

# Survey of Christian Theology.01

## Introduction





# Logistics & Learning Objectives:

1. Learning Objectives. Participants will gain an understanding of the:
  - a. Definition of Theology
  - b. Reasons we should study Theology
  - c. A high-level overview of the 12 key topics of Systematic Theology
2. For more information [studioscriptura.com](https://studioscriptura.com)



# Key Sources:



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5. Hodge, Charles. 1872. Systematic Theology. London and Edinburgh: T. Nelson and Sons.
6. Lewis, C. S. 2002. Mere Christianity. New York: HarperCollins.
7. Malpas, J., "Donald Davidson", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/davidson/>
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# Theology Defined

Theology: **θεο** - **λογία** *God's communications*

Christian theology is "talking about God in a Christian way." It is systematically arming oneself with knowledge of our Christian faith from God's word so we can better present God's love, grace, and truth to the world.

Knowing our Christian theology is important so we are not daunted by the onslaught of today's faulty thinking that is positioned against our Christian faith. As we renew our knowledge of, and commitment to what we believe and why we believe it, we'll equip ourselves to *hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering*. Hebrews 10:23



# Theology Defined *(continued)*


Systematic Theology is the ordering of our Christian faith in a coherent way; it catalogues our Christian beliefs.

Each topic is developed with support from the authority of Scripture.

In an organized way, Theology presents who God is and what His purposes are in the world.

"Systematic theology is any study that answers the question, "What does the whole Bible teach u.s...?" about any given topic."





Creeds (anglicized from Latin *credo* which means "I believe") have been used throughout Christian history to publicly proclaim our shared beliefs in God, i.e., our *theology*.

The earliest creeds come directly from the New Testament.

# 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

"For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

Many believe that these words were penned by Paul about 20 years after Christ's Ascension, and that these two verses comprise the earliest creed of theology that Christians publicly stated to proclaim their new faith. These two verses are rich with the foundations of our faith, including the authority of Scripture, the Second person of the Trinity's substitutionary death for our sins, and His bodily resurrection for our justification.







## Romans 10:8b-13

"That is, the word of faith which we preach: that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For 'whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'"

Paul wrote the above passage to to the Church at Rome while he was in Corinth. It is another one of the earliest Creeds of the Christian faith,





# Why Should We Explore Theology?

- Jesus tells us in Matthew 15:7-9:

“Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as *doctrines* the commandments of men.’”
- And St. Paul says:

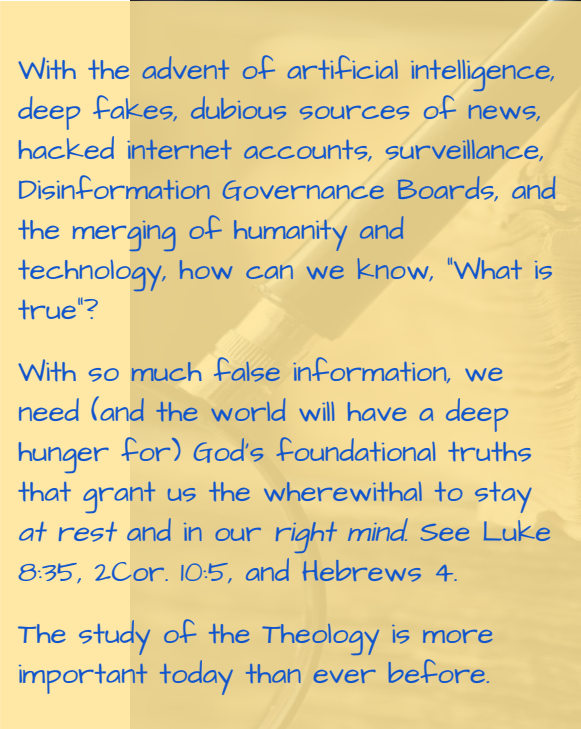
“For the time will come when they will not endure sound *doctrine*, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” 2 Timothy 4:3-4

# Why Should We Explore Theology? *(continued)*

Knowing our theology will equip us to be confident and ready to present our Christian beliefs to the world.

