**Objectives**

1. to encourage an increasing passion for God’s glory in each of our hearts and lives, and
2. to cultivate an understanding of the critical necessity of sound doctrine for enjoying a humble , holy              , happy , helpful and honorable life, as a faithful member of the body of Christ.

**Schedule**

Session 1 Wed, Apr 4/Sat, Apr 7 Intro to the Intro: Why Study Doctrine?

Session 2 Wed, Apr 18/Sat, Apr 21 Intro: Prolegomena

Session 3 Wed, May 16/Sat, May 19 Bibliology: God’s Word

Session 4 Wed, Jun 13/Sat, Jun 16 Theology Proper: God the Father

Session 5 Wed, Aug 8/Sat, Aug 11 Christology: God the Son

Session 6 Wed, Sep 5/Sat, Sep 8 Pneumatology: God the Spirit

Session 7 Wed, Oct 3/Sat, Oct 6 Anthropology/Hamartiology: Man and Sin

Session 8 Wed, Nov 14/Sat, Nov 17 Soteriology: Salvation

Session 9 Wed, Sat TBA Angelology: Angels

Session 10 Wed, Sat TBA Ecclesiology: The Church

Session 11 Wed, Sat TBA Eschatology: The Future

INTRO to the INTRO: Why Study Doctrine?

Doctrine - **didaskalias** - teaching (Matt 15:9; John 1:1-14; 1 Tim 1:8-10; 4:16; 6:3; 2 Tim 4:3; Titus 1:9; Titus 2:1; Eph 4:14)

1 Timothy 1:1-20

We will look at seven reasons in 1 Timothy 1:1-20 for devoting our lives to sound doctrine, **so that**

we may be certain to have eternal life and avoid destroying our lives and the lives of others.

Introduction (vv 1-2)

1. The command to destroy false doctrine requires knowing sound doctrine (vv 3-4).

Acts 20:30; 2 Tim 2:14-18; Gal 1:8-9; 1 Tim 4:7

1. The goal of sound doctrine is love (v 5).

Phil 1:9; 1 Cor 13; Eph 4:15; 1 John; 1 Tim 4:6; 2 Tim 2:14

1. There are those in the church who are devoted to living & teaching false doctrine (vv 6-7).

2 Tim 3:1-17; 1 Tim 4:1-5; Jude

1. There is hope in sound doctrine for the unrighteous and ungodly (vv 8-10).

Rom 1:18; Col 3:1-7

1. A devotion to the gospel will lead to an attack on all false doctrine (v 11).

1 Tim 1:3-5, 8-10; 4:1-16; 6:1-; 2 Tim 1:8-14; Rom 1:1-2, 15-17; 10:1-4

1. Jesus Christ gives His strength , mercy , grace , faith , love              , salvation and patience to those who will believe in Him for eternal life (vv 12-17).

2 Tim 3:15; 1 John 5; John 20:31; 1 Pet

1. Living false doctrine leads to the deception and destruction of lives (vv 18-20).

**Discussion**

1. How does knowing sound doctrine help us to love God and others more?
2. Have you been tempted or enticed to believe something untrue about God and if so, what was it? How was your false belief revealed to you - how was the truth made known to you and by what means?
3. Do you know friends, family or coworkers who follow false doctrine? Have you had opportunity to share the gospel/open their eyes to the truth? How did that go and how could you have done better?
4. What are the dangers of attempting to maintain sound doctrine without the body of Christ?
5. What disciplines must we develop in our lives to be able to recognize false doctrine?
6. Your brother believes that everyone should follow their own personal truth, their own moral compass. His motto is, “Live and let live, differences only cause division. Tolerance is the only way to achieve unity and peace.”  Is he right? How do you respond? 

INTRO: Prolegomena: What is Systematic Theology and Why is it Important?

Today we will examine what systematic theology is, its components, and its purpose, **so that** we might better know God, think His thoughts after Him, and live lives that are increasingly conformed to the image of His Son.

Prolegomena - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Theology - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Systematic Theology - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Theology in general (or general theology) is the entirety of our doctrine. When we combine all the doctrines we believe , teach , and live by we have our general theology.
2. We study general theology so that we might know the whole counsel of God, see our hearts permeated by truth so that we are protected from sin , and that we might be competent and equipped for every good work (Acts 20:26-27; 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 4:12-13; 2 Tim 2:15; 2 Tim 3:17).
3. Systematic theology answers the question, what does the complete canon of Scripture teach about any one theme or topic?
4. A systematic theology is “developed from exegetical and biblical theology.” (from “Biblical Doctrine” by John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue)
5. There are various ways a theologian might choose to categorize a systematic theology.

