, p. 369.
- ² David L. Larsen, *The Company of the Preachers: A History of Biblical preaching from the Old Testament to the Modern Era*, Kregel, 1998, p. 538.
- ³ <https://www.ed.ac.uk/divinity/undergraduate/why-study-here/why-study-trs>
- ⁴ <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/posts/why-study-theology/>
- ⁵ Michael Horton, *Pilgrim Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 14
- ⁶ Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Studies in Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, Reprint, 2000), 64.
- ⁷ Emphasis added [2]), Warfield, *Studies in Theology*, 71.
- ⁸ W. Adams Brown, *Christian Theology in Outline*, T&T Clark, 1927, p. 3.
- ⁹ *How Theology Stopped Being Regina Scientiarum—and How Its Story Continues*, Gijsbert van den Brink <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0953946819868092> First Published August 13, 2019 Research Article. This is a short 9 page article well worth the read.
- ¹⁰ Edited by Ben Quash and Michael Ward, *Heresies and How to Avoid Them: Why it matters what Christians believe* (Hendriksen Publishers, 2007), x.
- ¹¹ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/why-should-we-study-systematic-theology/>
- ¹² Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1938), 29.
- ¹³ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/i-just-believe-the-bible-doesnt-orthodox/>
- ¹⁴ Rolland D. McCune, "Preach Doctrine, or 'Felt Needs?'" In *The Sentinel* Vol. 11, No. 1 (Fall, 1994), p. 1.
- ¹⁵ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/why-should-we-study-systematic-theology/>
- ¹⁶ Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:7.
- ¹⁷ Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology*, 17.
- ¹⁸ Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p. 25.
- ¹⁹ Vine, W. E., *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, [Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell] 1981.
- ²⁰ R.C. Sproul, *Knowing Scripture* [Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1977], p. 25.
- ²¹ Currently Unknown
- ²² R.C. Sproul, *Knowing Scripture*, pp. 22, 23.
- ²³ McQuilkin, *Understanding and Applying*, p. 220.
- ²⁴ Klaus Bockmuhl, *Theology As Servant*, Christianity Today, February 27, 1976, p. 45.
- ²⁵ Nickolas Kurtaneck, "Are Seminaries Preparing Prospective Pastors to Preach the Word of God?" GTJ, V6 #2, Fall 85, p. 364.
- ²⁶ John R.W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982], p. 92.
- ²⁷ Klaus Bockmuhl, "Theology As Servant," Christianity Today, February 27, 1976, p. 45.
- ²⁸ ? Klaus Bockmuhl, "Theology As Servant," Christianity Today, February 27, 1976.
- ²⁹ Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* [Nelson: Thomas Nelson, 1998], p. 879,
- ³⁰ Charles U. Wagner, *The Pastor: His Life and Work* (Schaumburg, Ill.: Regular Baptist Press, 1976), p. 45.
- ³¹ Robert C. Anderson, *The Effective Pastor: A Practical Guide to the Ministry* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), p. 42.
- ³² "OCCASIONAL" LETTERS FROM PAUL by D. A. Carson. https://s3.amazonaws.com/tgc-documents/carson/1996_1Cor_part1.pdf
- ³³ <https://www.formaxprinting.com/blog/2014/04/printing-lingo-what-is-die-cutting>
- ³⁴ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, New Combined Edition (Eerdmans), 31.
- ³⁵ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/why-should-we-study-systematic-theology/>
- ³⁶ <https://www.uniontheology.org/resources/life/introduction-to-pastoral-theology>
- ³⁷ <https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/systematic-theology>
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.
- ³⁹ The Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization, Systematic Theology, Douglas Estes, First published: 25 November 2011. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9780470670606.wbecc1346>
- ⁴⁰ <https://iep.utm.edu/origen-of-alexandria/>
- ⁴¹ Rolland D. McCune, *Fundamentalism at the Closing of the Twentieth Century* [Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 4801 Allen Road, Allen Park MI 48101], pp. 8, 9.

TEN QUESTION QUIZ

WHY STUDY THEOLOGY

Circle the Correct Answer

1. What is theology?
 - a. The study of Eschatology
 - b. The study of God
 - c. The study of a biblical worldview
2. Match the following words with their correct definition.

Orthodoxy	a. Right doing
Orthopraxy	b. Right feeling
Orthopathy	c. Right thinking

3. Does the OT and NT teach a specific doctrine? Y - N
4. Is the doctrine taught knowable? Y – N
5. Why must theology be studied at a local church level?
6. What is a means of measuring Orthodoxy?
7. Are churches to “guard the gates” of a local church? Y – N
8. What passage teaches the defense of biblical truth?
 - a. Acts 20:17-35
 - b. Genesis 1:1
 - c. Matthew 1:1
9. Is there a difference between biblical theology and systematic theology? Y – N
10. Of the two, which one should come first in one’s study?

READING LIST FOR WHY STUDY THEOLOGY

1. **The Top 13 Christian Creeds: Origins, Contents, & Importance** Theology / *by* Paige Deane <https://justdisciple.com/christian-creed/>
2. **REFORMED CONFESSIONS OF FAITH** [sourced out of the 1500's]
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformed_confessions_of_faith