

HOW SHOULD WE STUDY THEOLOGY?  
(PRACTICAL AND PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS)

- I. We should be Saved in Christ if we want to understand
  - a. Only those who have the Spirit (saved in Christ) can understand spiritual truths
    - i. *“The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”* (1Corinthians 2:14)
  - b. Application: Do you trust that by God’s grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone as your way to God and Heaven?
- II. We should put a high value in the study of Theological truths
  - a. *“Buy the truth and do not sell it’ get wisdom, discipline and understanding.”* (Proverbs 23:23)
  - b. *“Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.”* (Proverbs 4:7)
  - c. What is the value of the doctrine of Incarnation, Christ deity and humanity, etc?
    - i. Put another way, is there value in knowing Christ? Of course!
    - ii. According to Paul: *“What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ.”* (Philippians 3:8)
      1. Knowing Christ Jesus is greater than everything else
  - d. Application: Between you and God, what is the cost (monetary, time or otherwise) you are willing to give up or go through in acquiring theological resources in strengthening your knowledge of Christ?
- III. We should be in prayer
  - a. We should pray for wisdom
    - i. *“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault. And it will be given to him.”* (James 1:5)
  - b. We should pray to God that we and others may know God better
    - i. The Apostle Paul: *“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.”* (Ephesians 1: 17)
  - c. We should pray to God that we are enlighten with great theological truths
    - i. Paul: *“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.”* (Ephesians 1:18-19a)
      1. Note that Paul prayed the Ephesians would be enlightened about the following theological truths:
        - a. God’s calling
          - i. In which we have hope!
        - b. The believer’s inheritance
          - i. Which is described as rich and glorious!
        - c. God’s great power
          - i. For those who believe!

NOTE: All theological truths ought to change our attitude, views or behaviors!

- d. Application: Do you pray in your theological studies for wisdom, God's enlightenment and to know God better through it?
- IV. We should study the foundation of the faith and also the more deeper truths
  - a. *"Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so."* (Hebrew 6:1-3)
    - i. The foundational truths are important, yet there are other teachings needed in order to go on to maturity
  - b. Application: Do you desire to be grounded in the foundation and also teachable to deeper theological truths?
- V. We should study with humility
  - a. From the above, with more theological truths and deeper knowledge comes the risk of the sin of pride; yet we ought to be humble.
  - b. Humility and wisdom ought to be related
    - i. *"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deed done in the humility that comes from wisdom."* (James 3:13)
      - 1. Notice from this verse that:
        - a. If one is wise they ought to be humble
        - b. Yet humility comes from true wisdom
  - c. To have wisdom requires humility
    - i. *"When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom."*(Proverbs 11:3)
  - d. Pride can only lead to destruction
    - i. *"Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble'."* (1Peter 5:5)
  - e. Application: Is there the pride of sin that you need to repent about? Will you bend your ego under the submission of Christ?
- VI. We should study with the available teachers God provides
  - a. God has given the church teachers
    - i. *"And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers..."* (1 Corinthians 12:28)
  - b. Utilize God's gift of teachers!
    - i. "We should allow those with gifts of teaching to help us understand Scripture. This means that we should make use of systematic theologies and other books that have been written by some of the teachers that God has given to the church over the course of its history."<sup>1</sup>
  - c. Application: Have you considered using the resources God has provided through commentaries, preachers, theologians, lexicons, study notes, etc?
- VII. We should study so that we can glorify God
  - a. Everything we do should glorify God

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction To Biblical Doctrine*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 35.

- i. *“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”* (1Corinthians 10:31)
  - 1. Everything means Systematic Theology also!
- b. Yet, how do we glorify God with Systematic theology?
  - i. Giving thanks to God!
    - 1. *“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”* (Colossians 3:17)
      - a. Have you thank God for Him revealing, teaching and allowing you to believe in the truths you received?
      - b. Do you thank God for granting you by His mercy, understanding?
  - ii. Speaking about it as if it was the very word of God!
    - 1. *“If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”* (1Peter 4:11)
      - a. Notice how the first sentence stated that when we speak as if our words were God, God may be praised through it.
      - b. Our speech about systematic theology must therefore:
        - i. Be truthful, because God’s Word is truth (see John 17:17)
        - ii. Be clear, because God’s Word is clear.
        - iii. Be logical, because God’s Word is logical.
  - iii. If we are to serve others by teaching or discussing systematic theology, we must all of our strengths that God provides into it!
    - 1. *“If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”* (1Peter 4:11)
      - a. Notice the second sentence above stated that serving with the strength of God would allow Him to be praised.
      - b. Therefore, to praise God in serving God with systematic theology one must:
        - i. Pour out all his energy into learning about systematic theology
        - ii. Put a lot of effort in preparation of the presentation of systematic theology
        - iii. Give all of God’s strength in the presentation of systematic theology
  - iv. Praise God!
    - 1. Our songs = our systematic theology
      - a. Many places Scripture tells us to sing (James 5:13, Colossians 3:16, etc)

- b. Yet, what is the content of our music?
  - i. It ought to be dictated by the Word of Christ (which effects our theology!)
    - 1. *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”* (Colossians 3:16)
- c. Worship music is a way to apply what we know in systematically theology
  - i. People might ask what does systematic theology have to do with their worship
    - 1. Yet, for a teenage unschooled girl in Palestine centuries before Grudem or Berkhof, what does systematic theology has to do with her worship?
      - a. See Luke 1:46-55
        - i. Notice the theological richness of Mary’s worship.
- c. Application: Will you give your thanks, joy, praise, honor, reverence, with all your strength and your speech, to glorify God and enjoy Him through Systematic Theology?