Prolegomena: Intro \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Bibliology: Doctrine of God’s Word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Theology Proper: Doctrine of God the Father \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Christology: Doctrine of God the Son \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Pneumatology: Doctrine of God the Spirit \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Anthropology: Doctrine of Man \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Hamartiology: Doctrine of Sin\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Soteriology: Doctrine of Salvation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Angelology: Doctrine of Angels\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Ecclesiology: Doctrine of The Church\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Eschatology: Doctrine of The Future \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Systematic theology contains general and specific benefits, as well four key limitations (2 Tim 3:16; Deut 29:29; John 20:20; 21:25; Luke 24:25-27, 32; 2 Pet 3:16; 1 Cor 2:13-14; 2 Cor 12:4; Job 11:7-12; 38:1-39:30; Rom 11:33-35; 1 Cor 3:1-3; Heb 5:11-13).
2. Systematic theology strives to organize and explain the doctrines and major motifs of Scripture so that we would have a greater, deeper, and richer understanding of Scripture’s overarching theme: The Eternal Kingdom of God *(*Ps 47:7-8; Ex 15:18; Ps 9:7-8; Isa 37:16; Mark 14:25).

When speaking about keeping in focus the unifying theme of Scripture John MacArthur states, *“God for His own glory has chosen to create and gather to Himself a group of people to be the subjects of His eternal kingdom, who will praise, honor, and serve Him forever and through whom He will display His wisdom, power, mercy, grace, and glory.”*

1. A Christian worldview is perceiving and interpreting the world through theology that is rooted and grounded in Scripture, and the application of that theology to our everyday lives (2 Pet 1:2-4; Jer 9:23-24).

**Discussion**

1. What are the benefits of studying theology systematically?
2. How does our understanding (or misunderstanding) of various doctrines affect our (general) theology?
3. If someone were to ask you to explain your (general) theology or what you believe about God, how would you answer that question?
4. How does systematic theology help us maintain the high priority of the Kingdom of God in all our doctrine?
5. How does systematic theology help us foster and maintain a biblical worldview?
6. How should (or how has) your study of systematic theology resulted in your greater love for Jesus Christ and for people?
7. Explain where you have observed the study of systematic theology resulting in someone’s greater likeness to the image of Jesus Christ, displaying the glory of God?

Bibliology: God’s Word

Where are we going?

We’re going to Survey the doctrine of “Bibliology” [see Origin and Definition]

**Origin and Definition of the Term**

The term “bibliology” comes from biblios (Gk for “book”) and logos (Gk for “word,” “study” or “doctrine”). It is essentially the study or doctrine of the Bible . A good practical, working definition is “what the Bible says about itself or “what God has said about His written word .”

For what reason: [see So That statement]

**“So that” Statement**

Believe in the veracity, sufficiency and authority of sacred Scripture, **so that** you may know the living God, hope in His holy character, and trust in His divine sovereignty.

A few weeks ago, I was asked by someone why I believed that Christianity was true? And that question has kind of driven my preparation and organization of what’s on my heart to present to you. Everything I understand about Christianity, comes from the Bible; what is it about this book that persuades me to place my hope and trust in it?

I’m reading all this material from the various Systematic Theology texts at my disposable, and I’m kind of wrestling with all the terminology and the different organization of the various topics, and I keeping asking myself, “what is it that I want my church family to take away from this talk?” I’ve got about 45 minutes: What are the “pegs” that I want them to be able to hang all this information on? And this is what I settled on:

Three Criterions

for

Hope and Trust

Veracity : true, accurate, reliable

Sufficiency : comprehensive, thorough, lacks nothing

Authority : jurisdiction, right to impose obligation

[story about the “fire” triangle from elementary science: Air, Heat, Fuel]

[relate back to Criterions for Hope and Trust]

Now there’s one very, very important caution here. You and I do not stand in judgement of the Word of God; we are not the rule by which the validity of the Scripture is measured. The Bible never challenges us to evaluate its testimony by any criteria; instead the Scripture simply presupposes the truth of what it says. And well it should, since to do anything else would insult the character of God.