With the growing slide toward syncretism, (allowing the world's beliefs to merge into Christianity) it is imperative for Christians to renew their knowledge of, and commitment to, our Christian beliefs and our ability to communicate them to the world.

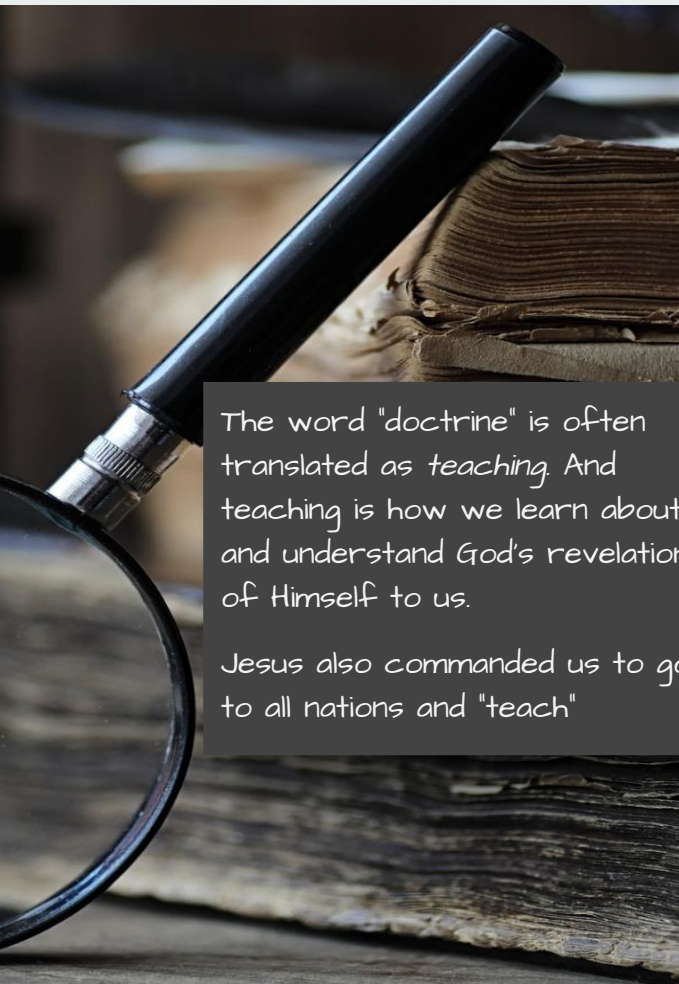
As new challenges arise against our Christian faith, let us arm ourselves with sound theology and be at the ready to contend *earnestly for our faith*. Jude 1:3



With the advent of artificial intelligence, deep fakes, dubious sources of news, hacked internet accounts, surveillance, Disinformation Governance Boards, and the merging of humanity and technology, how can we know, "What is true"?

With so much false information, we need (and the world will have a deep hunger for) God's foundational truths that grant us the wherewithal to stay at rest and in our right mind. See Luke 8:35, 2Cor. 10:5, and Hebrews 4.

The study of the Theology is more important today than ever before.



The word "doctrine" is often translated as *teaching*. And teaching is how we learn about and understand God's revelation of Himself to us.

Jesus also commanded us to go to all nations and "teach"

## Why Should We Explore Theology?*(continued)*

"But as for you, speak the things which become sound *doctrine*." Titus 2:1

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for *doctrine*, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' *doctrine* and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Acts 2:42

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of *doctrine*, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Ephesians 4:14



# Why Should We Explore Theology? *(continued)*

Christians should have a *discipleship of the mind* and especially in this day of a meteoric shower of facts and sloppy opinions.

McGrath, Alister E. 2011. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.

"Application to life is a necessary part of the proper pursuit of systematic theology. Thus a doctrine under consideration is seen in terms of its practical value for living the Christian life."

*Systematic Theology, Second Edition: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem

Systematic Theology is critically important to evangelism and Discipleship.





