

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Life Mission Church Doctrinal Statement

ABOUT THE TRINITARIAN GOD

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three distinct Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, yet they are one God. They are co-equal in being, nature, essence, power, and glory, but distinct in Their roles among each other and Their role amid creation, particularly Their role in our salvation.

Genesis 1.1,26, 27, 3.22 // Psalm 90.2 // Matthew 28.19 // 1 Peter 1.2
2 Corinthians 13.14 // Deuteronomy 6.4

ABOUT GOD THE SON, JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father in deity, power, holiness, and attribute. He was 100% Man without ceasing from being 100% God, as He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary so that He could dwell amongst us and as a sinless Man and then redeem fallen man. He lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He became the substitutionary atonement sacrifice by propitiating the wrath of His Father that was against all evil; we are justified by this sacrifice, which was then proven by His actual, physical rising from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return again someday to earth to reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords, when He will judge the living and the dead.

Matthew 1.22, 23 // Isaiah 9.6 // John 14.10-30 // Hebrews 4.14, 15 // 1 Corinthians 15.3, 4
Romans 1.3, 4, 3.24 // Acts 1.9-11 // 1 Timothy 6.14, 15 // Titus 2.13 // John 1.1, 2, 14 // Luke 1.35
1 Peter 1, 3-5, 2.24 // Ephesians 1.7

ABOUT GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is also co-equal in holiness, deity, and attribute with the Father and the Son of God. He is a Person, not an "it," as He has a mind, will, desires, and emotions. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He is the Agent that brings about regeneration by opening the eyes of the elect. He then lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right, and He also provides us, in God's grace, spiritual gifts to edify the body of Christ and build up the faith of the church. As Christians we seek to live under His control daily.

2 Corinthians 3.6, 17 // John 16.7-13, 14.16, 17 // Acts 1.8
1 Corinthians 2.12, 3.16 // Galatians 5.25 // Ephesians 1.13, 5.18

ABOUT THE BIBLE

The bible is God's written Word to us. It was physically written by human authors, but under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is the truth without any mixture of error. We believe in the sufficiency of Scripture, meaning that it is all we need for life and godliness. We believe that it alone is what is to be our guide for life, as it is the only infallible, guaranteed truth that we can trust in. We believe that we cannot know Jesus unless we know His Word.

2 Timothy 1.13, 3.16, 17 // 2 Peter 1.20-21 // Psalm 119.105, 160, 12.6
Proverbs 30.5 // Matthew 5.18 // John 16.12, 13

ABOUT HUMAN BEINGS

People are made in the image of God, to be like Him in character. People are the supreme object of God's creation. Although every person has some potential for physical and emotional good, all of us are marred by spiritual death that separates people from God because of the inherited sin we received from our first parents, Adam and Eve; we are therefore not born "basically good," despite our ability socially or ethically to make some good choices (which we also call "common grace"). Rather, we are born as broken sinners, unable to fix the problem and please God, and born with God's wrath aimed at us. As created mirrors to reflect His image, our sin has shattered the image of God, and the reconstructing of that broken mirror is only accomplished by the working of the Holy Spirit in order to once again reflect His glory and image in our life. Being dead in our sins and trespasses, we are unable to save ourselves and make ourselves alive. It is only by the "making alive" by the sovereignty of God the Father, through the work of Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit that we can be made alive.

Genesis 1.27 // Psalm 8.3-6 // Isaiah 53.6a, 59.1, 2 // Romans 3.22, 23, 5.12 // Ephesians 2.1-3, 12

ABOUT SALVATION

We are saved by grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ's work of atonement. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works, but only by God's gracious act of choosing us for regeneration can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we are brought by God's grace from our self-ruled life and are drawn to Jesus through faith, we are saved.

Romans 5.1, 6.23 // Ephesians 2.8-9 // John 14.6, 1.12 // Titus 3.5 // Galatians 3.26

ABOUT ETERNAL SECURITY

Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the true believer is secure in that salvation for eternity. If you have been genuinely saved, you cannot "lose" it. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of our covenant God that gives us this security.

John 6.37-40, 10.27-30 // Romans 8.1, 29-39 // 1 Corinthians 1.4-8 // 2 Timothy 1.12
Hebrews 7.25, 10.10,14 // 1 Peter 1.3-5

ABOUT THE CHURCH

When God chooses us for salvation, we are automatically adopted into His family, the church. Therefore, we believe that active participation, communion, fellowship, and service is necessary, not *for* salvation, but *because* of salvation. We believe that to be in obedience to Christ, we must be active members of the body and bride of Christ. For that same reason, we also believe that every believer should be baptized as an outward sign of the inward work of the Holy Spirit, again not *for* salvation, but *because* of salvation.

Ephesians 4.11-17 // 1 Corinthians 12.1-30 // Hebrews 10.24, 25, 13.17

ABOUT ETERNITY

People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin in hell, or eternally with God in heaven through forgiveness and salvation. Heaven and hell are real places of eternal existence; both are conscious, bodily, and never-ending. Once you are in either heaven or hell, there is no way to cross over.

John 2.25, 3.16, 5.11-13 // Romans 6.23 // Revelation 20.15 // Matthew 1.8, 2.44, 46 // Luke 16.19-31

Appendix B:

HISTORIC CREEDS AND STATEMENTS

The Five Solas

The Five solas are five Latin phrases that came about during Reformation in the 16th century. They summarize the basic beliefs of the Reformation, which at the time was seeking to get back on track with what the Scripture teaches. The Reformation came about due to the false teachings of the Roman Catholic Church of the day. The Latin word “sola” means “alone” or “only” in English. These five solas are the five main essentials that act as a foundation of the essentials of the Christian faith.

The following is taken from James Montgomery Boice’s book, *Whatever Happened to the Gospel of Grace?*¹⁰²¹

1. Scripture alone. When the Reformers used the words sola Scriptura they were expressing their concern for the Bible’s authority, and what they meant is that the Bible alone is our ultimate authority—not the pope, not the church, not the traditions of the church or church councils, still less personal intimations or subjective feelings, but Scripture only. Other sources of authority may have an important role to play. Some are even established by God—such as the authority of church elders, the authority of the state, or the authority of parents over children. But Scripture alone is truly ultimate. Therefore, if any of these other authorities depart from Bible teaching, they are to be judged by the Bible and rejected.

2. Christ alone. The church of the Middle Ages spoke about Christ. A church that failed to do that could hardly claim to be Christian. But the medieval church had added many human achievements to Christ’s work, so that it was no longer possible to say that salvation was entirely by Christ and his atonement. This was the most basic of all heresies, as the Reformers rightly perceived. It was the work of God plus our own righteousness. The Reformation motto solus Christus was formed to repudiate this error. It affirmed that salvation has been accomplished once for all by the mediatorial work of the historical Jesus Christ alone. His sinless life and substitutionary atonement alone are sufficient for our justification, and any ‘gospel’ that fails to acknowledge that or denies it is a false gospel that will save no one.

3. Grace alone. The words sola gratia mean that human beings have no claim upon God. That is, God owes us nothing except just punishment for our many and very willful sins. Therefore, if he does save sinners, which he does in the case of some but not all, it is only because it pleases him to do it. Indeed, apart from this grace and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit that flows from it, no one would be saved, since in our lost condition, human beings are not capable of winning, seeking out, or even cooperating with God’s grace. By insisting on ‘grace alone’ the Reformers were denying that human methods, techniques, or strategies in themselves could ever bring anyone to faith. It is grace alone expressed through the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that brings us to Christ, releasing us from our bondage to sin and raising us from death to spiritual life.

4. Faith alone. The Reformers never tired of saying that ‘justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone.’ When put into theological shorthand the doctrine was expressed as “justification by faith alone,” the article by which the church stands or falls, according to Martin Luther. The Reformers called justification by faith Christianity’s “material principle,” because it involves the very matter or substance of what a person must understand and believe to be saved. Justification is a declaration of God based on the work of Christ. It flows from God’s grace and it comes to the individual not by anything he or she might do but by ‘faith alone’ (sola fide). We may state the full doctrine as: Justification is the act of God by which he declares sinners to be righteous because of Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone.

5. Glory to God alone. Each of the great solas is summed up in the fifth Reformation motto: soli Deo gloria, meaning ‘to God alone be the glory.’ It is what the apostle Paul expressed in Romans 11:36 when he wrote, ‘to Him be the glory forever! Amen.’ These words follow naturally from the preceding words, “For from him and through him and to him are all things” (v. 36), since it is because all things really are from God, and to God, that we say, ‘to God alone be the glory.’”

¹⁰²¹pp. 65-149. Also see the links on this page: http://www.monergism.com/directory/link_category/Five-Solas/

The Apostles' Creed (from the Book of Common Prayer, 1662)¹⁰²²

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and buried:
He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Athanasian Creed¹⁰²³

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled; without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons; nor dividing the Essence. For there is one Person of the Father; another of the Son; and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is; such is the Son; and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreated; the Son uncreated; and the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father unlimited; the Son unlimited; and the Holy Ghost unlimited. The Father eternal; the Son eternal; and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals; but one eternal. As also there are not three uncreated; nor three infinities, but one uncreated; and one infinite. So likewise the Father is Almighty; the Son Almighty; and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties; but one Almighty. So the Father is God; the Son is God; and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods; but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord; the Son Lord; and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords; but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity; to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; So are we forbidden by the catholic religion; to say, There are three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none; neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created; but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten; but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is before, or after another; none is greater, or less than another. But the whole three Persons are coeternal, and coequal. So that in all things, as aforesaid; the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved, let him thus think of the Trinity.

¹⁰²² I made minor alterations to this 1662 version. Namely some capitalization and spellings, changing it from old English style to modern English. The word "catholic" was de-capitalized, as it is understood as "universal," not "Roman Catholic."

¹⁰²³ I made minor alterations to this, as well, but only in de-capitalizing the phrase "Catholic Faith" and "Catholic Religion" as to not confuse the reader into thinking this as a "Roman Catholic" viewpoint, but a catholic, as in universal view.

Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation; that he also believe faithfully the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right faith is, that we believe and confess; that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God, of the Essence of the Father; begotten before the worlds; and Man, of the Essence of his Mother, born in the world. Perfect God; and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood. Who although he is God and Man; yet he is not two, but one Christ. One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh; but by assumption of the Manhood into God. One altogether; not by confusion of Essence; but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man; so God and Man is one Christ; Who suffered for our salvation; descended into hell; rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the God the Father Almighty, from whence he will come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies; And shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire. This is the catholic faith; which except a man believe truly and firmly, he cannot be saved.

THE CHICAGO STATEMENT OF BIBLE INERRANCY¹⁰²⁴

PREFACE

The authority of Scripture is a key issue for the Christian Church in this and every age. Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are called to show the reality of their discipleship by humbly and faithfully obeying God's written Word. To stray from Scripture in faith or conduct is disloyalty to our Master. Recognition of the total truth and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture is essential to a full grasp and adequate confession of its authority.

The following Statement affirms this inerrancy of Scripture afresh, making clear our understanding of it and warning against its denial. We are persuaded that to deny it is to set aside the witness of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit and to refuse that submission to the claims of God's own Word that marks true Christian faith. We see it as our timely duty to make this affirmation in the face of current lapses from the truth of inerrancy among our fellow Christians and misunderstanding of this doctrine in the world at large.

This Statement consists of three parts: a Summary Statement, Articles of Affirmation and Denial, and an accompanying Exposition. It has been prepared in the course of a three-day consultation in Chicago. Those who have signed the Summary Statement and the Articles wish to affirm their own conviction as to the inerrancy of Scripture and to encourage and challenge one another and all Christians to growing appreciation and understanding of this doctrine. We acknowledge the limitations of a document prepared in a brief, intensive conference and do not propose that this Statement be given creedal weight. Yet we rejoice in the deepening of our own convictions through our discussions together, and we pray that the Statement we have signed may be used to the glory of our God toward a new reformation of the Church in its faith, life and mission.

We offer this Statement in a spirit, not of contention, but of humility and love, which we propose by God's grace to maintain in any future dialogue arising out of what we have said. We gladly acknowledge that many who deny the inerrancy of Scripture do not display the consequences of this denial in the rest of their belief and behavior, and we are conscious that we who confess this doctrine often deny it in life by failing to bring our thoughts and deeds, our traditions and habits, into true subjection to the divine Word.

We invite response to this Statement from any who see reason to amend its affirmations about Scripture by the light of Scripture itself, under whose infallible authority we stand as we speak. We claim no personal infallibility for the witness we bear, and for any help that enables us to strengthen this testimony to God's Word we shall be grateful.

¹⁰²⁴This was the statement that launched the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, an interdenominational joint effort by hundreds of evangelical scholars and leaders to defend biblical inerrancy against the trend toward liberal and neo-orthodox conceptions of Scripture. The Statement was produced at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Chicago in the fall of 1978, during an international summit conference of concerned evangelical leaders. It was signed by nearly 300 noted evangelical scholars, including Boice, Norman L. Geisler, John Gerstner, Carl F. H. Henry, Kenneth Kantzer, Harold Lindsell, John Warwick Montgomery, Roger Nicole, J.I. Packer, Robert Preus, Earl Radmacher, Francis Schaeffer, R.C. Sproul, and John Wenham. The ICBI disbanded in 1988, its work complete. The Council ultimately produced three major statements: this one on biblical inerrancy in 1978, one on biblical hermeneutics in 1982, and one on biblical application in 1986. A published copy of the statement may be found in Carl F. H. Henry in *God, Revelation and Authority*, vol. 4 (Waco, Tx.: Word Books, 1979), on pp. 211-219.