As I said before, these criterions are intended simply as pegs, or markers, or memory aids to help categorize information. As we walk through all this doctrinal material, as we examine the Bible and what it says about itself, there are two things I want you to just kind of hold in your hand, or be turning over in the back of your mind:

1. “How does what we’re talking about demonstrate the veracity, and/or the sufficiency, and/or the authority of the Scripture?
2. “How does that intensify, strengthen, or maybe even newly establish, hope and trust in your heart for the Bible, and by extension, your knowledge and love of God, its divine Author?”

Don’t be scared. Truth is, nearly all of this material is already going to be familiar to you already, so don’t let the organization or the presentation throw you. After all, I’m mostly just going to be reading back to you what Scripture already says.

OK, here we go…

**Outline**

1. The Bible is Revelation .

**Reveal**: insight into something we don’t know and/or couldn’t find out on our own.

1. General revelation: *Creation* and *Conscience*; what we can observe and infer about nature and ourselves.

(Rom Ch. 1: creation; Rom Ch. 2: conscience)

1. Special revelation: Direct communication; *Spoken* (directly or representatively), or *Written* (directly or inspirationally).

**Examples in the Bible**

* Burning bush (OT); Jesus’ preaching (NT)
* Prophets (OT); apostolic teaching (NT)
* Tablets of the Commandments
* Books of the OT and NT
1. The Bible is Self ‑Attesting .

**Attest**: To affirm or witness to.

**Of what?:** Its origin and authorship; both explicitly and implicitly

1. Divine : asserts to be the very Word of God (Isa 44:2, et al.; Ex 4:22; 1 Thess 2:13)
* Is 44:2, et al. “Thus says the Lord…”
* Ex 4:22 “Then you [Moses] shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord…”
* 1 Th 2:13 “And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God…”
1. Inerrant : affirms nothing contrary to fact (Num 23:19; 2 Sam 7:28; Prov 30:5; John 14:6, 17:17)

(explicit attestation)

Does not err. Growing reluctance among contemporary evangelicals to affirm the inerrancy of Scripture. Culture is relativistic; rejects absolutes.

* Num 23:19 “God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?”
* 2 Sam 7:28 “And now, O Lord God, you are God, and your words are true…”
* Prov 30:5 “Every word of God proves true…”
* Jn 14:6 “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life…”
* Jn 17:17 “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth…”
1. Prophetic : accurately predicts future events (Isa 45:1‑6; Mic 5:2)

(implicit attestation)

* Is 45:1 6 “Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus [King of Persia, end of the Babylonian captivity of the Hebrews], whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed: “I will go before you and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I name you, though you do not know me. I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other.” [written 150 years before Cyrus]
* Mic 5:2 “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.”
1. Consistent : non‑contradictory authorship (Gen 2:9; Zech 14:8‑9; Rev 22:1-2)

(implicit attestation)

Across many authors and many centuries

**Thematic example**

* Gen 2:9 “And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”
* Zech 14:8 9 “On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter. And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one.”
* Rev 22:1-2 “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

**Doctrinal example**

* Gen 15:5-6 “And [God] brought [Abraham] outside and said, ‘Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.’ Then he said to him, ‘So shall your offspring be.’ And [Abraham] believed the Lord, and [God] counted it to him as righteousness.”
* Rom 4:4-5 “Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.”
* Eph 2:8-9 “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”
1. Reliable : accurately recounts the past, rightly describes the present, promises perfect future revelation (Luke 1:1-4; Rom Ch.1-3; 1 Cor 6:9-11; John 14:26)

(implicit attestation)

* Lk 1:1-4 **PAST** “Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.”

**Luke considered to be one of the best ancient historians.**

* Rom Ch.1-3 **PRESENT** (where Paul describes the fallen nature of man); 1 Cor 6 (where Paul lists a number of sins that used to characterize the lives of many in the church, but are now delivered from it)
* Jn 14:25-26 **FUTURE** “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” Pre affirms inspiration of the NT writings – segue to “inspiration”?...
1. The Bible is Inspired . (2 Tim 3:16; G*k* ***theopneustos,*** *“God‑breathed”*)

In the original autographs/manuscripts. Modern copies and translations are, by definition, not inspired.