## Why Should We Explore Theology?*(continued)*

During this day of self-help, self-reflection, self-esteem, self-actualization, self-fulfillment, self-improvement, Self-magazine, self-storage, self-importance, and self-medication ... maybe it is a good exercise to reflect on things outside yourself ... the things of God!

# Why Should We Explore Theology?*(continued)*

1. We are experiencing a global crisis of **meaning**. "The general neurosis of our times." And we may not yet have fully comprehended the impact to our lives. Carl Jung
2. "Ever more people have the means to live, but no **meaning** to live for." Viktor Frankl And this leads to a hatred of the existing society.
3. :The great prevalence of anxiety disorders, depression, and addictions is evidence that points to this dire lack of **meaning** in life - this meaninglessness leads to mental illness.
4. Often more things, more knowledge, more passion on the issue in the headlines-of-the-day are the square pegs to fill the God-shaped-vacuum ... the **meaninglessness** in their soul.

Academy of Ideas. "Why the Lack of Religion Breeds Mental Illness."  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DffqK6j-y1U&t=1s&ab\\_channel=AcademyofIdeas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DffqK6j-y1U&t=1s&ab_channel=AcademyofIdeas)







# Why Should We Explore Theology?*(continued)*

1. "It is not a play on words when I call religion [Christianity] a psychotherapeutic system. It is the most elaborate system, and there is great practical truth behind it."
2. "...the duty to realize one's deepest conviction with the same courage and the same self-sacrifice shown by Jesus"  
Carl Jung
3. Atheism is often regarded as a sign of enlightenment and progress. But Jung called in today's "urban neurosis".
4. Lack of faith in God often results in reliance on, and then ultimately worship of, science and the state.

Academy of Ideas, "Why the Lack of Religion Breeds Mental Illness."  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DffqK6j-y1U&t=1s&ab\\_channel=AcademyofIdeas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DffqK6j-y1U&t=1s&ab_channel=AcademyofIdeas)

# Why Should We Explore Theology? *(continued)*

"Your man has been accustomed, ever since he was a boy, to have a **dozen incompatible philosophies dancing about together inside his head**. He doesn't think of **doctrines** as primarily "true" or "false," but as "academic" or "practical," "outworn" or "contemporary," "conventional" or "ruthless." **Jargon**, not argument, is your best ally in keeping him from the Church. Don't waste time trying to make him think that materialism is true! Make him think it is strong, or stark, or courageous—that it is **the philosophy of the future**. That's the sort of thing he cares about."

"Even if a particular train of thought can be twisted so as to end in our favour, you will find that you have been strengthening in your patient the fatal habit of **attending to universal issues** and withdrawing his attention from the **stream of immediate sense experiences**. Your business is to **fix his attention on the stream**. Teach him to call it "real life" and don't let him ask what he means by "real. life."

The Screwtape Letters: Annotated Edition by C. S. Lewis



# Why Should We Explore Theology? *(continued)*


In order to “walk in truth”, we need to know the truth. And theology is our systematic approach to understanding the truth of God and truths about God. We explore theology to grow into becoming better Christians, to *walk in the truth* and to glorify God!



“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the **truth that is in you**, just as you **walk in the truth**. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in **truth**.”  
3 John 1:2-4

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching** them to observe **all things** that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.” Matthew 28:18-20





Systematic Theology is often organized/catalogued into the following theological topics.

At advanced levels, each of these topics are often further explored as full courses.



A potential objection: *The topics dictate the conclusions.*

But if we proceed with an undisciplined approach we expose ourselves to not teaching the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27) and being tossed to and fro (Eph 4:14) by the vicissitudes of today's post-modern thinking that influences our culture.

The following topics are not only what Christians have believed and taught for 2000 years - but these topics are areas that mankind has questioned during recorded history!

