

BIBLICAL DOCTRINE

A Systematic Consideration of Christianity

GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOWLING GREEN

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INTRODUCTION: WHERE WE GO

Psalm 119:18

18 Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law.

Psalm 36:9

9 For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.

1 Corinthians 13:9–10

9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part;

10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.

In Scripture, three different words are used to speak of doctrine:

- Hebrew (Old Testament): *leqah* – teaching, instruction, what is received

Deuteronomy 32:2

2 “Let my *teaching* drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As the droplets on the fresh grass And as the showers on the herb.

- Greek (New Testament): *didache* – instruction, teaching
- Greek (New Testament): *didaskalia* – the activity of teaching

Titus 1:9

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.

The word itself is somewhat amorphous – it can be ‘true’ teaching, or it can be ‘false’ teaching. When we speak of Biblical Doctrine, we are referring to the teaching of Scripture in all its forms: proclamation, expositional, or thematic. If we speak of Systematic Biblical Doctrine (Systematic Theology), we are referring to the summation of biblical teaching that follows historical themes or categories.

“Why should Christians study Biblical Doctrine?”

1. The primary reason we study biblical doctrine stems from our Lord’s command:

Matthew 28:19–20

19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

2. The study of biblical doctrine brings blessing and benefits to the believer:

2 Timothy 3:16–17

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Revelation 1:3

3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

JOHN MACARTHUR: BIBLICAL DOCTRINE (PAGE 41)

SOUND DOCTRINE EXPOSES AND CONFRONTS SIN AND FALSE DOCTRINE (1 TIMOTHY 1:8-11; 4:1-6)

SOUND DOCTRINE MARKS A GOOD SERVANT OF CHRIST JESUS (1 TIMOTHY 4:6; TITUS 2:1)

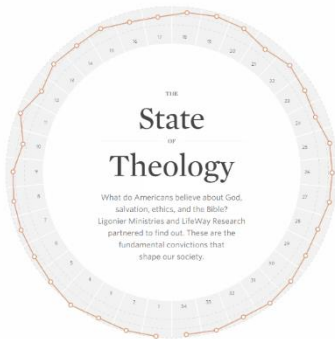
SOUND DOCTRINE IS REWARDED WITH DOUBLE HONOR FOR ELDERS (1 TIMOTHY 5:17)

SOUND DOCTRINE CONFORMS TO GODLINESS (1 TIMOTHY 6:3; TITUS 2:10)

SOUND DOCTRINE IS INCLUDED IN THE APOSTOLIC EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW (2 TIMOTHY 3:10)

SOUND DOCTRINE IS ESSENTIAL TO EQUIPPING PASTORS (2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17)

SOUND DOCTRINE IS THE CONTINUAL MANDATE FOR PREACHERS (2 TIMOTHY 4:2-4)



Ligonier Ministries 2018 State of Theology Survey

Statement NO. 11

Everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature.

52% of Evangelicals Agree

Statement NO. 3

God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

51% of Evangelicals Agree

Statement NO. 6

Jesus is the First and Greatest being created by God.

78% of Evangelicals Agree

“How should Christians study Biblical Doctrine?”

I. We should study biblical doctrine with prayer.

“No matter how intelligent, if the student does not continue to pray for God to give him or her an understanding mind and a believing and humble heart, and the student does not maintain a personal walk with the Lord, then the teachings of Scripture will be misunderstood and disbelieved, doctrinal error will result, and the mind and heart of the student will not be changed for the better but for the worse. Students of systematic theology should resolve at the beginning to keep their lives free from any disobedience to God or any known sin that would disrupt their relationship with Him. They should resolve to maintain with great regularity their own personal devotional lives. They should continually pray for wisdom and understanding of Scripture.” Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*

JONATHAN EDWARDS’ RESOLUTIONS, AUGUST 17, 1723

65. RESOLVED, VERY MUCH TO EXERCISE MYSELF IN THIS ALL MY LIFE LONG, VIZ. WITH THE GREATEST OPENNESS I AM CAPABLE OF, TO DECLARE MY WAYS TO GOD, AND LAY OPEN MY SOUL TO HIM: ALL MY SINS, TEMPTATIONS, DIFFICULTIES, SORROWS, FEARS, HOPES, DESIRES, AND EVERY THING, AND EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE.

2. We should study biblical doctrine with humility.

“Peter tells us, ‘Clothe yourself, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble’ (1 Peter 5:5). Those who study systematic theology will learn many things about the teachings of Scripture that are perhaps not known or not known well by other Christians in their churches or by relatives who are older in the Lord than they are. They may also find that they understand things about Scripture that some of their church officers do not understand, and the even their pastor has perhaps forgotten or never learned well.” Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*

James 3:13, 17-18

13 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.

17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.

18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

3. We should study biblical doctrine with reason.

"We find in the New Testament that Jesus and the New Testament authors will often quote a verse of Scripture and then draw logical conclusions from it. They **reason** from Scripture. It is therefore not wrong to use human understanding, human logic, and human reason to draw conclusions from the statements of Scripture. Nevertheless, when we reason and draw what we think to be correct logical deductions from Scripture, we sometimes make mistakes. The deductions we draw from the statements of Scripture are not equal to the statements of Scripture themselves in certainty or authority, for our ability to reason and draw conclusions is not the ultimate standard of truth – **only Scripture is.**" Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*

4. We should study biblical doctrine with help from others.

"We need to be thankful that God has put teachers in the church ("And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, and third *teachers*..." I Corinthians 12:28). We should allow those with gifts of teaching to help us understand Scripture. Also...our study of theology should include talking with other Christians about the things we study."

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*

5. We should study biblical doctrine by collecting and understanding all the relevant passages of Scripture on any topic.

6. We should study biblical doctrine with rejoicing and praise.

"The study of theology is not merely a theoretical exercise of the intellect. It is a study of the living God, and of the wonders of all His works in creation and redemption. We cannot study this subject dispassionately! We must love all that God is, all that He says and all that He does. Our response to the study of the theology of Scripture should be that of the Psalmist who said, 'How precious to me are Your thoughts, O God!' (Psalm 139:17)." Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*

"What are the subjects we will study in Biblical Doctrine?"

- **Prolegomena:** of truth and how we know it.
- **Bibliology:** of the divine revelation of God's Word.
- **Theology Proper:** of God the Father.
- **Christology:** of God the Son.
- **Pneumatology:** of God the Holy Spirit.
- **Anthropology and Hamartiology:** of man and sin.
- **Soteriology:** of salvation.
- **Angelology:** of angels and demons.
- **Ecclesiology:** of the church.
- **Eschatology:** of the future.

"What are the limits of Biblical Doctrine (Systematic Theology)?"

1. The silence of the Bible on a particular topic (Deuteronomy 29:29, John 20:30, 21:25).
2. A student's partial knowledge/understanding of the entire Bible (Luke 24:25-27; 2 Peter 3:16).
3. The inadequacy of human language (1 Corinthians 2:13-14; 2 Corinthians 12:4).
4. The finiteness of the human mind (Job 11:7-12; 38:1-39:30; Romans 11:33-35).
5. The lack of spiritual discernment and maturity (1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:11-13).