I. SUMMARY STATEMENT

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.
2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: It is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.
5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

II. ARTICLES OF AFFIRMATION AND DENIAL

Article I.

- We affirm that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God.
- We deny that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition, or any other human source.

Article II.

- We affirm that the Scriptures are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience, and that the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture.
- We deny that church creeds, councils, or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible.

Article III.

- We affirm that the written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God.
- We deny that the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity.

Article IV.

- We affirm that God who made mankind in His image has used language as a means of revelation.
- We deny that human language is so limited by our creatureliness that it is rendered inadequate as a vehicle for divine revelation. We further deny that the corruption of human culture and language through sin has thwarted God's work of inspiration.

Article V.

- We affirm that God's revelation in the Holy Scriptures was progressive.
- We deny that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it. We further deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings.

Article VI.

- We affirm that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration.

- We deny that the inspiration of Scripture can rightly be affirmed of the whole without the parts, or of some parts but not the whole.

Article VII.

- We affirm that inspiration was the work in which God by His Spirit, through human writers, gave us His Word. The origin of Scripture is divine. The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery to us.
- We deny that inspiration can be reduced to human insight, or to heightened states of consciousness of any kind.

Article VIII.

- We affirm that God in His work of inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared.
- We deny that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.

Article IX.

- We affirm that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write.
- We deny that the finitude or falseness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God's Word.

Article X.

- We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.
- We deny that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.

Article XI.

- We affirm that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses.
- We deny that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished but not separated.

Article XII.

- We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit.
- We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

Article XIII.

- We affirm the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture.
- We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.

Article XIV.

- We affirm the unity and internal consistency of Scripture.
- We deny that alleged errors and discrepancies that have not yet been resolved violate the truth claims of the Bible.

Article XV.

- We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy is grounded in the teaching of the Bible about inspiration.
- We deny that Jesus' teaching about Scripture may be dismissed by appeals to accommodation or to any natural limitation of His humanity.

Article XVI.

- We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy has been integral to the Church's faith throughout its history.
- We deny that inerrancy is a doctrine invented by scholastic Protestantism, or is a reactionary position postulated in response to negative higher criticism.

Article XVII.

- We affirm that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word.
- We deny that this witness of the Holy Spirit operates in isolation from or against Scripture.

Article XVIII.

- We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.
- We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads or relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims of authorship.

Article XIX.

- We affirm that a confession of the full authority, infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. We further affirm that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ.
- We deny that such confession is necessary for salvation. However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences, both to the individual and to the Church.

Appendix C:

Glossary of Terms

Adoption: Adoption is the very real work of the Holy Spirit where He unites us with Christ as sons and daughters of God the Father. It is through His indwelling and sealing that the Holy Spirit does this, but also makes it known and real to us.

Already/not yet: This is an element of the present age that many theologians describe as saying that the Kingdom of God is already here, in the sense that the enemy has been defeated, the Holy Spirit has been poured out, and we are able to see much of, maybe a foretaste, of the final and eternal victory. That said, we are still living in a fallen world and the consummation of the age has not yet come. We are living in the days between D-Day and V-Day, so to speak.

Arianism: This is the unbiblical belief that God the Father created Jesus and that Jesus is not eternal, but rather a perfectly created being. This belief was rejected as a heresy at the First Council at Nicaea, but still remains, particularly amidst the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Arminianism: This is sometimes called Wesleyanism (as it was made popular by the great John Wesley, who in turn started the Methodist Church), it is the following of another theologian named Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). Arminius was a fan of Calvin's work, and even studied under Calvin's successor and disciple, Theodore Beza. Nonetheless, Arminius did find things in Calvin's theology that he didn't like, and so in his teachings, he pursued other thoughts. After his death in 1609 his theological differences with Calvinism were systematized as the "Five Articles of the Remonstrants." Arminianism, though not denying God's sovereignty, weighs in more heavily on man's free choice and free will, which causes their soteriology to have man more involved, making him able to lose salvation and affect whether or not he becomes a Christian in the first place (see *unlimited atonement* and *synergism* entry below).

Atonement: Atonement literally means "at-one-ment." It reconciles and unites two parties who are at odds and makes them "at one" with each other. Biblically, the atonement is when we refer to the work of Christ. But this work is not just His death on the cross, but His sinless life and perfect obedience, culminating with His death. It is through His perfect life and perfect sacrifice that He becomes out atonement.

Body/Bride of Christ: This is the most often used term to describe the universal/invisible/eternal/spiritual church of God. The *only* people in this category are true believers who make up the body of Christ.

Calvinism: This is the following of a great theologian named John Calvin (1509-1564). He was a Dutchman who lived in the 16th century who helped spur on the Reformation (see entry below), which was sparked by Martin Luther in 1517. Calvin took many of Luther's themes and built upon them. The theological insights he penned have been incredibly important and have greatly influenced the church ever since. It weighs in heavily on God's sovereignty (see *monergism* entry below), as well as the doctrine of soteriology (see entry below). It is also more broadly categorized as "Reformed theology" (see entry below). Calvinists hold to five particular doctrines as their flagship, which are summarized in the acronym "T.U.L.I.P." (see entry below).

Christus Exemplar: This Latin phrase means that Christ's work on the cross is an example of us. We are to take up our cross daily and live our lives selflessly. We are to crucify our flesh on a daily basis through repentance. This is not to keep God's pleasure, that is worked out in the atonement, but this is a response to God's pleasure.

Christus Victor: This is a Latin phrase that means that in Christ we have complete victory, because He has complete victory over His enemies. We need not be afraid of Satan, sin, demons, or evil, because He has proven Himself victorious and has conquered sin, death, and the enemy, and will one day have all of His enemies under His feet.

Common grace: This is His grace that is available in an infinite amount of ways to all people, down to the breath that we breathe.

Complementarian (in humanity): This term, in context human relationships, helps explain the dynamic relationship between each other. We know that we are equal in who we are in Christ, yet we are distinct in our roles and interaction with each other. It simply means that in our equality *and* our differences, we *complement* each other. In a complementarian structure, there is a clear perception of partnership, yet with defined roles and responsibilities.

Complementarian (in the Trinity): This term, in context of the Trinity, helps explain the dynamic relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We see that they are equal in essence, holiness, attribute, eternity, and power, yet they are distinct in their role and interaction with each other and Their creation, all the while maintaining their complete God-ness and God qualities. It simply means that in their equality *and* their difference, they *complement* each other. See the section on the Church for more on how this affects our lifestyle as believers.

Conditional and Unconditional: As you probably assume, these terms relate the varying covenants expressed in the Word. Some of them have conditions attached that man must obey in order to procure the blessing. Others are unconditional, which is God saying that “there is nothing you can do to procure these blessings, you will simply have to trust that I can and will do it.” That said, even in that statement we, in actuality, see one condition: faith. Though only God fulfills the actual conditions, our response is to “simply have to trust that He can and will do it.” So though these covenants are “unconditional,” they each do in fact have the condition of faith.

Continuity: This is a term we use to describe the many features of this current life that we will see in the next. It helps us get a biblical understanding and picture of what resurrection really is.

Covenant: A covenant, in its simplest definition, is a relational promise. It’s not merely a contract, as a contract exudes a bit of a stale, lifeless, business transaction. But a covenant, particularly the biblical covenants, is based on commitment, love, mercy, and blessings. Yet at the same time, some are conditional and have attached stipulations that, when failed, result in punishment.

Covenant Theology: This is a “lens” that people see the whole overall story of the bible through. It sees that God has had one singular plan for His people from the beginning, called a covenant. They see that God has, from day one, called people unto Himself “by grace through faith,” not differently throughout various areas. There are a few variations of this, as well. This is a basic framework for viewing the nature and structure of the plan of redemption as revealed through the Word. It is a way of viewing exactly how God interacts with His people and how He intends on carrying out His redemptive work.

Deism: This is the erroneous belief that God simply “pushes the first domino” and sits back and watches events unfold. Though God indeed institutes “cause and effect,” natural laws (such as gravity) to orchestrate what and how things happen on earth, He is not simply watching and waiting, but He is upholding all things, declaring all things, ordaining all things, and planning all things. We will see more of this in coming chapters.

Discipline: This is one of the great privileges of being a child of God. Though painful, this is not His punishment, because this is fueled by His love and desire to us repent and behold His glory again.

Dispensationalism: This is a “lens” by which people view the overall story of the bible. It sees that God relates differently with people during various different periods of time, or dispensations. In general, there is a major distinction between the church and Israel, and they are seen as two distinct peoples of God. There are a few variations, however.

Dualism: Dualism is in some ways the broad category that Platonism falls into. It is the general belief that there are two “natures” or “sides” that are in opposition with each other. In terms of creation, it would be the spiritual and physical. Real biblical theology, however, teaches that both the natural and physical, in its original form, was declared “good” by God. Therefore in our lives we can rest assured that enjoying physicality is not evil or sin, unless it is idolized or is already known as an actual sin. However if it is “neutral” or “secular,” we are free to enjoy it to the glory of God.

Egalitarianism (in humanity): This is the view of human relationship that sees equality in all areas. The prefix “egal-” means “equal.” Of course, as noted in the study, there is for sure an equality among all humanity as God’s people, but there are also distinctive differences, hence the following term, *complementarian*. An egalitarian mindset dramatically shapes how you interact with the various relationships in your life, particularly in the area of accountability.

Egalitarianism (in the Trinity): This is the view of the Trinity that comes from the modalist view above. The prefix “egal-” means “equal.” Of course, as noted in the study, there is for sure equality among the three Persons of the Trinity, but there are also distinctive differences, hence the following term, *complementarian*. See the section on the Church for more on how this affects our lifestyle as believers.

Eisegesis: This is the wrong way to study the Word, which means to “put into.” Using this method, we are putting into the Word thoughts, doctrines, and ideas that were not already there. This is common practice when people take Scripture out of context or read into it what they want.

Election: It’s the idea that God “chose” or “elected” people to be saved. This happened before the foundation of the world, and some call it “predestination” (see entry below).

Ekklesia: This is a Greek word that means “assembly,” and even more specifically an assembly that is “called out.” It is noted as an assembly with purpose and function, not just gathering together. Our English bibles translate this as “church.” An overwhelming majority of the time this word is used in the Word (104 out of 114 times) it is used to describe a physical assembly of believers, whether across the world or in a home.

Exegesis: This is a word used to describe a method of studying the bible. It means to “take out of.” The idea is that we are taking out of the Word what God put there.

External call: This is the general gospel call, any proclamation to people who do not know the Lord. This call to Jesus and repentance can be rejected.

Foreknowledge: This is not just the fact that He knows what will happen. Look at these verses speaking of God’s actual planning of definite events, not just simply “knowing” that they will happen. For God to “foreknow” is not just Him looking into a crystal ball and seeing “who is going to choose Me,” but that we are chosen by Him according to His foreknowledge, meaning that it is according to the fact that *He planned* the intimate knowing of us.

Free Agents: This is one of a few terms that people use to describe our (limited) free will. What this entails is that we, as humans, are absolutely free to make choices in life, such as what food to eat, where to go to school, whether or not we choose to steal, or whether or not we enter into an adulterous relationship or not. However, what we are not able to do, per the term “inability” above, is choose to free ourselves from the bondage and slavery of sin. Since we are dead in our sins, spiritually dead, we cannot just simply “step out of the grave.” We’re dead, and we need God alone to give us grace, the free gift of life, to enable us to rise from the spiritual grave.

So though we do see that we have every bit of freedom that we, as unbelievers, perceive to have, there is truly a spiritual free will that as unbelievers, we aren’t even aware of, that is only made alive by grace.

Fruit of the Spirit: This is the evidence of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling in us. We can know He is in us when we see the various fruit of the Spirit in our life. Without it, we should take very seriously the consideration of our salvation being true or not.

Gift Righteousness: This is the free gift of righteousness that is imputed onto us upon having the atonement applied to our life by grace through faith. This gift righteousness is a free gift, unmerited by us.

Glorification: This is the final stage of our salvation process. We will be raised, body and spirit, our current body purged of sin and any deformity, whether physical or spiritual. We will live forever on this earth (but renewed) in

Inerrant: This word speaks of the Scriptures as being without anything untruthful or contrary to fact. What it does *not* mean is that the bible is without normal literary or grammatical language usages. For instance, the bible says “when the sun rose.” But we know that the sun doesn’t technically rise. We also see that Jesus “fed the 5,000.” Now, sure, there may have been exactly 5,000 people there that day, but there was probably more *around* 5,000. It is not a “false statement” or a “lie” if there were 4,787 people there. these glorified bodies.

Grieve the Holy Spirit: This is the very real thing that we as believers can do to the Holy Spirit. We can ignore Him, suppress Him, and grieve Him. We do this every time we sin and turn to our own ways. Though we can do this for a time, and that time may even be long, He will always win the arm wrestling match.

Hierarchal (in humanity): This is a more domineering approach to relationships. It is much more clear-cut authoritative with a “top down” mentality. Not much leeway or partnership is given to those in the relationship.

Hierarchal (in the Trinity): This is also a false view of the Trinity as being complete subordinate in *all ways* in their relationship. Though as we saw in the study, Jesus does the will of the Father and is submitted to Him, there is also equality in substance among them. See the section on the Church for more on how this affects our lifestyle as believers.