# Our Christian Beliefs

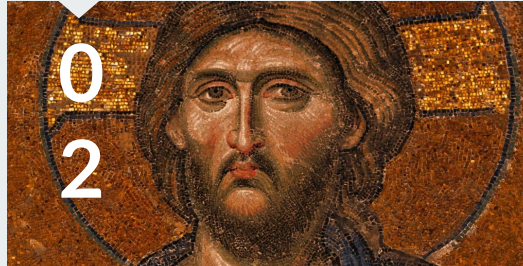


## Doctrine of God - Theology Proper

One eternal, spiritual and personal God exists in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). He is creator, holy, all-powerful, all-knowing, just, the source of truth, and unchangeable.

## The Person of Jesus Christ - Christology

Jesus is the second person of the Trinity and is God incarnate. He reveals the character of God to us. Through His crucifixion and resurrection, He is the Author of Salvation, Son of God, Son of Man, and LORD. He is our Prophet, Priest, and King.



## The Holy Spirit -Pneumatology

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. He is the Church's comforter, sanctifier, and guide.



# Our Christian Beliefs *(continued)*



## The Trinity - Trinitarianism

God is One and reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Although we are not able to fully comprehend the Trinity, it is the fundamental aspect of the Christian view of God. Human reason just comes up short in its ability to grasp the glory of God and this is due to the majesty of God.

## Human Nature & Sin - Hamartiology

Man is made in God's image and with free will. But man has abused (and continues to abuse) that free will by being disobedient to God. Sin affects all people and it darkens our mind and our ability to think clearly about life. It also perverts our relationships and it is the reason we will suffer a physical death and eternal separation from God.



## Salvation - Soteriology & Sanctification

The Good News is that the life, death, and the resurrection of Jesus changes things. Through Jesus, God demonstrates His love toward us, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us! When one confesses with their mouth that Jesus is LORD and believes in their heart that God has raised Him from the dead, they will be saved!



# Our Christian Beliefs *(continued)*



## Sacraments - Sacramentology

After salvation, the sacraments are an outward sign of one's commitment to their new life in Jesus. Denominations around the world all agree that baptism and communion are biblical sacraments. Some believe there are a few others as well.

## The Church - Ecclesiology

The Church is globally comprised of all who have been called out of their old sinful life and have placed their faith and trust in Jesus. The Church is the people of God, the body of Christ.



## End of the World - Eschatology

All good things must come to an end - but something better is coming! The end of the world is one of the topics on which Jesus regularly warned us to not be deceived. But our joyful hope and confidence is that He will return, wipe away every tear, destroy all evil, and set up His kingdom forever.



# Our Christian Beliefs *(continued)*



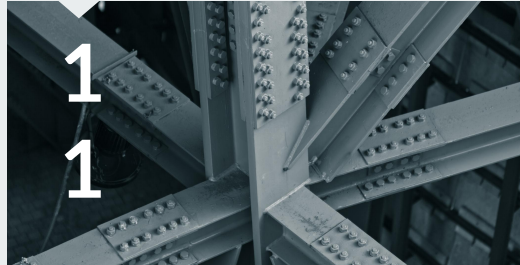
## Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is the method and approach of interpreting the Bible - it is the structural steel behind developing good theology. All Bible verses must be read in context and must be read with the purpose of determining the intent of the original author.



