

THE251 Theological Foundations Wk 1 Assignments

Weekly Objectives

- Describe the nature, necessity, means and goals of Christian theology.
- Demonstrate a commitment to the priority application of Biblical truth to all areas of life and ministry.

Weekly Outcomes

Cognitive Outcomes

- Describe theology as connecting revelation from God with its appropriate application in life
- Articulate the reasons why the theological task is necessary for Christian life and ministry
- Describe how repentance and faith are necessary for good Christian Theology
- Articulate how good theology leads to worship.

Affective Outcomes

- Prioritize revelation from God over human wisdom and tradition in doing theology.
- Appreciate the value of theology for Christian life and ministry
- Acknowledge a commitment to trusting God's revelation and changing their own mind, heart and actions to conform to God's revelation

Devotional

Scripture: Philippians 1:9-11

In Philippians 1:9-11, Paul tells the Philippians that he is praying for them, and he tells them the content of his prayer. He asks that their love may abound in knowledge and discernment. Notice how Paul connects Christian love with understanding. And by making growth in both of these to be the focus of his prayer, Paul shows that they are a priority. And the result of this growth is that the Philippians would be able, not only to discern, but also to approve what is most important. In the next verse, he shows that this brings about a lifestyle of purity and righteousness. For Paul, the Christian's affections are not separated from their thought life, which is not separated from their actions. In the same way for us, ideally, our love should grow in knowledge and understanding. This will aid us to think rightly about all parts of our world and experience. And this, in turn will aid us to live rightly and react rightly to every situation in a manner which is pleasing to God. Too often, Christians don't think well, or they don't connect their thinking with their lifestyle in a way that pleases God. It is so important to connect our affections, our intellect, and our actions together in a mutually reinforcing relationship. The name for this integrated task is theology. Therefore, learning to do theology well is

a priority, according to Paul. And good theology will benefit everyone who takes this priority to heart.

Please, then, prayerfully consider what it would be like for Paul's desire to be realized in your life. What specific things would change? What difference would it make? And what steps can you take to make it so?

Introductions

Hi everyone. I'm so glad that you have chosen to be a part of the Theological Foundations class. This course is designed to help you to see the world through God's eyes and to respond accordingly. Ideally, throughout this course, you will learn to think theologically and connect theological ideas to your decisions and conduct. This is an introductory course, so we won't be able to cover theology in much depth. Therefore, the main goal of this course is for you to begin to do this for yourself, and be prepared for a lifetime of theological growth. Therefore, please be prepared to think about thinking about God, and then to explore how this God-focused thinking can transform your life.

The first workshop will concentrate on the theoretical underpinnings and necessary values for doing good theology. Because there is such a wide variety of mindsets and assumptions about even the most basic aspects of our lives in the world today, it is helpful to step back and investigate the most fundamental questions. In one sense, questions as basic as "What is theology?" and "Why should we do theology?" are fairly simple and can be answered quickly. However, as we look a little deeper, the answers to these simple questions can diverge into a wide variety of important implications, which will dramatically affect our theology in the long run. That is why it is helpful to build the foundation carefully, so that the rest of the course will be more beneficial. We invite you to examine your fundamental assumptions and work to make sure they conform with God's revelation.

Preparation

Read Kopic pp. 15-37

Read Grudem pp. 11-29

Watch 4 course videos

"Course Introduction" at www.bradcopp.com/THE251/CourseIntro.php

"What is Theology?" at www.bradcopp.com/THE251/WhatisTheology.php

"Why do Theology?" at www.bradcopp.com/THE251/WhydoTheology.php

"Means and Goals of Theology" at www.bradcopp.com/THE251/MeansandGoals.php

Assignments

1. The Nature of Theology Discussion

- This discussion will help you to think through the nature and necessity of theology and how to do it for yourself. You will be exposed to a few ideas about the nature of theology, and process the implications of these ideas as you formulate your own understanding of the theological task. You will be exposed to the holistic nature of Christian theology and challenged that theology is more than just an intellectual exercise. Ideally, you will begin to understand theology as a special kind of knowledge that comes from God Himself, and therefore, you will embrace doing theology with all of your heart as well as your mind, and demonstrate that commitment by adjusting your thoughts and actions accordingly. Ideally, you will see the benefit of theology, both in the nature of theology itself, and in the needs of your own life and ministry.

- Prepare to discuss how your conception of the nature of theology has been influenced by the course material. Ensure the following points are addressed.
 - Your definition and attitude toward theology before interacting with the course material.
 - How has this understanding and attitude been challenged and/or strengthened?
 - Given your definition of theology, how are the primary means of theology appropriate to the task? And why do you think these particular means have been highlighted as most important?
 - If it is true that theology demands more than just intellectual faculties, what other parts of your life must you bring to the theological task?
 - What difference does this concept of theology make for the way you should think and act in everyday life?

2. My Personal Theological Task Journal

- This journal will help you wrestle with the necessity of theology and come to a conclusion that honors God and brings benefit to your life and the lives of those to whom you minister. Ideally, you will recognize the connection between your thoughts, affections and actions, and you will commit to strengthening your own underlying theological foundation. Ideally, you will plan and commit to attitudes and actions that will help you mature in your discipleship and ministry. Ideally, you will use the content of your theological knowledge as fuel for expressions of affection and gratitude as you contemplate about the character of the Lord, and what He has done.

- Write a detailed personal definition of your theological task. Include a thorough plan for your own theological growth. This should include the following points.

- Using the iceberg illustration as a guide, describe the relation between theology/worldview, beliefs, values and actions in your own life. How do they influence one another?
- In your own life and/or the lives of the people to whom you minister, what underlying theology/worldview most urgently needs to be addressed? What changes in beliefs, value and behavior would result?
- What attitudes and actions would benefit your theological growth in areas common to all maturing disciples?
- What attitudes and actions would benefit your theological growth in areas specific to your own personal gifts, callings, and ministries?
- What attitudes and actions would grow your esteem for the Lord and empower greater expressions of worship and sacrificial service for His glory?
- What personal action steps will you take as a result?

3. Term Project Part 1 – Choosing a Topic

- This activity is the beginning of a project that will span all five weeks of this course. In this project, you will investigate and write on a theological topic of your choosing, using a method you will learn in subsequent weeks. For this week's activity, all you will do is to choose a general category of topic. In subsequent assignments, you will narrow the topic down to a specific question or issue, but for this week, all you should do is choose and report a general area of investigation. Ideally, you should choose a topic about which you are personally curious, or which is currently more relevant to your life and ministry. Ideally, your chosen topic will be both. If you need suggestions or examples of suitable topics, read through the Table of Contents of the Grudem textbook for ideas.
- Briefly write the general topic on which you would like to research and write in future assignments and submit for instructor comment and approval.