Logos: Logos is the Greek word that the bible uses for the word “word.” But rather than just seeing it as the simple term used to describe a series of letters that make a single word, logos is used to describe words that are more or less the manifestation of thoughts, desires, and plans that come from one’s mind. Specifically as we think of God’s Word, we should know that they are not just words that describe Him or His character, but that they are words that come from the very mind of God to reveal His ways, will, desires, plan, and purposes.

Hyper-Calvinism: Hyper-Calvinists would oftentimes fall into the category of Christians who have played the “telephone game” a little too much with Calvinism. They would tend to believe in “utter” as opposed to “total” depravity, “extreme limited atonement” (as opposed to Calvin’s actual version of limited atonement, which some call “unlimited limited atonement,” or even a balanced view of “limited atonement”). They would also see the lack of a need for evangelism since God has already picked teams. These tend to hold onto *their* version of the Five Points as absolutes, rather than convictions, and often go so far as to question the salvation of any Arminian and declare them as teaching heresy. They are often prideful, judgmental, and have a very ominous, unloving picture of God that they inadvertently portray.

Hypostatic Union: This is the technical nerdy term to describe the dual nature/one Person of Christ. We believe that as the Scripture tells it, Jesus was 100% Man, and 100% God, not 50/50. It is indeed a divine mystery, but somehow, He always had the full nature of God, as well as the full nature of man (minus sin).

I AM WHO I AM: This is the Name of God. It is a statement of eternity, meaning that He has existed for all time past, present, and future. It is also a statement of His “never-changingness” (new word). In the Scriptures, when you see the word “LORD” in all capital letters, that is His Name, which in English we often write out as “Yahweh.” The phrase “I AM WHO I AM” spoken in Hebrew phonetically sounds like the Name “Yahweh.”

Additionally, it should be noted that when we see “God” it is describing *what* He is. He is God. The word for God is not unique to Him, however, as it can also describe *what* other things are: gods. Also, the word “Lord” when it is not capitalized, is a title, in some ways, for what He *does*: He “lords” over the universe. He is the Lord. But this is also not unique to Him, as others in the bible are called by their servants “my lord,” because those people “lord” over their servants. The LORD, however, capitalized, is unique to God Himself. It is His Name, Yahweh, “I AM WHO I AM.” There is no one else that can be called by that Name.

Last, we see combinations, such as “the LORD our God,” or statements such as “oh LORD, our Lord.” This is using His Name and personalizing *what* He is and what He *does*. It would be like my two boys saying “Jobey, our dad.”

Illuminate: Illumination is a term used to describe one of the activities of the Holy Spirit working in our hearts and minds. For when we are spiritually dead, the spiritual truths in the Word don’t quite make themselves known. However, upon being regenerated by the Holy Spirit, our spiritual eyes and ears are opened by Him and our minds are now able to perceive that the words are not just true but are truth. The Holy Spirit essentially, as the word ‘illuminate’ implies, shines a flashlight into a dark room so that we can see clearly what is right in front of us.

Imago Dei: This is a Latin term that means “image of God.” It is a term used to describe the fact that all human beings were made in God’s likeness. Though, of course, sin has shattered this image, there is some remnant of His image in our lives.

Imputed: To have something imputed means to have it transferred onto something. It means that the actual guilt of wrongdoing and sin was placed on the substitution. It’s an actual transfer of actual ownership. Likewise, Christ’s righteousness is imputed, or transferred, onto us.

Inability: Inability means that we, because we are dead in our sins and trespasses, are unable to choose God on our own, because we are spiritually bankrupt. We need God to draw and raise us by His grace, and when we are given His grace, we *then* respond in faith. It is somewhat another way of saying *total depravity*. The fact that we are spiritually dead makes us unable to free ourselves from the bondage of sin. It is only by an act of grace that we can freely walk out of our prison. The Word constantly states that salvation is “by grace, through faith,” not simply “by faith.” Faith is a spiritual act of the will, but being spiritually dead, we cannot enact our will in that manner. We need grace (a gift from God) in order to enact true saving faith.

Incarnation: If you’ve ever enjoyed a carne asada burrito, you know that “carne” means “meat.” The word “incarnation” means to “embodied in flesh” or “taking on flesh.” The incarnation was the event where God became embodied in flesh so that He could be the perfect Man to atone for the sins of man.

Incommunicable and communicable attributes of God: These are the various traits that we share with God (communicable) and will never share with God (incommunicable). The phrases simply mean that some, like having a moral character, can be commuted from God over to us. These are the distinctions that make us “in His image.” Others cannot be commuted, such as the following three “omni-attributes.”

Infallible: This is different than inerrancy, in that it states that the truth stated in the Word is truth that transcends human sinfulness; that even though sinful men wrote out God’s plan for mankind’s salvation, their own corruption or misunderstanding didn’t get woven into the theological or doctrinal fabric.

Intermediate heaven: This is what we call the current state of heaven. In the future, after the second coming of Christ, the New Heavens and New Earth will emerge, which will be our eternal home. For now, saints who have passed away reside in the intermediate heaven, which is very real, good, and holy, as it is in God’s presence, but it is not the actual final place for the saints.

Inward call: This is the inward call rooted in God’s election of us before the foundations of the world. It is not a general call we can deny or resist (such as the external call, see entry above), but it speaks more of a decree or summons, as if a king calls you or summons you into his presence. Or quite possibly, it is like a subpoena to the court. It’s not really an option.

Irresistible grace: This refers to the “internal call” (see entry below) that God calls us by unto salvation. Because it was His choice to elect us before the foundations of the world, we can’t reject His choice.

Justification: After receiving this “gift” (grace) of opened eyes and regeneration (see entry above) and are now able to finally believe in faith, we are now imputed His righteousness. He has become sin, we have become God’s righteousness. Complete substitution. Martin Luther called this the “great exchange.” To be justified is as if your sin record is “just if I’d” never done it. To be justified means your sin record is forgiven.

Kenosis Theory: This is the erroneous view that Jesus set aside His divine attributes and functioned simply and only as a Man. Scripturally, Christ had two natures dwelling in one person. So though He may have been operating in His human mind or knowledge in one instance, He could have also drawn from His divine nature and mind in another. We believe that He was fully God and fully Man all the time, and is to this day.

Kinsman Redeemer: This is part of a law in Jewish culture in which a relative either rescues or redeems property or a person. This must be carried out by a blood relative. A common usage would be that if a man owned land and was forced to sell it due to bankruptcy, if He wanted to get it back the only way for this to happen would be through a relative purchasing the land for him and then giving it to the relative who lost it in the first place. This idea is most clearly illustrated in the book of **Ruth**.

Koinonia: Koinonia is the word used for “communion” or “fellowship” in our English bibles. I point this one out specifically because I find that many Christians believe that this is all that is required to “be the church.” But it is important for us to see that koinonia is simply one of the things that the church (ekklesia) does.

Limited atonement: This is the Calvinist or Reformed view of the atonement that means Christ’s death was limited only to those who got saved. In other words, it is limited in its extent. Some Calvinists would call it “particular atonement” rather than “limited.” This means that for those “particular” and “limited” number of people who God actually chose, for those people, the blood purchases every part of their salvation. The blood of Jesus doesn’t just

make salvation possible, but it actually purchases us as our ransom and completes the transaction. Through His blood we are given (not just made available) eternal life, forgiveness, and a future glory in Christ forever.

Mediator: A mediator, as far as biblical covenants go, is the person who stands representing a group of people before God. It is through this person that the blessings of the covenant are able to come to the people.

Modalism or Sabellianism: This is the unbiblical belief that God is one God with three personalities or manifestations. It would see God as more or less as putting on different “hats” or playing different “roles” depending on His interaction with His creation, specifically with mankind. Though this has been historically declared a heresy, it still remains popular in the modern day Emergent church movement, and is a staple belief of the Pentecostal Church. See the section on the Church for more on how this affects our lifestyle as believers.

Monergism: This means that God alone did the whole work of salvation. God opens the eyes, makes us alive, and draws us to Himself as a gift.

Omnipresence: This is the ability to be anywhere and everywhere all at one time. This rightly describes God, that He is ever present, but this is not an attribute that man will ever or has ever had. Man is a physical image of God, complete with a Spirit, but God is a spirit and is not confined to a physical body.

Omnipotence: This is the ability to be all-powerful, and is also a God-only attribute. Man, despite our delusions, will never and has never been all-powerful. Man was indeed given dominion over creation, but omnipotence wasn't part of the design.

Omniscience: This is the ability to know all. Only God will hold the knowledge and answers to everything. We know that He is not knowable in totality, and this is part of what makes God.

Ordo salutis: This is Latin for “order of salvation.” Now, it should be clear that this “order” is for our own understanding. The bible doesn't have a numbered list, and some theologians differ over the order.

Original Sin: Original sin is the truth that we are conceived in sin because of Adam. Adam is the figurehead of the human race, and so we are born sinful (and pre-disposed to sin), not only because of this being seen as hereditary, but also because we are “in” him as a people.

Orthodox: Orthodox is a conservative view of Christian doctrine. It maintains that we aren't trying to “reinvent the wheel” or “find new truth,” but that whatever is in the Word and has been revealed by God has always been there. We're not trying to start a new way to believe or see God, but are relying on the original intent of God to reveal Himself in Scripture.

Penal Substitution: This is a specific type of substitutionary atonement that states that there is an actual penalty for sin that needs to be paid. The Word says that the penalty is death, and when Christ becomes our substitution, He must taste death as the penalty and wear the wrath of God on His shoulders.

Perseverance of the saints: Also called “preservation” or “eternal security,” this is the truth that if we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, we will be preserved by His strength and desire. God will cause us to persevere because we are His, chosen from the foundations of the world.

Platonism: Platonism is a philosophy built on the teachings of Plato. Plato believed that the material world was evil and that the spiritual world was good. Plato was a Greek philosopher, and his beliefs among the Greeks was substantial, and so therefore this particular influence was very normal in the early Christian churches, such as the church at Corinth. Through the years, others, such as Origen, passed along and kept alive some Platonic teachings.

Polytheism: This is the belief that there are multiple gods. In the context of the Trinity, it sees the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three separate gods, independent from each other in nature. This is not what the Scripture teaches, which is the belief of only one true God.

Predestination: This is a broader term for “election” that incorporates not just election for eternal life for some, but the idea that the rest who were not elected were predestined to hell. Though this sounds harsh, there is much to say about the nature of how this works in the great plan of God.

Propitiation: Propitiation means to “satisfy.” When we sinned, God’s justice necessitated a punishment upon sin, and that punishment meant His wrath would consume sin. To propitiate God’s wrath means to satisfy it, and the only way to satisfy it is for it to destroy sin. If we choose to try to propitiate His wrath, we will be utterly destroyed. So we needed Jesus to propitiate God’s wrath. His perfect life and fulfilling of all the requirements of the Law made propitiating God’s holy wrath possible.

Ransom: This is a word used to describe the picture of us being held captive and imprisoned, and the payment that is necessary to set us free. Though we were captives to sin and death, however, the ransom is not paid to them, as Jesus owes sin and death nothing. The offended party is God, and the Ransom, Jesus, was a worth Ransom.

Reformation: This is a movement that started in 1517 when Martin Luther, who was at the time a Roman Catholic monk, came to realize through reading the Scripture that many of the practices and beliefs of the Catholic Church were not Scriptural. He wrote out his grievances in an article called his “95 Theses” and nailed them to the door of his church in Wittenberg, Germany. Since then, Protestantism developed over the next 400 years, and of course, continues today.

Reformed Theology: Reformed theology, the Reformation, and Reformers come from the 16th century in our church history. For over a thousand years, the Roman Catholic way of teaching Scripture along with their Holy Tradition dominated Christian life. In the 16th Century, however, a “reformation” of how we approach our faith came about. It was a bit of a Christian revolution.

Modernly, this term, though definitely helping narrow down and focus on a particular “brand” of Christian doctrine, does not quite do justice in pinpointing that brand either. Amidst the reformed churches, there are many nuances that are discussed and disagreed on. It would be wise for us to not jump to conclusions when we hear the term, but in generality, also know “about” where these believers are coming from. This is hard to do, as various reformed Christians do hold to varying values and convictions.

This is a general term for most mainline Protestant denominations, such as Baptist, Presbyterian, and Lutheran. They *usually*, but not always, are Calvinistic in their theology.

Regeneration: This is the moment most of us call being born again. Upon hearing the external gospel call (see entry above) and by His grace responding to His inward call (see entry above), there is this moment in our life when God, in His sovereignty, mercy, and grace, opens our eyes, ears, and understanding and we recognize that the gospel is true.

Second Adam: This is a term that speaks of Christ being the second perfect man to ever walk the earth. What Adam lost us in his moral failure but breaking the Covenant of Works, Jesus will regain, and even more, by His moral works victory which will fulfill the Covenant of Redemption. Death came through the first sinless (turned sinful) man, life came through the second sinless Man.

Self-disclosure: This is the idea that we can only know about an infinite God because He has chosen to make Himself known. Without His self-disclosure, we would not be able to get to know or “find” such an eternal and infinite God, since we are finite people.

Sola Gratia: This is one of the “Five Solas” coined from the Reformers of the 16th century. It means to represent the theological truth that we are saved by “grace alone.” It works in tandem with the above phrase, *unmerited favor*. It states that there is absolutely *nothing* that we can do to impress, woo, please, sway, or gain His sympathy. Our salvation is an indiscriminate gift.