Don’t mean usages like “motivational” (his speech really inspired me), or “exceptional” (that was an inspired musical performance).

Speaks not to the content of the text, but to its origin.

* 2 Tim 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God…”
1. Written by human authors who were…(2 Pet 1:21)
* 2 Pet 1:21 “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”
1. …“carried along ” by the Holy Spirit. (G*k* ***phero***)

(“to bring, to bear, to carry, to move with intentionality”)

Views of Inspiration

* Mechanical : God “takes control” of the author and uses him like a typewriter.
* Dictation : God communicates with the author, telling him exactly what to write down.
* Superintendence : God sovereignly directs the life of the author so that he writes from the heart exactly what God has purposed to be written.

**Super**: above or beyond; more than usual or common

**Intend**: with purpose, or toward a goal; not accidental

**Supernatural**, Supervisor, Superconductor

**Examples from the Bible** (As we look as these examples, I want you to hold in your mind that Scripture is true and inerrant. It’s not a work of fiction like a novel, where elements of the story can just be made up by the author. We’ve already read some Scripture passages that recorded some of Moses’ audible conversations with God. How many history books have you read where actual conversation is recorded? Why? Because there was not a witness for what was actually said. A history book author wouldn’t stick his neck out that far, unless he had letters or some other kind of documentation. But Scripture does this **all the time**.)

* **The Pentateuch** ([Jesus speaking] “Moses wrote of me.” Jn 5:46); Moses wasn’t present when, for example, God was speaking to Abraham. How was he able to recount events and conversations that had happened hundreds of years before he was born? Now, perhaps you might say “It’s oral tradition, verbally transmitted knowledge that was eventually written down.” Well, let’s look at another example…
* **Sermon on the Mount**; Matthew documents this lengthy message that Jesus preached. From what we know about the disciples, is it likely Matthew was taking notes? Ok, well, maybe you’re still not convinced; let’s look another…
* **Jesus praying in Gethsemane**; 3 times the text in Matthew tells us that the disciples are asleep while Jesus is off by Himself, praying. Yet His prayers are all recorded. How does Matthew know what Jesus prayed? He was asleep! (“The Helper will bring all these things to your remembrance.” Jn 14:26)
1. The Bible is Complete .
2. Canon is closed (Rev 22:18-19)

(written by Apostle or close associate; recognized and received by the church as inspired; harmonious with all other books, no contradiction)

* Rev 22:18-19 “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”

We know the canon of Scripture is closed because there are no more sources of revelation available today:

* God has already told us He’s said everything He intends to say until Jesus returns (see Rev 22, above).
* There are no more prophets or apostles.
* There are no other inspired writings that we’re going to find, or remain “undiscovered” (for example, the “Q” source from which Mark, Matthew and Luke supposedly drew material for their Gospels, explaining their similarity. No; each writer was simply uniquely inspired).
* Personal experience is not inspired; allowing experience to override the Bible, or saying that “God told me…” is tantamount to saying that you have new revelation — that you are a source of inspired revelation.
1. Contains everything necessary for faith and practice (2 Tim 3:15‑17; Deut 29:29; Ps 19:7-8)

**Everything we need to know to be saved and reconciled to God. Everything we need to know about what God expects of us and how to be obedient.**

* 2 Tim 3:15 17 “…from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”
* Deut 29:29 “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”
* Ps 19:7-8 “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.” PERFECT and RIGHT and PURE sounds pretty comprehensive!
1. Transmission is accurate

Something that is TRANSMITTED has both an Origin and a Destination. When we speak of the Transmission of the Bible, we’re talking about whether the original TEXT of Scripture has indeed arrived at its intended destination, and also whether the original MEANING is still intact. The Bibles we hold are not originals — they are Transmitted copies.

* Sovereign preservation by the Author (Matt 5:18; Isa 40:8; Rom 15:4)
* Textual criticism provides confirmation

(extra Biblical)

Not “criticism” in the negative sense.

Scientific discipline that collect and compares copies of ancient texts, evaluates variants; goal is to confidently reconstruct text of the original autographs or manuscripts.