Sola Fide: This is another one of the “Five Solas” coined from the Reformers of the 16th century. It means to represent the theological truth that we are saved through “faith alone.” This means that once we have been given grace by God to have our eyes opened, we now *still* don’t do any works to gain salvation, but simply believe in faith that He is our Savior.

Sola Scriptura: This is a phrase coined by the Reformers of the 16th century to put the authority of our faith back in the hands of the Word of God. It was largely due to the unbalance that was seen in the Roman Catholic Church, who had what is called a Magisterium who dictated *how* the bible was to be translated and applied, as well as Holy Tradition. Of course, human teachers and traditions aren’t bad, but what the phrase *sola scriptura* communicates is that those things are not on par with Scripture, but that they are submitted to the Scriptures. In today’s day and age, most non-

Catholic Christians, particularly in the West, may not have issue with seeing anything other than the Word being authoritative in *concept*, but no doubt, we have *plenty* of other sources that do dictate our faith, be it feelings, emotions, social concepts, Oprah, politics, Hollywood, etc.

Soteriology: This is quite simply the “study of salvation,” as it focuses on the various elements of salvation: how we get it, how we keep it, etc.

Sovereignty: Sovereignty is the truth that God is in control of all things at all times. God plans, has a purpose, and does not simply watch things unfold and react to them. Rather, He sees everything from start to finish all at once. He is all-powerful in His sovereignty and is affected by no outside source.

Sufficiency of Scripture: This is a term used to explain how the divinely inspired and given Scriptures are all that God has declared were *necessary* and needed for us to live a God glorifying and worshipfully obedient life. It *doesn't* mean that this is *all* that we will ever get. God does give other gifts from time to time by His own will and desire; however, nothing is *needed* to be added to what we have already been given by and through the Scriptures.

Synergism: This means that God enables man to choose and repent in his free will to be saved. There is a partnership in salvation. God opens the eyes, man reaches out to God.

Sanctification: Sanctification is the growth process of our faith. It is every moment of our walk with God from the time we are saved until the day we go to be with Him. Our sanctification, though it may be up and down at times, has been pre-ordained and purchased as fact and imminent by the blood of Jesus.

Saving grace: This is grace that saves, and is given by His calling, or election of us.

Substitutionary Atonement: This is a phrase used to describe the idea that Jesus is a substitution standing in place of our judgment.

Total Depravity: Total depravity means that mankind is totally sinful in every extent. This in no way means that we are depraved in every way to the furthest degree at all times, doing the most evil we possibly can all the time, but that every faculty of our body, mind, emotions, and heart has been distorted and maimed by sin. We simply cannot be trusted.

T.U.L.I.P.: This is the commonly held acronym by which Calvinists systematize their flagship doctrinal beliefs. It stands for Total Depravity, Unmerited Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints.

Trinity: Though not a term found in the bible, it is a term used to describe the mysterious solidarity/unity/diversity of the three distinct Persons of the Trinity and their unique relationship with each other and Their creation. In brief summary, we believe that the Trinity helps define the one true God by saying that, 1). God is three Persons, 2). each Person is fully God, and 3). there is only one God.

Unlimited atonement: This is the Arminian view of the atonement that means Jesus' death on the cross has made salvation possible for all people; in other words, it is unlimited in its extent. The blood of Jesus purchases the opportunity, but not salvation, for all people to be saved (while maintaining that not all will choose, so this is not universalism). The atonement doesn't actually purchase us for salvation, but only makes it available. What makes it effective is that we must now choose it. Therefore, the blood of Christ only initiates salvation, rather than doing the whole work and purchasing it for us.

Unlimited limited atonement: This view affirms the strengths of both views of the atonement. Christ did indeed die to make a way for salvation for all people, but that the only ones who get the full benefit of the atonement are those that receive it, those that were chosen by God, in Christ, before the foundations of the world. In that sense, it is unlimited in its availability, but limited to who receives it. To those who it is given to, the blood of Jesus doesn't just make salvation possible, but it actually purchases us as our ransom and completes the transaction. Through His blood we are given (not just made available) eternal life, forgiveness, and a future glory in Christ forever.

Unmerited Favor: This is the idea that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, that we can do to earn God's grace. It means that there is nothing good in us, but that for some reason, we have been given God's grace, though we have no merit for it. What this tells us is that for one, we are beyond the hope of any kind of works for salvation, but that we are not beyond the reach of God's grace.

Utter Depravity: Utter depravity is the erroneous view that we are all evil all the time in every way. This would be what many hyper-Calvinists would hold to.

Will of Command: This is God's will as it pertains to His eternal and holy desire. It is based on what He has said *should* be, such as His Ten Commandments. This will, of course, can be offended and disregarded by mankind.

Will of Decree: This is God's will as it pertains to what He decrees, or causes to be. Though He has a holy standard (His commands), He appoints everything by His sovereignty to work out for His most ultimate glory and grace to be known.

Appendix D: Recommended Reading

Systematic Theology and Doctrine Books

Systematic Theology

Systematic Theology

Systematic Theology

Systematic Theology

Christian Theology

Doctrine of the Christian Life

Doctrine of God

Doctrine of the Word of God

Salvation Belongs to the Lord

Doctrine

Institutes of the Christian Religion

Know the Truth

Wayne Grudem

Louis Berkhof

Thomas Oden

Charles Hodge

Millard Erickson

John Frame

John Frame

John Frame

John Frame

Mark Driscoll

John Calvin

Bruce Milne

Books About How To Study the Bible

Living by the Book

How to Pray and How to Study the Bible

Knowing Scripture

Hendricks

R.A. Torrey

R.C. Sproul

Books About Church and Church Life

Deep Church

Vintage Church

Eusebius: the Church History

The Didache

Living Church

Church History in Plain Language

The Cross and Christian Ministry

Jim Belcher

Mark Driscoll

Eusebius

Early Church Fathers

John Stott

Bruce Shelley

D.A. Carson

Christian Living

Religion Saves

Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands

Idols of the Heart

Counsel from the Cross

The Discipline of Grace

Don't Waste Your Life

Cross Centered Life

Just Do Something

Celebration of Discipline

I Really Want to Change...So, God Help Me

Prayer

Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist

The Cross Centered Life

Mark Driscoll

Paul David Tripp

Elyse Fitzpatrick

Elyse Fitzpatrick

Jerry Bridges

John Piper

C.J. Mahaney

Kevin DeYoung

Richard Foster

James MacDonald

E.M. Bounds

John Piper

C.J. Mahaney

Men, Women, Marriage, and Family

Feminine Appeal

God, Marriage, and Family

Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

Big Truths for Young Hearts

Shepherding a Child's Heart

The Excellent Wife

Carolyn Mahaney

Andreas Kostenberger

John Piper and Wayne Grudem, editors

Bruce A. Ware

Ted Tripp

Martha Peace

Bible Study and Commentaries

The MacArthur Bible Commentary

Exodus

The Message of Ephesians

The Message of 2 Timothy

The Message of Exodus

NIV Application Commentary on Ephesians

The Gospel According to John

John MacArthur

Phillip Ryken

John Stott

John Stott

J.A. Motyer

Klyne Snodgrass

D.A. Carson

Books on Specific Theological Topics

Vintage Jesus

Heaven

If God is Good

The Cross of Christ

Father, Son, Holy Spirit: Role, Relationship, and Relevance

One Faith

Let the Nations be Glad

Confessions

Knowing God

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

Showing the Spirit

Mere Christianity

Chosen for Life

Chosen by God

The Holiness of God

Scandalous: the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus

The Cross and Salvation

The Heart of the Cross

The Passion of Jesus Christ: 50 Reasons for the Cross

In My Place He Stood Condemned

3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare

The Message of Salvation

Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God

12 Sermons on the Passion and Death of Christ

Spectacular Sins

For the Fame of God's Name

Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond

The Essential Works of Charles Spurgeon

Mark Driscoll

Randy Alcorn

Randy Alcorn

John Stott

Bruce A. Ware

J.I. Packer and Thomas Oden

John Piper

Augustine

J.I. Packer

R.A. Torrey

D.A. Carson

C.S. Lewis

Sam Storms

R.C. Sproul

R.C. Sproul

D.A. Carson

Bruce Demarest

Montgomery Boice and Phillip Ryken

John Piper

J.I. Packer and Mark Dever

Clinton Arnold

Philip Ryken

J.I. Packer

C.H. Spurgeon

John Piper

Sam Storms and Justin Taylor, editors

Stanley Gundry and Darrell Bock, editors

Daniel Partner, editor

Books on Apologetics

The Reason for God

The Big Book of Bible Difficulties

The Case for Faith

The Case for Christ

The Case for a Creator

Defending Your Faith: An Introduction to Apologetics

Christian Apologetics

Apologetics to the Glory of God: An Introduction

The Apologetics of Jesus: A Caring Approach to Dealing with Doubters

The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict

A Ready Defense

Answers to Tough Questions

Tim Keller

Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe

Lee Strobel

Lee Strobel

Lee Strobel

R.C. Sproul

Norman Geisler

John Frame

Norman Geisler and Patrick Zukeran

Josh McDowell

Josh McDowell

Josh McDowell

Appendix E:

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

A Study from a Previous Class

I. APPROACHES TO THE WORD OF GOD

There are three main approaches to the Word of God, and they give varying results. It is important for us to see this, so we are getting a balanced diet of the Word.

- Reading the Word is quite simply that: reading the Word. You read it like a story or a book. This is good as it gets the Word in you, you learn characters, plots, stories, etc. But this, without study and meditation, can be minimally fruitful. You will find yourself not understanding certain things, such as cultural information, significance of practices, monetary values, political implications, etc.
- Studying the Word is when we dissect the Word as we read it. We look up what a word may really mean in its original language, we find out how much certain monetary values are worth, we compare verses with other verses in the bible, and we find out the overall context of what is being taught and how it relates to today. This, however, without prayer and meditation on the Word, can often leave us to be “smarty pants” type Christians, legalistic, and prideful.
- Meditating on the Word is when we take what we have been reading and studying and we dwell on it. We think about it, pray about it, sit before Jesus concerning it. We ask Him to reveal to us what His purpose in it for our life is. We ask the Holy Spirit to help the Word go deep in our hearts so that it is accessible in life’s future events when we will need it. Meditating on the Word is when the knowledge of the Word through reading and studying travels from our brain to our hearts. Meditation, however, without studying the Word, can leave us with a very experiential relationship with the Lord where we are constantly meditating over the same things over and over again because we are not continually learning and studying new things in the Word.

Most of approach the Word with only one of these, and I’ve found that most people will spend time *reading* the Word (usually “point and pray”), but not many study or meditate. However, all three methods are important for us to get the most we can out of the Word. If we don’t, we often find ourselves either frustrated, bored, confused, or unimpressed with the Word, and we never see the value in it. This isn’t a problem with the Word, however, it’s a problem with our own devotion and know-how. This class is here to help you get the tools you need to help you understand, love, and depend on the Word of God.

**Combined, we have a balanced diet and
We are getting all that we can out of the Word of God.**

II. TOOLS TO GET YOU STARTED

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

You may have wondered why there are so many translations out there. Without getting too technical and arduous (there are a large number of reasons), we will make mention of the most pertinent one, which is the balance of literal, word for word translation (known as “formal equivalence”) versus readability (“functional/dynamic equivalence”).

For study purposes, it is recommended to have at least two, if not more, translations readily available. You would probably want to have a “main translation” that you like, one that is convenient to take with you, to read, to comprehend, and to memorize. But you would also want others to give you other insights. This can be done in a few ways, either by purchasing separate bibles, having a bible study software program, or a parallel bible (more on this later). Before you do that, here is a rundown of what you can expect from the popular translations to help you make a decision. Take a look at this chart to see where particular translations rest in their literal vs. functionality balance.

Formal Equivalence (Literal/Word for Word)			Dynamic Equivalence (Functional/Phrase by Phrase or Thought by Thought)		Paraphrase	
KJV/NKJV	NASB	ESV	NIV	NLT	LB	the Message

English Standard Version (ESV) is a recent translation that was derived from the previous RSV. The general editor was noted theologian J.I. Packer and, along with 130 others, had Wayne Grudem, another noted theologian, as one of the translators. It seeks to be accurately word for word, but taking into consideration ancient idioms and syntax, making it more readable than the NKJV or NASB, but not quite as dynamic as the NIV. This is nearly a must have for some aspect of your study, if not also as your every day reading bible.

New International Version (NIV) is an easier read than NKJV, but is also a good version to study from. There are plenty of study materials out there to accompany NIV. The NIV is an easier read because it is translated “phrase by phrase (dynamic/functional)” rather than “word by word (formal/literal),” making it flow better in modern day English. This is noted as being a great every day reading bible, as well as a very accurate translation for study. This is for sure a must have for some aspect of your study.

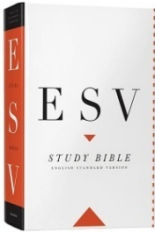
New American Standard Bible (NASB) is a “word for word” translation as well, sticking very conservatively to the original language. The NASB is widely regarded as one of the most literally translated of 20th-century English Bible translations. It began as a re-translation of the ASV, which was somewhat liberal. Though it is a strict word for word translation, when the text was truly confusing, they would occasionally become “thought by thought,” and footnotes were added so the reader knew when this would happen. Twenty conservative scholars from varying backgrounds oversaw the translation.

New King James Version (NKJV) is great for studying original language meaning and getting a very close translation to original. NKJV is a “word by word” translation of the bible. It uses a slightly younger manuscript of the New Testament than others, such as the NIV and NASB. Though it has a very academic feel to it, and would be a good insightful translation to check into, it is typically not the best for every day reading and use, but more as a supplemental translation.

New Living Translation (NLT) is the revision of the “Living Bible (LB).” These are even easier reads than the NIV, very plain language and easy to understand. This would be a great bible for devotional time and simply reading the word, as well as being very popular with new believers trying to get a handle on the bible, but it would not be very good for in depth bible study. That said, it wouldn’t be a bad thing to have one handy for clarity. For the record, the older “Living Bible” borders on practically being a commentary more than a translation as it took a lot of “creative license” in paraphrasing (rather than translating) the bible. The NLT employed 87 scholars.

The Message is a paraphrase (NOT translation) if you want to read the bible like a story or novel. It gives new life to Scriptures you have read before numerous times. It is very colorful, descriptive, and was poured over by scores of theologians before being published. Though it is an amazing bible for devotional time, there are no study tools that I am aware of to accompany this translation, which makes it a poor choice for in depth bible study.

Study Bibles



****The English Standard Version (ESV) Study Bible**(Crossway)

This bible has lots of great commentary, graphs, charts, full color maps, a great appendix full of sections on doctrinal overviews, how we got the Scriptures, biblical ethics, how to read and interpret the bible, and more. It also comes with a free online resource that includes the bible itself, all the maps, a concordance, and all the resources, all searchable.

****The Nelson Study Bible** (Thomas Nelson)

Lots of a great maps, insights, word studies, and in depth topical studies

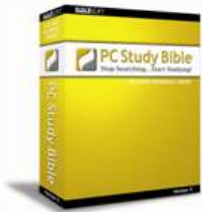
****The Life Application Bible** (Tyndale)

CONCORDANCES

****Strong's Concordance.** This is the concordance to use for the KJV or NKJV versions.

****The Strongest NIV Concordance.** This is the concordance to use for the NIV versions

Bible Study Software



****PC Study Bible** is a great program. Go to www.biblesoft.com.

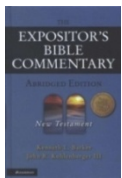
****QuickVerse** is similar to PC Study Bible but is **Mac compatible**. Go to www.QuickVerse.com.

****Online Resources** that are free and helpful are www.e-sword.net, www.biblegateway.com, and www.blueletterbible.org.

You can purchase all of these resources through **CBD (Christian Book Distributors)** on-line at www.christianbook.com, or check **Family Christian** in Escondido (off Valley Parkway). For more discounts, find them used on www.amazon.com.

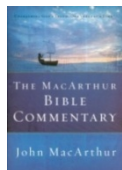
COMMENTARIES

Commentaries are the work of a particular teacher, pastor or group of Bible researchers. They are created to give further verse by verse, in depth information, both factually and theologically. There are *numerous* commentaries. Here are a few that we use and/or recommend:



****Expositor's Bible Commentary:** A verse by verse commentary on the whole bible made into two volumes, Old and New Testament. You can buy them separately, or as a set. This is a great aid to your study if you want something to cover the whole bible. 250 charts, maps, tables, and pictures.

\$46.99 for both volumes at www.christianbook.com.



****MacArthur Bible Commentary:** A thorough, scholarly look at the entire bible. Lots of cross references and insights. MacArthur adds a great resource for your bible study, especially for an all in one book.

\$23.99 at www.christianbook.com.

****Zondervan Bible Commentary** F.F. Bruce, General Editor

Easily laid out, full color photos and maps, very thorough and highly recommended.

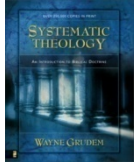
****The Weirsbe Bible Commentary** (Separate Old and New Testament editions)

Similar to the Jon Courson Commentary in the way that it is more practical and applicable to life while still explaining what is going on in the Scriptures.

NOTE: check out www.bestcommentaries.com for more information on great commentaries of all sorts. Whole bible, Old Testament, New Testament, various books of the bible, you name it. A great resource with great reviews.

THEOLOGY AND DOCTRINAL BOOKS

Books that specifically tackle particular doctrines or theology differ from commentaries in that they go after a concise understanding of how theology and doctrine work as weaved throughout the whole bible, not just a specific look at a book of the bible. One method of study is called “systematic theology,” where you build a “system” by which theology is connected to each other. This is a very important part of study that helps us get an overall view of particular doctrines using the whole counsel of God.



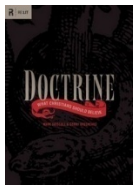
****Systematic Theology** by Wayne Grudem.

One of the most thorough, well written books on doctrine and theology, Grudem’s work is a staple in most bible teachers’ and pastors’ libraries. Intimidating at first, it is surprisingly readable and understandable, and it is easy to find the particular aspects of theology with his thorough index and footnotes.

1291 Pages.

A smaller, 528 page, version is available.

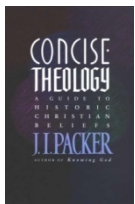
Also, a super condensed, 156 page, version is available.



****Doctrine** by Mark Driscoll.

This is not as thorough, but easy to read and full of the great “essentials” of the Christian faith. Driscoll offers a biblical, and very balanced view of the “closed hand” theological doctrines, and the book is written a little more conversational than “Systematic Theology,” which is a lot more text book style.

463 Pages.



****Concise Theology** by J.I. Packer.

Packer is another theologian whose commentaries and writings have inspired and helped teach thousands. He is one of the most influential modern day theologians and authors and has authored or contributed to dozens of books about the supremacy of God, His glory, holiness, and worship. This more compact book on theology is a great start at understanding the essentials.

267 Pages.

MISCELLANEOUS AUTHORS AND RESOURCES

There have been many, many amazing bible scholars, r_____rs, theologians, pastors, and expositors over the years. While it is important for us to glean truth and wisdom from their studies, at the end of the day, everything must be tested against Scripture. There is no perfect teacher, however, and so while we may “endorse” certain men and women, we know that their work is fallible, yet we have gained much from many of their teachings.

****Dr. John Piper:** One of the most gifted theologians of our day, Dr. Piper may be one of the most God-centric, humble servants of Christ around. His website, www.desiringgod.com is an amazing resource for sermons, articles, and insight into the word of God.

****John R. W. Stott:** Every sermon series we go through, you will find a Stott book on that section of Scripture in the hands of the Pastors. His balance, objectivity, and knowledge of the Word is inspiring.

****Wayne Grudem:** Grudem works closely with folks like Piper, Driscoll, and others. He, too, is very objective in his approach to the Word, and he aims to dissect the Word to make it palatable for others. His book, “Systematic Theology” (mentioned above) is a must have for bible students.

****theVillageChurch.net:** The Village Church’s website has a resource center online with short 1 or 2 page writings on doctrinal issues. If you have a question on certain topics, check out their website for great, concise writings on various biblical subjects.

****Pastor Charles H. Spurgeon:** Spurgeon’s work has inspired millions of pastors, teachers, and members of the body of Christ with his studies.

****CS Lewis:** A favorite for many, Lewis had a way of making huge, heavenly, biblical thoughts come down to earth and meet reality. Among those is *Mere Christianity*.

A Good Affordable Start

If studying is a fairly new thing for you, and money is probably an issue for you as well, consider a few things to get you started. Here are a few of the basic tools you will want, and there are a few ways to go about getting them affordably.

A good study bible: You probably have “your bible” that you are attached to. That’s good. Consider getting a good study bible for your specific study time. One with a different translation is great, to give you other insights. The **ESV** is a great translation for study, as it is very detailed in what words it chooses to translate.

A concordance: Being able to look up each word in its original language is paramount for your study. You do not need to know Greek or Hebrew to find great meaning in these words. A concordance helps you do this, and it’s not rocket science, so don’t be intimidated.

A “whole bible” commentary: It’s good to have something like this, just in case you’re looking around in particular parts of the bible. That said, these aren’t cheap, and having a good study bible may negate the need to buy one, as they have, albeit limited, commentary at the bottom of each page of Scripture.

A good theology or doctrine book: Though going through the bible verse by verse is the best for study, having a book that helps you grasp the big, “close handed,” theologies and doctrines of our faith, is a great tool to have. These seem intimidating, but they are broken down per doctrine, in bite size sections. This will help prevent from what is called “string theology,” where we string together verses that support what we believe. Instead, we build a “systematic theology,” which is a system of verses, more like web, rather than a string, that include ALL the verses, EVEN the ones that *seem* to oppose each other. It’s sort of like Jenga, where all the verses are dependent on each other.

Individual commentary books: Once you have a couple good foundational books, like the ones above, you can slowly, one by one, add to your collection as you tackle particular books of the bible.

Computer software: This can help you out dramatically, and even save you money (and time). You can automatically scratch off the need to spend \$20 on a concordance if you can go online. Or, if you happen to buy the **ESV Study Bible** (listed below), it comes with a searchable program, including a concordance.

Start With:

- ESV Study Bible has maps, good commentary, and a free online software program.
- In addition to the free software with ESV Study Bible, you can use blueletterbible.com as a free concordance.

Total: \$32

Then Add:

- A whole bible commentary. These run around \$30 or so.
- A good theology or doctrine book. You can start small for \$12 or go big with \$26.

Total: \$40-55

Then Add as You Go:

- Individual commentaries as you go through certain books, such as **Exodus**. These run around \$10-25 per book.

Total: \$10-30 per month as you can afford

III. BEGINNING YOUR STUDY

Step 1: Pray

The greatest thing you have going for you when it comes to reading and studying the Word is that you have the actual Author Himself living *in you*! That is one advantage you *never* had in high school growing up with all of the text books you had to study!

So, when you begin a time of reading or study, always ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you and teach you through the very Word that He authored. He has been sent and given to us as a *Helper*, so let Him do His job! Ask Him for the help you need to understand Scripture. These are spiritual things we are trying to understand, so let's ask *the* Spirit for help.

Step 2: Read the Text

The first thing you will want to do is simply read through the text. This is the first step in what is called "exegesis," which is the act of asking the question "what did the original author (the human author and God) intend to communicate to the original hearer?" This helps you keep everything *in context* and is necessary before we apply anything to our own lives. When you do this, consider a few ideas:

- **You *may* want to read a background introduction from a commentary or study bible.** I like reading first before getting into external sources, but if you are just looking for background info, and if you are new to studying, this is a good place to start.
- **Use multiple translations.** This will help you give a nice rounded context of what is going on in the text. Recommended translations would be NIV, ESV, NASB, and the New Living for clarity. A parallel bible or bible software would be a great help.
- **For smaller books like 2 Timothy, you should read through it a few times,** maybe even read through it once for every bible translation you have.
- **For larger books like Exodus, read it in one or two sittings.** As much as you can, compare with other translations as you go, especially if the text gets difficult to understand, switch to NIV or the Living Bible just for reading and comprehension purposes.
- **Take brief, quick notes** either by marking your bible or jotting them down on paper. Note items such as purpose of the text, tone of attitude of the writer, and main themes.
- **Try not to read any commentary while you are reading through the Scriptures!** This will be a temptation, especially if you want understanding. This isn't the time to get every detail, it's the time to comprehend the main themes, characters, and plot.

Once you feel like you have a good overall understanding of the overall theme of the book, take some more detailed notes in order to divide up and put into your own words the major themes of the book. Many good study bibles and commentaries will do this for you as an introduction. Don't look at these yet, you are trying to train yourself. Do it on your own, and when you feel confident, compare your outline with other outlines. There is no "right" way to outline, but you will notice that you had similarities in many of the divisions. Try something like this:

- **Find major changes in theme throughout the book.** Start with this in mind, titling your sections in your own words. Then have a few lines under each heading to further divide subthemes.
- **Paraphrase each section or topic.** Use your own words to put the main thoughts of each paragraph or section into once sentence or thought. This helps you contextualize and soak in an entire theme, rather than bits and pieces.
- **Read through your outline.** Spend time going through your outline to see if it helps you understand the overall flow, purpose, and attitude of the book you are reading in the bible. By now, this should give you a really good idea of the *big picture* of the book, so that you can indeed keep your verse by verse study *in context*. This is an important part of proper study (called "exegesis" as we will discuss next week). You are ready to now study verse by verse.

Step 3: Study Verse by Verse

It's a good idea, inasmuch as you will be going verse by verse, to more realistically think in terms of "paragraph by paragraph" or "theme by theme." If you learn to "think in paragraphs" you will run much less of a risk of taking a verse out of context. Here's a few ideas:

- **Select your paragraph or sub-section.** Once you do this, read through this section again a few times, preferably with different translations. Keeping in the back of your mind (or on the outline in front of you) the overall theme, occasion, and tone of the book, you will read this section within that context. Make more detailed notes or marks in your bible as you go.
- **Now go verse by verse.** The first thing you want to do is to figure out "what did the author intend to communicate?" This is again called "exegesis." Before we apply anything to our own life, we have to first find out what was intended in the first place.
 - a. **Do a word search** (this is called *cross reference*). Use a concordance to do this. Also, if you have a good study bible, often times it will have in the margins other related Scriptures you can open to. This is called a "chain reference." To do a word search, a complete concordance or a software program is necessary. Refer to the "**Word Study**" part of the LGHW for a way to get started. This helps you see how certain words or phrases were used elsewhere in the bible, giving you a broader, more balance context. Remember to use multiple translations.
 - b. **Look up the word in its original language.** Though this sounds difficult, it is not. Also see the "**Word Study**" for more direction on this. This tool helps you see the exact meaning for the words. It gives you more context. Try blueletterbible.com or purchase software like **PC Study Bible**.