1. The Bible is Authentic .

(not counterfeit; obviously real)

1. Evident : recognizable, clear and illuminating (John 10:26-27; 1 Cor 2:14)
* Jn 10:26-27 “…you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”
* 1 Cor 2:14 “The natural person ***[unregenerate]*** does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual ***[regenerate]*** person judges all things…”
1. Living and Active : agent of sanctification (Heb 4:12; 2 Tim 3:15)
* Heb 4:12 “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”
* 2 Tim 3:15 “…from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus”
1. Compelling : “binding” on the conscience (Matt 4:4; Rom 12:2; Prov 8)
* Matt 4:4 “But [Jesus] answered, ‘It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”
* Rom 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

**Luther at Diet of Worms**: “I am bound by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures…my conscience is captive to the Word of God.”

* Prov 8 “…O sons, listen to me [to wisdom]: blessed are those who keep my ways. Hear instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it. Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors. For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord, but he who fails to find me injures himself; all who hate me love death.”
1. Infallible : unable to fail, or to err (Isa 55:10-11)

(stronger word than **inerrant**: simply does not fail, or err)

* Is 55:10-11 “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it”

[RECAP!!]

OK, let’s review where we’ve been. Back at the beginning, we established three criterions for categorizing what the Bible says about itself: its Veracity, its Sufficiency, and its Authority. Then we walked through the Scripture itself and found that the Bible is:

* **Special Revelation**, God’s written Word
* **Self Attesting** to its Divine Origin through it’s Inerrancy, Prophecy, Consistency, and Reliability
* **Inspired** by the Holy Spirit who Superintended the lives of Scripture’s human authors
* **Complete**; we have all of God’s necessary revelation, and it has been sovereignly Preserved for us, and accurately Transmitted to us.
* **Authentic** because it is infallibly recognized by God’s people, it sanctifies us as it illumines our minds, and compels us to trust and hope in its message.

And that’s our foundational Bibliology; what God has said about His written word.

***[STOP and take questions]***

**Some Final thoughts on Evangelism and the Authority of Scripture**

I said earlier that I had recently been asked by someone why I believed that Christianity was true? That’s a reasonable question, and as evangelists, it’s one that we’re likely going to run into a lot. So, I answered, “well, everything I understand about Christianity I learned from the Bible, and I believe that the Bible is authoritative on whatever it teaches.” And he said, “well, ok — why do you believe the Bible is the authority?”

Now the probably the worst way to answer that question is to say, “Because I just know that it is; I just believe it.” That’s a subjective answer; it’s not grounded in anything beyond my own preference, and it’s certainly not a helpful response. What more do we need to understand before we can answer this question really well?

[MacArthur/Grudem excerpts from “**Authority of Scripture**”]

*[MacArthur]*

*“The doctrine of authority boils down to one primary question: How does one become convinced that the Bible really is the Word of God? Or, how does a person become certain that Scripture is the truth of God conveyed through the process of inspiration and that it thereby has the right to exercise authority over one’s life?”*

*[Grudem]*

*“It is one thing to affirm that the Bible claims to be the words of God. It is another thing to be convinced that those claims are true.”*

*[Grudem]*

*“It is helpful for us to learn that the Bible is historically accurate, that it is internally consistent, that it contains prophecies that have been fulfilled hundreds of years later,…that through it people come to find salvation,…and that it claims hundreds of times over to be God’s very words. All of these arguments and others are useful to us and remove obstacles that might otherwise come in the way of our believing Scripture. But all of these arguments taken individually or together cannot finally be convincing.”*

*[MacArthur]*

*“Given the nature of God and his Word, he alone is qualified to establish and attest to Scripture’s divine authority. This is precisely what he does through the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit to a believer. According to the Bible, the Holy Spirit works through the Scriptures to confirm its reliability, giving the believer a certainty that it is the Word of God. Authority is derived from a spiritual ministry of the Holy Spirit — not a subjective determination by the believer.”*

*[Grudem]*

*“The Bible will commend itself [as authoritative]…, if we are thinking rightly about the nature of reality, our perceptions of it and of ourselves, and our perception of God. The trouble is that because of sin our perception and analysis of God and creation is faulty. Sin is ultimately irrational, and sin makes us think incorrectly about God and about creation. Thus, in a world free from sin, the Bible would commend itself convincingly to all people as God’s Word. But because sin distorts people’s perceptions of reality, they do not recognize Scripture for what it really is. Therefore it requires the work of the Holy Spirit, overcoming the effects of sin, to enable us to be persuaded that the Bible is indeed the Word of God, and that the claims it makes for itself are true.”*

*[MacArthur]*

*“The internal testimony of the Holy Spirit illuminates the believer so that he knows that the Scriptures are the Word of God. The biblical basis for this clarity is derived from two sources. First, the words of Scripture are self‑attesting because they claim to be from God. Second, the Holy Spirit’s dynamic power applies the truth of Scripture, resulting in a confident assurance in the Word itself. This ministry of the Spirit is actuated through the reading and proclamation of Scripture. That does not mean that all who hear or read believe, but it does mean that those who [do] believe do so because of the convicting and illuminating work of the Holy Spirit.”*

**So, why is that helpful to you, as an evangelist?** The question was, “Why do you accept the authority of the Bible?” “Because God has saved me; I have a regenerate nature; God’s Spirit dwelling within me persuades me that this is the Word of God.”

The unregenerate person doesn’t have that. He’s not going to, by nature, accept the authority of God. So, what do you need to say to him? Tell him the truth: “The “natural” man cannot accept the things of God. Repent of your sin and believe in the Gospel.” In the moment, that might not be a very satisfying answer. But it’s the answer you have to give. And you might have to give it over and over again, while you pray for God to save him.

**Discussion**

1. In a systematic theology, why is “Bibliology” often the first topic, rather than “Theology Proper?” Why should the doctrine of Scripture precede the doctrine of God?

Answer: If the Bible is our exclusive source of truth, we must first know why we believe it.

1. How do we know anything about who God is, and the nature of our relationship to, and with, Him?

Answer: While general revelation (Ps 19:6; Rom 1:20-21) makes man accountable for the existence and knowledge of God, Scripture alone provides the special revelation necessary for being reconciled to Him through Christ.

1. There are books other than the Bible that are claimed to have a divine origin (Koran, Book of Mormon, etc.) What discredits these claims? Why are these other books not deemed to be spiritually authoritative?
2. Are translations of the Bible inspired? Can we be confident that the English Bibles we read are the true Word of God?
3. Does the Bible you hold contain errors? If so, how does that reflect on the character of God? If not, how should we think about differences in narrative details, loose quotations, apparent “contradictions,” scribal additions, and other difficult textual elements?
4. Do you “hear God’s voice” when you read Scripture? How does that encourage and strengthen your faith, as a believer? Does God “speak” to us through other means, or in other ways, in addition to the Bible?
5. Is hearing the Word of God preached the only prerequisite for salvation and regeneration? How is the “natural man” affected by the proclamation of Scripture?
6. How can we know and demonstrate that the canon of Scripture is closed, and that there will be no new revelation from God until Jesus returns?
7. Is Christianity true? Can the truth claims of a faith or religion actually be tested? Can a “blind” faith, grounded only in personal preference, be valid?

THEOLOGY PROPER: Who is God?

**Definition**

Theology Proper – theos (Gk for ‘God’) logos (Gk for word, doctrine, study); It is essentially the study of God or the doctrine of God. It is what God has said about God.

Transcendence – God’s otherness or separateness from His creation (humanity and nature).

Immanence – God’s presence and activity within His creation.

*The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed*

 *belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

*Deuteronomy 29:29:*

We will juxtapose God’s transcendence (otherness) and immanence (activity) **so that** we might worship Him with every thought, word, and deed.

**Introduction**

Erroneous view of God

1. Mother nature
2. Being itself
3. Pantheism
4. Deism
5. Polytheism
6. Atheism
7. Agnosticism

**Outline**

1. God is Trinity God does not have a beginning or an end.
	1. God is one God (Deut 6:4; Rom 3:30; James 2:19)(transcendence)(immanence).
	2. God is three Persons. (Thus He is able to create time and space and sustain life after time and space).
2. Father (Deut 32:6; Ps 89:26; John 17:1)
3. Son (Heb 1:8; Col 2:9; John 1:1; 8:58)
4. Spirit (Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor 3:17; 1 Cor 2:11)
	1. Trinity in action: Each Person has a distinct role in the redemption of man(eternity). (ever presence).
5. God is infinite God does not have a beginning or an end.
	1. He acts beyond (transcendence)and through (immanence)time and space.
	2. He is not limited by time and space. (Thus He is able to create time and space and sustain life after time and space).
	3. God’s infinity in action: God is omnitemporal (eternity)and omnipresent (1 Cor 15:23). (ever presence).
6. God is eternal God does not have a beginning or an end.
	1. He has forever existed (Gen 1:1; Ps 90:2; 17:5).