Always Remember, Context is King!

Before moving on, let's take a look at how to do this by using software.

We will use www.blueletterbible.com because of its ease of use and because it is free.

The first thing you do when you open to www.blueletterbible.org is type in the word or phrase you want to look up.

- **Single Words:** For single words, just type in the word. Below I have used “alert.”
- **Phrases:** For specific phrases, such as “sound doctrine,” type it using quotation marks (such as with web search engines).
- **Multiple Words:** To see verses with multiple words in it, but not necessarily next to each other (such as wanting to see verses that contain the words “Word” and “Truth”), you will type them in the same as a specific phrase (like “sound doctrine”), but *without* using quotation marks.
- **Multiple Forms of the Same Word:** Look up *various forms* of a word. To do this, such as in “doctrine, doctrines, doctrinal, etc.” you would choose to place an asterisk (*) at the best place in the word. For instance, we would type “doctrin*” in order to catch all words that start with the spelling of “doctrin,” such as “doctrine, doctrines, doctrinal, etc.” This saves you time and it will bring up all those instances in one search.

NOTE: Other programs have different protocols. Some will like to see quotations for specific phrases, some like the word “and” in between words, and some will want to see the word “and” in capitalized form like “AND” so it knows you aren’t searching for the actual word “and.” It sounds kind of confusing, but once you know what your program uses, it is easy.

Also, most will allow you to choose whether it is case sensitive (like if you wanted to do a study on false gods and didn’t want to see all the times “God” is in the bible, but just “god”).

Homepage

Type in your word
& choose your translation



We'll use the
word “alert” for
example

Blue Letter Bible



SEARCH
COMMENTARIES
AUDIO/VIDEO
STUDY TOOLS
IMAGES/MAPS
DEVOTIONALS
HELP/FAQS
KNOW GOD
FREE WEB TOOLS
ABOUT BLB
CONTRIBUTE
OTHER LINKS
BLB INSTITUTE
BLB BOOKSTORE

BLB APPS
IPHONE
IPAD

FIND US ON



For You have magnified Your Word above all Your name. - Psalm 138:2

Bible / Dictionary Search

(help) (abbreviations) (drop list) Version

(Examples: John 3:16 , or Jesus faith love , or "God of my salvation")
[Show/Hide Advanced Options](#)

INTRODUCING
The BLB Bookstore

Net profits on EVERY SALE
go to support evangelism ministry

New Items

- After we put together the BLB app for the iPhone, we believed (silly us!) that it wouldn't be too much more trouble to port it over to iPad. A couple months of good hard work later and we've got the BLB iPad app ready to go.



(Apologies to Blackberry and Android users!)

- Announcing the addition of a new class for the Blue Letter Bible Institute entitled *History and Authenticity of the Bible* by Dr. David Hocking.



Search the Bible

Word or Verse

Range Options

Search the BLB

LexiConc
FAQ Search

Featured Items

MyBLB:

- My Preferred Bible

Today's Items:

- Day by Day by Grace
- Daily Promise
- Bible Reading
- Morning & Evening Devotion

Items of Interest:

- ISBE
- Daily Bible Reading Program
- NT Introductions
- Sayings Not Found in Scripture
- Scripture Difficulties
- Topical Analysis

- Once you type in your word or phrase, select the translation you want to choose and click “search.”
- The program will then bring up all the verses in the bible that the phrase exists in.
- Notice on the right column, it shows you how many times that word shows up in other translations. You can click on them to see those results.
- Below that, it also shows you a synopsis of how many times it occurs in each book.

Skim the verses to see if any stick out as something pertinent or valuable to your study. Some broader words, like “sin” or “Father” that show up a lot in the bible will give you a lot of verses that may not be helpful, so it takes time to skim through and find relatable verses.

Sift through your results & click on a couple verses you find interesting



Blue Letter Bible

SEARCH

COMMENTARIES

AUDIO/VIDEO

STUDY TOOLS

IMAGES/MAPS

DEVOTIONALS

HELP/FAQS

KNOW GOD

FREE WEB TOOLS

ABOUT BLB

CONTRIBUTE

OTHER LINKS

BLB INSTITUTE

BLB BOOKSTORE

BLB APPS

IPHONE

IPAD

FIND US ON

Search Results for -Alert-

Bible Search (Help)

Alert

Version

NIV

Search

Show/Hide Advanced Options

Dictionary Results

There were no results found in the dictionaries. Browse the Dictionaries.

NIV Concordance for -Alert-

Primary Results

LexiConc

(Alert)

occurs 8 times in 7 verses in the NIV

Page 1 / 1 (Jos 8:4 - 1Pe 5:8)

COPY OPTIONS

SHOW STRONG'S

Jos 8:4

with these orders: "Listen carefully. You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don't go very far from it. All of you be on the alert.

Psa 17:11

They have tracked me down, they now surround me, with eyes alert, to throw me to the ground.

Isa 21:7

When he sees chariots with teams of horses, riders on donkeys or riders on camels, let him be alert, fully alert."

Mar 13:33

Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.

Eph 6:18

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

1Th 5:6

So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.

1Pe 5:8

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

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Other Versions

(Notes)

NLT(8)

ESV(2)

NASB(15)

RSV(2)

HNV(1)

Search Results

(Notes)

Jos(1)

Psa(1)

Isa(1)

Mar(1)

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Scripture

- Once you find a verse that seems of interest, click on it and it will open up that portion of Scripture in context.
- Below is the example of **Mark 13:33**. You'll notice that you have a few options to study this verse.

- K:** The **K** is for the **"Treasury of Scripture Knowledge."** This is a great asset for study. It brings up a list of related other verses by their topic.
- C:** The **C** is for **"Concordance."** This will show you the definition of the word in its original language.
- L:** The **L** is for **"Lists of Audio, Commentaries, and Study Tools."** This is an awesome selection, as it gives you various commentaries from different theologians, as well as audio teachings on the passage. The selection is limited, however it is a great tool to use.
- V:** The **V** is for **"Versions/Translations."** This will bring up multiple translations side by side so you can read them all next to each other to get a greater context.
- D:** The **D** is for **"Dictionary Aids."** This gives you a choice of Greek and Hebrew dictionaries so you can look up the definitions of these words and their appropriate uses.
- I:** The **I** is for **"Images/Maps."** This will bring up various maps or pertinent images for the study. Occasionally, a little music symbol will pop up as a selection to, giving you a list of hymns that were written about this topic, word, or verse. Pretty cool!







Click the "C"
button to see the
concordance page


Button Explanation:


-  Scripture Knowledge
-  Concordance & Hebrew/Greek Lexicon
-  List Audio, Study Tools, Commentaries
-  Hymns
-  Version/ Translations
-  Dictionary Aids


Click the "C"
button to see the
concordance page


Button Explanation:


-  Scripture Knowledge
-  Concordance & Hebrew/Greek Lexicon
-  List Audio, Study Tools, Commentaries
-  Hymns
-  Version/ Translations
-  Dictionary Aids



















Mar 13:33 Be on guard! Be alert ^[fn]! You do not know when that time will come.



















Mar 13:34 It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.



















Mar 13:35 "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn.



















Mar 13:36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping.














Mar 13:37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'

NIV Footnotes:

- (13:14) Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11
- (13:14) Or he; also in verse 29
- (13:21) Or Messiah
- (13:25) Isaiah 13:10; 34:4
- (13:30) Or race
- (13:33) Some manuscripts alert and pray

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Prior Book

Prior Chapter

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Next Book

Mark

Chap: 1

Verse: 1

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For our purposes, we will click on the “C” to check the concordance for the original word and definition.

- When you click the “C,” it will break down the verse by showing you the Greek, but will also show you the verse word by word in English. You will notice a little number, that is called a “Strong’s Number” named after the “Strong’s Concordance.” Click on that to see the definition of the word in Greek.

Find your word of interest in the sentence. There you can see it in Greek on the right. Click on the “Strong’s #” to get a more in depth explanation of the word (in this case it's G69)

K

C

L

≠

V

D

Mar 13:33

Be on guard! Be alert ^[fn]! You do not know when that time will come.

Lexicon / Concordance for Mark 13:33

GNT Morph

13:33 βλέπετε ἀγρυπνεῖτε οὐκ οἴδατε γὰρ πότε ὁ καιρὸς ἐστίν

English (NASB)	Strong's	Root Form (Greek)
Take heed,	G991	βλέπω <i>blepō</i>
keep on the alert;	G69	ἀγρυπνέω <i>agrypneō</i>
for	G1063	γὰρ <i>gar</i>
you do not	G3756	οὐ <i>ou</i>
know	G6063	οἶδα <i>oida</i>
when	G4219	πότε <i>pote</i>
the appointed time	G2540	καιρὸς <i>kairos</i>
will come.	G1510	εἰμί <i>eimi</i>

Textus Receptus

13:33 βλέπετε ἀγρυπνεῖτε καὶ προσεύχεσθε οὐκ οἴδατε γὰρ πότε ὁ καιρὸς ἐστίν

K

C

L

≠

V

D

Mar 13:34

It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

K

C

L

≠

V

D

Mar 13:35

Therefore keep watch because you do not know

Now we see a screen specifically for the word we want to see, the word “alert.”

- It gives you a transliteration, which means it is the way we spell it in English.
- It gives you an audible pronunciation.
- It tells you the part of speech (verb, noun, adjective, etc.)
- It tells you how many times it is in the bible.
- It gives you an outline of how it is used within the bible.
- It shows you what variations it shows up as in the bible.
- It gives you a thorough copy of Thayer’s Lexicon, which is a dictionary of Greek words as they would have been understood in their day.

Once on the Strong's page you can see the Greek spelling, listen to the Greek pronunciation, and read the definition



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Lexicon Results
Strong's G69 - agrypneō

ἀγρυπνέω

Transliteration agrypneō	Pronunciation ä-grüp-ne'-ō (Key)
Part of Speech verb	Root Word (Etymology) Ultimately from ἀλφά (G1) (as negative particle) and ὕπνος (G5258)
TDNT Reference 2:338,195	Vines View Entry

Outline of Biblical Usage

- 1) to be sleepless, keep awake, watch
- 2) to be circumspect, attentive, ready

Authorized Version (KJV) Translation Count — Total: 4
AV — watch 4

Thayer's Lexicon (Help)

ἀγρυπνέω, -ῶ; (ἀγρυπνος equiv. to ἀϋπνος); *to be sleepless, keep awake, watch*, (i. q. γρηγορέω [see below]); [fr. Theognis down]; trop. *to be circumspect, attentive, ready*: Mk. xiii. 33; Lk. xxi. 36; εἰς τι, *to be intent upon a thing*, Eph. vi. 18; ὑπέρ τινος, *to exercise con-*
[Click Here for the Rest of the Entry](#)

Word / Phrase / Strong's Search
<- Previous Strong's G68 Next Strong's G70 ->

G69 NIV Search

Search the Bible
Word or Verse
NIV Range Options

Search the BLB
LexiConc Search Options
FAQ Search

Search Results
(Notes)
Mar(1) Luk(1) Eph(1)
Hbr(1)
Entire Bible

Featured Items
MyBLB:
■ My Preferred Bible

Today's Items:
■ Day by Day by Grace
■ Daily Promise
■ Bible Reading
■ Morning & Evening Devotion

Items of Interest:
■ ISBE
■ Daily Bible Reading Program
■ NT Introductions
■ Sayings Not Found in Scripture

So you now have a few things going for you. You have an outline, a basic understanding of the theme, occasion, and attitude of the writings. Now you are breaking apart each word and phrase to get a better understanding. As you continue, using your concordance, or in this case, bible study software, either copy and paste or jot down the Scriptures you found that help you get a better context for the particular verse or paragraph you are studying.

Personally, I like to use Microsoft Word. I copy from my software any verse that seems to give me more insight, and I copy into Word. At first it's just a bunch of random verses, sort of a jumbled mess, but once I have them all in one place, I start reading through them. With some verses that seem extra pertinent, I will go through and apply my study method (reading in context, using various translations, outline, paraphrase, and verse by verse word study) just as I did with my main text. As you can see, your study can go on some tremendous rabbit trails, but this is how you learn!

Once you have a better understanding through other verses, I will take notes on my findings. You can add some of these “cross references” verses into your outline, or write them in the margin of your bible for future use. I save all my studies as a Word document for future reference.

Lastly, it would be good to now paraphrase the section again, but with your new found knowledge of the original language and context of other Scriptures. You will be amazed at how much more depth these verses have!

Step 4: Check Your Findings

Notice, we have gotten this far by *only using our brains, the bible, and the Holy Spirit* (by this I mean that even in using www.blueletterbible.org we still only did cross references and language checks, keeping us in the text of the Word only; we have not looked into commentaries, maps, or other resources).

So now, it's a good time to check your findings. You can do this in many ways, and it is always good to hold yourself accountable with your studies and check with others. Some people will say that we shouldn't need other people's opinions and that we only need the bible and the Holy Spirit. Though this sounds very reverent and "holy," it is a terribly unbiblical view of the Word and how we approach it. Countless times in the Scriptures, it speaks of being taught, being teachable, learning from one another, sharpening each other, teaching others, being committed to the apostles' teachings, being instructed by others, and being built up and equipped by pastors and teachers. Paul tells Timothy to train up teachers that can in turn teach others. It is a sign of humility when we admit we don't know everything and that we can learn from others who have put more time and commitment into the study of the Word.