Psa. 90:2-Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

* 1. He will forever continue to exist: God is immortal (Ps 102:26-27; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16; Rev 4:8-10).

###### God’s eternality in action: God is not limited within time rather, God is active within time in order to accomplish His will.

1. God is unchangeable God does not have a beginning or an end.
2. He is Immutable (Ps 102:26-27; Mal 3:6; James 1:17).
3. He is the self-existent One (Ex 3:14; John 5:26).
4. God’s unchangeability in action: God depends on nothing and all things depend on Him (Acts 17:24-25; 1 Cor 8:6; Rom 11:36, Eph 1:5-6).
5. God is omniscient .
6. God’s knowledge is comparable to His decree (Ps 2:7; Acts 2:23; 1 Cor 2:7).
7. God’s knowledge precedes His creation and actions (Rom 8:29).
8. Omniscience in action: God knows our actions (Ps 139:2; 4), our lifespan (Ps 39:5), where we live including the culture in which we live (Acts 17:26), our needs (Matt 6:8), and Himself (Matt 11:27).
9. God is Spirit .

a. His essence is without form or body parts (Gen 1:1-2; Deut 4:15; John 4:24).

b. His essence is without limits (Ps 139:7; Jer 23:23-24).

c. God’s Spirit in action: God is invisible.

1. God is wisdom .

a. He is omnisapient (Ps 147:5; Rom 11:33).

b. He has full and complete understanding; He actively produces the best option for creation and the sustaining thereof (Prov 3:19; 8:22; Ps 104:24; Rom 11:33; 16:25-27).

c. God’s wisdom in action: God is rightly glorified because of His active wisdom.

1. God is omnipotent .
	1. He has the ability to accomplish His purposes and decree (Gen 1:3; Ps 89:11).

and whatever His infinite wisdom directs.

Stephen Charnock says it this way: “The power of God is that ability and strength whereby He can bring to pass whatsoever He pleases, whatsoever His infinite wisdom may direct, and whatsoever the infinite purity of His will may resolve...[God’s power] is that which gives life and action to all the perfections of the divine nature. How vain would be the eternal counsels, if power did not step in to execute them. Without power His mercy would be but feeble pity, His promises an empty sound, His threatenings a mere scarecrow.

* 1. He is not restricted by natural laws (Luke 1:37).
	2. God’s omnipotence in action: God’s six day creation and sustaining thereof.
1. God is holiness .
	1. He is separate from all that is finite and earthly (Ex 15:11; Isa 54:5, Hab 1:12).
	2. He is separate from all that is ethically unclean (Josh 24:19-20; 1 Pet 1:15).
	3. God’s holiness in action: God calls a people to be separate from the world.
2. God is just (Ps 19:9; 99:4; 119:7; Rom 7:12).
	1. His justice is retributive, executed on the wicked (Ps 7:11; Rom 2:9; 12:19).
	2. His justice is remunerative, rewarding the faithful (Heb 11:26).
	3. God’s justice in action: God will complete His justice (Rev 20:10; 12).
3. God is goodness (Ps 25:8; 119:68).
	1. He is absolutely good (1 John 1:5).
	2. He alone is good (Mark 10:18).
	3. God’s goodness in action: God is pleased with His own work.
4. God is truth .
	1. He is the only true God (Isa 44:9‑10; John 17:3).
	2. He speaks truth (1 John 5:20).
	3. God’s truth in action: God sanctifies His elect by truth (John 17:17).

**Discussion**

* + - 1. How did our Bibliology help you prepare for our Theology Proper study?
			2. How has a better understanding of God’s transcendence impacted you?
			3. Describe how you are comforted by God’s immanence?
			4. Which of God’s attributes do you desire to better display in an effort to minister to others?
			5. Why is the doctrine of the trinity critical to the Christian faith?
			6. How do you think a better understanding of the doctrine of Theology Proper will help you to wrestle with other biblical doctrines?
			7. How would you use your better understanding of God to encourage someone in despair?
			8. Why is it imperative for you to continue to learn about God?