The fear, of course, is fallibility. And to be sure, EVERYTHING you read or hear outside of the bible MUST be compared to Scripture, whether it is a pastor, teacher, book, or church tradition. But in addition to this, guess what else this caution includes? YOUR OWN MIND!!! Yes, just as each teacher on earth is not perfect, NEITHER is YOUR mind, so even if you WERE to just read on your own with no outside help, you are still stuck with YOUR imperfect mind!

Because of this, we have to be on the lookout for good and bad teaching. This can be a touchy subject, and we need to be careful in how we discern this. That said, because we are imperfect, it is good and wise to seek advice and counsel (from more than one person that you trust) on any given book, author, or doctrinal belief. Get the opinions of others you trust, check it against the Word, pray through it, etc. If you can't make a decision on a matter, it's best to put it on the shelf until a later time. Don't rush to make doctrinal judgments.

- **Open a commentary.** Commentaries are writings based on the studies of other theologians. While incredibly helpful, it is important again to remember that only God's Word is perfect. Try bestcommentaries.com for solid reviews and direction. Also, a good Study Bible will have good commentary in it. See the list of authors and theologians that the pastors enjoy and trust.
- **Read other sources.** There are many great books (and bad ones) out there. Remember, however, to make reading/studying the bible your number one goal, time wise and priority wise. If you don't know the bible and good sound doctrine like you should, don't spend/waste time on other books. Know His Word first. Check out thevillagechurch.net, desiringgod.org, and marshallchurch.org and use their search engine for good articles, sermons, and writings on biblical principles and doctrine.
- **Ask a pastor or solid mentor if what you feel like you found is solid.** Having a good conversation to walk and talk through questions is always a good thing. Be humble and teachable. Doctrine can be a sticky thing for many, and so many will even just avoid it. Additionally, many will just have a "buffet-style" theology, where they just pick and choose theology and doctrine as they please, with no real systematic connections. Everything we believe must be in context to the rest of Scripture.

Step 5: MEDITATE

Once you have read and studied on your own, it is time to meditate on the verses. Meditation is thinking about a Bible verse in order to discover how I can apply its truth to my own life.

This is the key to a transformed life. On my bookshelf on my desk I have written the verse “knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.” We don’t want to just get puffed up with pride and information. We want what we learn and study to transform us into the image of Christ.

The Goal of Theology is Worship.

-Philip Ryken

Reading, studying, and meditating on the Word is THE key to becoming like Christ.

John 8:32

[Jesus speaking to believers:] Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

How do we get free from sin? By knowing the truth. What, then, is the truth?

John 17:17

[Jesus speaking to the Father:] Sanctify them by the truth; Your Word is truth.

The Word is the Spirit-breathed Word of God.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

- **Once you feel confident in your findings, it is time to meditate on them.** Go through the verses again, reading, again possibly in various translations. Pray as you read, stopping frequently at words or phrases that stick out to you. Ask God to reveal to you what He intended for us to know and walk in. Thank Him for the truths that He is showing you, and ask Him to reveal more as you study.
- **Take your time.** Take time to pause, reflect, and be silent. Let Him speak to you.
- **Picture it.** Visualize the scene in your mind or visualize your life if you were being obedient to this passage.
- **Pronounce it.** Say the verse aloud, each time emphasizing a different word.
- **Paraphrase it.** Say the verses in your own words. Maybe read through your paraphrases you wrote down.
- **Personalize it.** Replace the pronouns or people in the verse with your own name. Make it personal.
- **Pray it.** Turn the verse into a prayer and say it back to God.

Step 6: INVEST TIME AND MONEY

Invest in your discipleship. Set aside regular time to read, study, and meditate. Ask your spouse or a friend to hold you accountable in this so that you do it. If money is an issue, budget \$15-50 per month to invest in your studies, whatever you can afford. Make a list of books you may want to pick up to help you study. Check [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) for used books. This is for the rest of your life, and it is for a healthy marriage and the raising of your kids. It is also for the sake of the non-believers around you. This is a worthy investment, far more worthy than Direct TV, Starbucks, fast food, or even a car payment for that matter. Make it happen.

Step 7: WORK HARD AND BE PATIENT

Be patient, be deliberate, and work hard. Don’t rush, don’t get frustrated, keep going and work hard at it. If the average book of the bible takes you 6 months to study in depth (we went through Ephesians in 6 months, which is a small book!), and there are 66 books in the bible, it will take you 33 years to thoroughly study the entire bible! So don’t be in a rush! You have your whole life! Concentrate on quality, NOT quantity!

IV. PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

How We Apply Our Studies to Life

**With the right of private interpretation
comes the sober responsibility of accurate interpretation.**

-R.C. Sproul, "Knowing Scripture"

Let's recap a little bit as we look more into interpreting the bible as well as applying it to our lives.

1. **The Interpreter.** To properly interpret the bible, we must first start with our greatest tool: the Holy Spirit. He is the One who teaches us and testifies of the bible's truth. He must be our interpreter, not our social or cultural conditioning or opinions.
2. **The Word.** We have to have a right doctrine of the Word, that it is perfect, God-inspired, inerrant, and infallible. We believe that it doesn't contradict itself. This is the groundwork for our approach to the Word.
3. **Approach.** Once we believe those essentials, we have to have what is called proper "hermeneutics." This is the technical term for the method of interpretation. EVERYONE already does hermeneutics with anything they read. Whether the bible, a text message, an email, or a history book, we have a method in which we discern what is being said. Many an email or text message has been "read wrong" by the recipient because of faulty hermeneutics. Most evangelical Christians adhere to what is called the "historical grammatical" method. This means that when we interpret, we take into consideration historical and literal context as well as the use of idioms, metaphors, poetry, and symbolism.
4. **Study.** Once you have your method of interpretation, we study the word to find out what the original intent of the writer was. This is called "exegesis," which is a twenty dollar word for "study," but it infers the proper method (hermeneutics) and actual breaking down of what was actual intended. Like hermeneutics, though it's a big word, EVERYONE already does this. Anytime you read anything and interpret it, you are doing exegesis. Much of last week's teaching was on the basics and tools of good exegesis.
5. **Interact.** Humility and accountability are incredibly important for study. Though we have the Holy Spirit, the Word, and a God-given brain, it is imperative that we are accountable to each other in our studies and findings. This is the heart of the statement at the top of the page. It is our responsibility to check our findings. Scripture is clear that we are to teach others and be taught, and that there is no such thing as "truth for you" (more on this as we talk about personal application). We are given commentators, theologians, friends, pastors, mentors, and books to help us stay on track (as long as those sources are rooted in the Word as well and point us there).

Last week we covered at least the principles of these first five points of studying the Word. This week, we will look at two main, and in some ways, final steps of bible study: formulating and applying.

6. **Formulate.** As you exegete, or study, and interact with others in discussing and checking your findings, you start putting pieces together. This is called "doctrine," which simply means "teaching." Your doctrinal beliefs on various aspects and topics in the bible will radically dictate how you view life, faith, interaction with God, people, etc. Proper doctrine is the building blocks for a good, biblical theology (here I make distinction between theology and doctrine, though their relation is so close many see them as synonymous. This is fine, but for our purposes we will say that doctrinal truths create our overall theology, the things in which we believe. In other words, you can study and find facts on something, but unless you believe it and teach it the findings remain isolated and impractical. Once we have good doctrine on a these many issues, we have what is called a "systematic theology," meaning the way doctrines interact and interlock.)
7. **Application.** Last, but absolutely not least, is application. Application is a practical way of saying "obedience." We are to not just be hearers of the Word, but doers also. It answer the question "now what?" We will be looking at how we apply our studies, as well as the nature of application we get outside of study (when the Holy Spirit reveals something to you through the Word that was not its original intent. This is a valid work of the Holy Spirit, but it also bears risks when it is not the Holy Spirit, but rather our own reading into it. More on this later.).

A theology that doesn't work is a poor theology

V. BUILDING YOUR THEOLOGY

How Various Doctrines Shape Your Life

We live in a day and age of Christianity where there is a lot of fluff, a lot of feel-good theology and writings that appeal to our emotions. Many believe “theology” or “doctrine” to be something divisive or something of “old fashioned religion,” and that the popular phrase that “Christianity is not a religion, but a relationship” throws doctrine and theology in the category of religion, making a relationship with Christ the only thing of importance. A general view is that as long as the person believes in Jesus, prays, and reads their bible (or in many cases, just Christian literature), then we are good to go. Though this may be enough for salvation, this is by far a false view of being a passionate disciple of Christ.

Knowing right doctrine and theology will point you towards a *healthier, richer, balanced, passionate* relationship with Jesus Christ. For those that are married or have children, you know that the more that you *know* the person you love, the more you love them. This is true with God. The more we know Him – His Word, His ways, His faithfulness, His truth, His character, His methods, His plan, His heart, His “history”, and His grace – the more we fall in love with this wonderful, beautiful God.

Right Doctrine = Right Relationship = Right Living

We believe that there is a divine order of right living. Notice we don’t say a “moral” living, as Christianity and faith in Jesus goes far beyond the “religion” of morality. Yes, morality may be a valid byproduct or evidence of our faith, but it is not the end all, be all. Our right living *must* be a product of a right relationship with Christ, not a willingness or desire to “be good.” Even further, the only way to *have* a right relationship with Christ is by *intimately knowing who He is*. This comes by knowing the Word, will, and ways of God. When we know good theology, theology that teaches us that God exists, is personal, can be known, loves us, saves us, and changes us, this theology and doctrine impassions us to pursue Him with all that we have as a lover of God.

Step 1: Be Aware of What You are Reading

This, in part, is a matter of *hermeneutics*, or, more simply stated, the theory or principles of how you approach the Word. The Word is a collection of various writers from different backgrounds and eras. Here is a brief rundown of a few facts we have to consider as we approach the Word:

The Old Testament is broken up in three styles of literature:

- **Historical Books.** There are 17 historical books (sometimes called “historical narratives”): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.
- **Poetry Books.** There are 5 poetry books (sometimes called “wisdom books”): Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.
- **Prophetic Books.** There are 17 prophetic books: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

The New Testament has 4 Gospels, Acts, 21 Epistles, and Revelation in it.

- **Gospels.** There are 4 gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
- **Epistles.** There are 21 Epistles: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude.
- **Apocalyptic.** There is 1 apocalyptic book: Revelation.

Of these styles, they each have their own unique challenges, which we will discuss. Also, it is important to note that within all of these books, there can be seen sub-divisions and inter-usage. In other words, the gospels use poetic writing at times (i.e. the parables), but they are largely the story and declaration of the good news (and therefore can be said that they are “historical books”). There are also apocalyptic sayings from Jesus as well. Additionally, the epistles could be subdivided into epistles and letters (particularly the pastoral epistles: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon). All of this changes our approach, which we will discuss.

Also, the bible is what is called “culturally conditioned.” This means that though the truths are timeless and eternal, they were written by men and women in their contemporary time and culture with a particular purpose for each writing. All of this must be considered as we build our theology that we base out of the Word. For instance:

The Bible was written:

- over a 1500 year span (from 1400 B.C to A.D. 100)
- over 40 generations
- over 40 authors from many walks of life (i.e. - kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, scholars)
- in different places (i.e. - wilderness, dungeon, palaces)
- at different times (i.e. – times of war, peace, slavery, etc.)
- in different moods (i.e. - heights of joy, depths of despair)
- on three continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe)
- in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek)

This takes us back to the combination of hermeneutics and exegesis. Remembering that the best way to exegete, or study, is by using a “historical grammatical” approach as your hermeneutics. This means that you will take into account the historical context and literal purpose of the writing, as well as take into account language use, such as slang, idioms, and imagery.

Real contextual studying means not just “how does this make sense in a sentence or paragraph,” but also includes history, language, time, location, the author’s tendencies, style of literature, syntax, etc.

Let’s look briefly at a few principles as we consider how to exegete the various parts of the bible properly so we can build our theology. We will only examine a few of the main types of literature.

STEP 2: DISCERNING YOUR FINDINGS

First of all, let’s look at an important phrase that is called “the analogy of Scripture (or faith).” The analogy of faith is a phrase that was coined to describe the idea that Scripture interprets Scripture. Knowing that the Word doesn’t contradict itself, when we are either wondering about the meaning of a verse or seeing an “apparent” contradiction or tough saying, we have to look at the way it affects other Scripture. In our approach to the Word, a common thread as we look at the varying literature styles and topics that run through the Word, it will often come back to “context” of not just the book it is found in or the historical time frame, but to the whole bible itself.

Old Testament Historical Narratives. OT narratives are great epic stories. They are colorful, descriptive, but at some times disconcerting as we see some bizarre stuff happen. Here are a few important principles to keep in mind when it comes to these great books of the bible:

- They don’t *usually* teach an explicit doctrine. Building doctrinal belief *solely* on an OT narrative can be dangerous, though we often times find principles and underlying wisdom.
- That said, they can and will, however, support doctrinal beliefs explicitly stated other places in the bible. So this is not to say that they have zero doctrine, but that it wasn’t their main purpose. For instance, if we want to conquer a city, the bible doesn’t teach us to march around it seven times (**Joshua 6**). That would be false. That said, this story does add to the doctrine that God is all-powerful and can work miracles.
- Narratives record what happened, not always what *should have* happened. Abraham having concubines is not doctrinal support to have concubines. It records history; the good, bad and the “unbiblical.”
- Narratives primary purpose is as stated above: to record events. The overarching purpose of all these events is to illustrate God’s plan for the redemption of mankind, His creation, and to illustrate His power, love, perfection, holiness, and glory. Their primary focus is not necessarily to answer all the theological questions that arise within them, though often times the answers to some of these questions can be found elsewhere (we call this the “analogy of faith,” the fact that Scripture interprets Scripture).

Note: As stated before, other works, particularly the book of **Acts** and on a lesser scale (due to its absolute uniqueness in overall specific purpose), the gospels, also can fall into the category of “historical narratives.” It is of good value to note that many of the stories are “descriptive” rather than “prescriptive.” Unless the Word says “therefore, do this,” we cannot always assume that just because they are there that they prescribe to us what we should do, but rather describe what was done (and often for a principle, rather than a specific prescription.). For instance, just because **Acts 6.1-6** has men distributing food to widows, this doesn’t mean every church has to have a Food for Widows Ministry (that would be prescriptive). Rather, it does give us an example (descriptive) that we need to be mindful of the needs of the church.

The Gospels. The gospels are the first four books of the New Testament comprising of the life and ministry of Jesus. In one sense, they are like Old Testament historical narratives in that it tells a story of factual events. But of course, it also has many teachings, some in parable, some plain, and some using word plays. Here are a few things to keep in mind with the gospels:

- The gospels were written by four different men, and therefore are from four varying points of view. Keeping in mind the audience and purpose is the key.
- Like narratives, sometimes the gospels alone can't be used to build actual doctrine, but more to add to concrete doctrine found elsewhere. Of course, this isn't always the case, but we need to be aware of that. For instance, just because Jesus washed the feet of the disciples doesn't mean that every church should have a Foot Washing Ministry. Again, this was descriptive. The epistles, as we will see, do their part in expounding the words of the gospels into more concise doctrines. To be sure, the gospels are for sure an important piece to formulating biblical doctrine.
- The gospels, though relatively historical in their literature, also have plenty of word play, hyperbole, parables, and other styles of communication. Jesus Himself spoke many a time in parable, word play, and hyperbole. For instance, we know that He doesn't really mean for us to pluck our eyes out if our eyes cause us to sin. He was very creative in His speech and used this kind of hyperbole to effectively communicate. We can ascertain, however, know what the point of the saying was.

The Epistles and Letters. These are for sure the most purposeful in forming correct doctrine and theology. That said, the epistles and letters build on the truths found in all the rest of the Old Testament and teachings of Christ. One problem we run into in the church, however, again is context. Much must be understood about the purpose of the letter, the historical background, and the author. Here are a few tips when approaching the epistles and letters:

- The epistles and letters were largely used for instruction. They were written to churches and church leaders. They are, in many ways, the "how tos" of the gospels. In all of the bible, they are the most explicitly prescriptive for the church and Christian living, building on the theology found in the rest of the bible.
- That said, it is important to take into consideration the history, context, audience, author, and culture of these works. There are, indeed, parts of these letters that are more descriptive rather than prescriptive. A holy kiss, for instance, though it *sounds like* a command "*greet* each other with a holy kiss" does not seem at all to be an actual command given to the church for all time, but is a part of culture in the first century. The heart behind more seems to be the greeting, rather than the kiss (today, a hand shake or hug will do just fine).
- With contextualization, it is of utmost importance to be very humble, discerning, and careful. We can very easily say that since the holy kiss is outdated then something else is also outdated. Again, we have to be very careful with our exegesis, taking in consideration *all of the Scriptures*, not just one verse.

There are other forms of literature that we didn't cover, and inter-usage, such as apocalyptic literature found in Daniel, Ezekiel, and Isaiah, and we can also put the Psalms and even Acts into their own category. But for the sake of our study, this should give us a good groundwork for how we approach particular books.

Now, using the "analogy of Scripture," we will see how our findings will build our doctrines of particular issue to help build a working theology.

**The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed,
and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.**

-Augustine

STEP 3: BUILDING RIGHT DOCTRINE

Once you have a good exegetical system down, you start formulating your “theology,” or your “study of God.” There are various subdivisions of theology.

We will use some of these methods when we approach particular topics and issues in the Word. These specific focused studies we affectionately call the “ologies.”

The suffix “-ology” comes from the Latin word for “word.” We translate it as “study.” Therefore, “bio-”, meaning “life,” and “-ology,” meaning “study,” means “the study of life,” or “biology.”

Theology: The Study of God (“Theo” = “God”): Theology is specifically studying God. Who He is, what He does, His patterns, ways, and interactions. It is the most general term we use for studying His Word.

Bibliology: The Study of the Word (“Biblio” = “Book”): Bibliology is the study of the Word, specifically the bible itself.

Anthropology: The Study of Man (“Anthropos” = “human”): Origin, physical make up, behaviors, and such.

Hamartiology: The Study of Sin (“Hamartia” = “sin” or “missing the mark”): How it affects us, where it comes from, the residual effects of it, how it is fixed, etc.

Christology: The Study of Jesus Christ (“Christos” = “Christ”): Who He is, what He accomplished, how He affects our life, His relationship within the Trinity, His deity, His humanity.

Pneumatology: The Study of the Holy Spirit (“pneuma” = “breath”): “Breath” is a metaphor for a non-material being (ghost or spirit) or influence. It is the study of where the Holy Spirit came from, what His role is in our life, His relationship within the Trinity, etc.

Soteriology: The Study of Salvation (“soterion” = “salvation”): How do we receive salvation, who can be saved, what is the process, how is it carried out?

Ecclesiology: The Study of the Church (“ekklesia” = “assembly”): What is the church, who leads the church, who is part of the church, what is the church’s role, how does it function and carry out God’s will?

Eschatology: The Study of the Last Things (End Times) (“eschatos” = “last”): What will happen at the end of days, what is the order of the last days (rapture, second coming of Christ, etc.)?

Once we have a decent grasp on our biblical theology, especially the many major subdivision “ologies,” we see how they fit together, like a jigsaw puzzle. They complement each other, they illuminate each other, and they don’t contradict each other. This is what we call “systematic theology.”

Systematic Theology: The study that answers the question “what does the whole bible say about this particular topic or issue.” It shows how various Scriptures throughout the bible work in harmony together to form a well-rounded, connected, agreeing view of a particular topic. It also then connects them to other “ologies,” forming a completed jigsaw puzzle. This isn’t to say that every single last question in the bible is answered, this simply can’t be, as God cannot be *completely* known in totality, but we do understand, with confidence, how God has chosen to reveal Himself and work and act among our world.

Practical Theology: An important byproduct of knowing our various “ologies” is the result of practical theology. This is when we are studying and we examine how to best apply truths to the life of the church and the world around us (missions, preaching, evangelism, counseling, etc.). No “ology” is very useful unless it changes us.

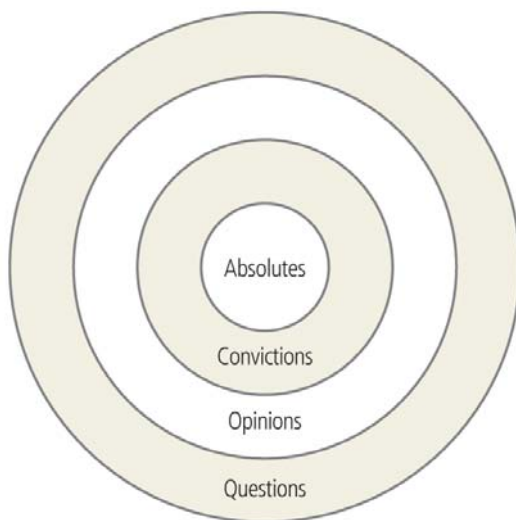
Apologetics: Lastly, a proper understanding of all of these will give us confidence in our life and we will be able to recognize, oppose, and defend against, false teaching. Apologetics is the studying of theology in order to defend truth against criticism and distortion and giving evidence to its credibility.

The bible certainly covers a LOT of topical ground. What it says about various topics and subjects, the importance Scripture puts on them, their clarity in Scripture, their agreement with other Scripture (the analogy of faith), what the consensus of the historical orthodox church is, and the ramifications they have in our life and faith greatly dictate what we do with them and how we walk them out. Generally speaking, you will often hear them spoken of as “**closed hand**” issues or doctrines (beliefs we in no way compromise: the deity of Christ, salvation by grace through faith alone, the existence of only one true God, etc.), as well as “**open hand**” issues or doctrines (beliefs that are not essential for salvation or being a Christian, such as church structure, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Christian liberty, etc.).

More specifically, we can break down the various doctrinal findings in the following four categories:

In the chart below, the center circle contains **Absolutes**, doctrines that would be the “closed hand” essentials. These, as we will define in this class, are those that we WILL NOT compromise in any shape or form. The second circle, **Convictions**, are beliefs that we hold strongly to as they facilitate much of the way we live out our life. They are often times essential to the walking out of our faith, but not essential to having faith. We more often than not don’t ever compromise these, however we are constantly open to those convictions changing as God does various works within us. The next circle, **Opinions**, are quite simply that: opinions. These are things that we have typically given thought to, are generally important to us, but in no way do we hold on tight to, often times because the Word doesn’t say much about them and we therefore don’t become dogmatic about them. These opinions will oftentimes greatly change throughout the course of our life, depending on the stage of life we are, our experience, wisdom, and continual revelation of truth in the Word. Lastly, **Questions** are the parts in the Word that are not quite as clear or definitive. These are the least mentioned (or often times unmentioned) issues in the bible that don’t have much dogmatic education, but we know are there for a reason and so we ask questions about their place in our life.

What various issues or doctrines would fall under the following categories?



Absolutes: _____

Convictions: _____

Opinions: _____

Questions: _____

Three main approaches to these doctrines will place us in a particular journey of theology.

What happens when we push **Questions**, **Opinions**, or **Convictions** closer to center or into the **Absolutes** inner circle?

What happens when we push any of the **Absolutes** into any one of the outlying circles? _____

What happens when we are mindful of these issues and rightly aim to place them in their proper category?

We must guard against both syncretism as well as sectarianism. Syncretism allows too many absolutes and convictions be pushed to the outside, and sectarians push them to more to the middle.

Step 4: Applying Your Studies

John 17.17 says that the Word sanctifies us. This means that as we read, study, and meditate on the Word, it will change us and conform us more and more into the image of Christ. It not only gives us instruction and direction on how to handle situations, but more than anything, it changes our hearts.

The human heart is an idol factory.

– John Calvin

With this in mind, all the attempts and regulations and steps we can take to change ourselves will be futile. It is the Word, breathed by the Holy Spirit, that realigns our worship from our own selves onto Christ. The more we know the Word, the more we know Him. The more we know Him, the more we worship Him. Studying the Word is a part of becoming the worshipper who worships in “spirit and in truth,” not in “spirit and in ignorance.” And, to be sure, I’m not so convinced that the latter is even possible. There must be at least *some* knowledge to worship in spirit, it is only our own choice to limit *how much* truth we are given to, and therefore limit *how much* we worship.

Having a well-rounded, good working theology will do a few things for you:

- It changes how you worship, and how much you worship.
- It changes how you pray, and what you pray for.
- It changes how you share your faith.
- It changes how you read the Word, and how often and how well you read the Word.
- It helps you spot false teaching, bad advice, and bad decisions.
- It sheds sin from your life.
- It makes you more joyful, content, peaceful, and gracious.
- It improves your friendships, marriage, work, and family.
- It causes you to love others more.
- It changes your desires.

It is not enough to simply discover truth, but we need to apply it for it to be of any value.

One final thought on applying your studies. There will also be times when you are seeking the Lord for a particular answer or direction for a certain event or choice in your life. Though we have talked much about finding the actual “interpretation” of the particular books of the bible (of which there is only one), there can also be many “applications.”

Many times we will “get something” out of the Scriptures that was clearly not what it was intended to say. Many times, this is indeed the Holy Spirit using His Word to speak to us something for us. Sometimes, however, it is us looking for an answer. This is the opposite of exegesis, it is called “eisegesis.” Eisegesis is the practice (sometimes accidental practice) of misinterpreting text to make it into something it wasn’t intended to be. We do this in many places in life, just like exegesis. Have you ever thought that someone was mad at you, and when they have a get together on a night that they knew wouldn’t work for your schedule you automatically think it’s was to spite you? That is eisegesis. It could be that it was the only date that worked for them. But you won’t know until you objectively find out (exegesis).

Now there are a few ways that we can “get stuff” out of the Scripture, outside of exegesis. Let’s look at a couple:

Principle. Many biblical stories don’t explicitly teach things, but will implicitly teach things. We can see principles, yet not commands, from within the text.

“Direct Speech.” This is how I would quantify when the Holy Spirit speaks to you something directly through His spoken Word (maybe through prayer or fasting). Here are a few guidelines to help you discern their validity:

- Is it biblical? The Lord will *never* speak something against His ways or Word. Test it against Scripture.
- Don’t make a doctrine out of it. God can speak through His Word in many ways, but we can’t make them dogmatic in our lives or the lives of others.
- Spend time praying and fasting.

Ask others. Share your encounter with people you trust. Ask them what they think.