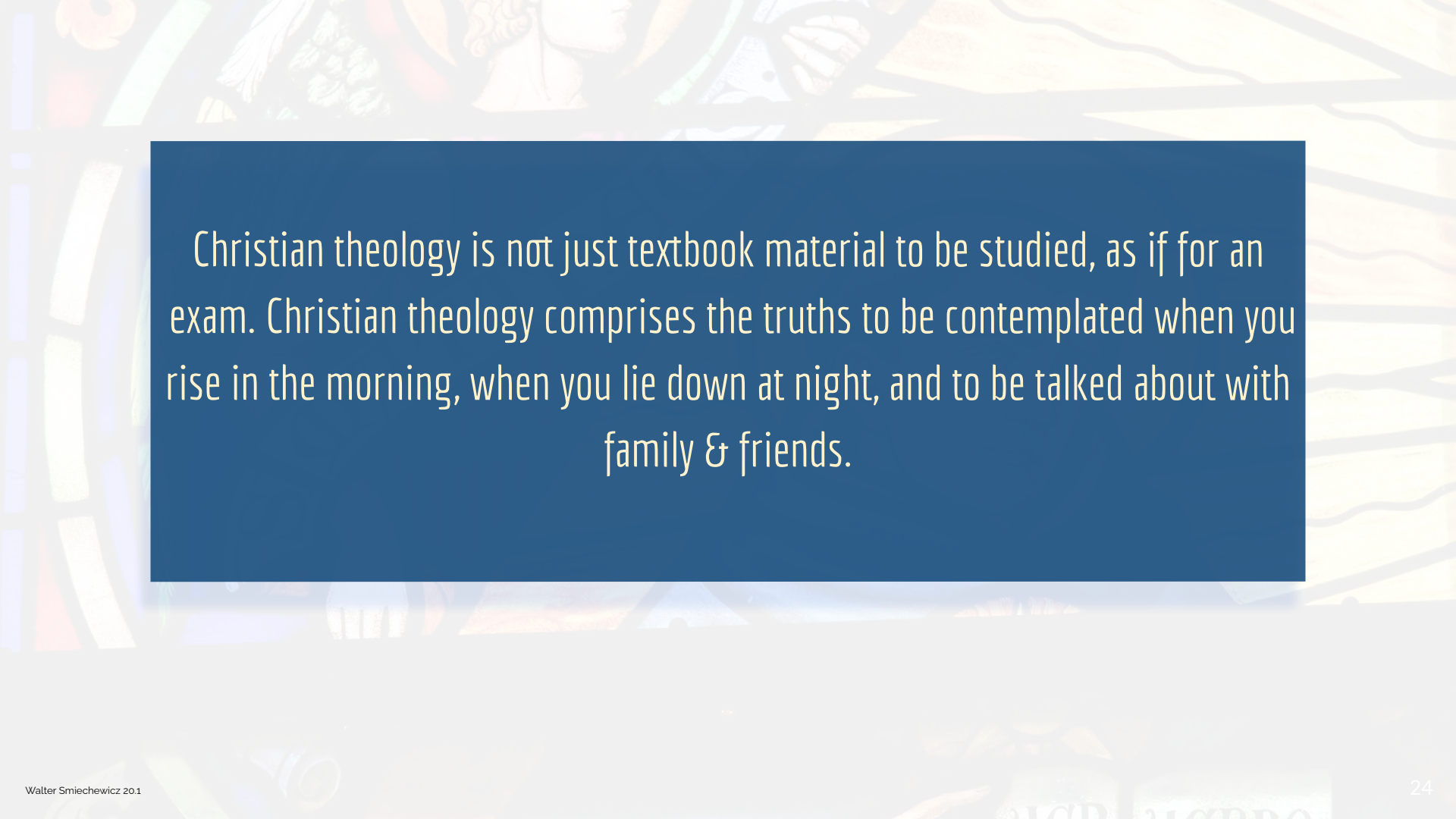
## The Authority of Scripture - Bibliology

The bible (39 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament) is inspired by God. The bible is authoritative, sufficient, inspired, and inerrant in all things that pertain to Christian theology, life and godliness.



## Apologetics

*Not* an apology for our faith. Apologetics is speaking with logic to provide a reasoned presentation and defense for our faith. Theology is *what* we believe and apologetics is *why* we believe.

The background of the slide is a faded, artistic representation of a stained glass window. It features various geometric and organic shapes in shades of blue, green, yellow, and red, with dark lines separating the panes. The overall effect is a soft, textured backdrop.

Christian theology is not just textbook material to be studied, as if for an exam. Christian theology comprises the truths to be contemplated when you rise in the morning, when you lie down at night, and to be talked about with family & friends.



# How Should We Study Theology?

1 **With Prayer** - "Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law."  
Psalm 119:18

2 **With Humility** - "Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know." 1 Corinthians 8:1b-2

3 **With an engaged intellect** - "Be diligent [study] to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

4 **With help from those who have gone before** - "And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers" 1 Corinthians 12:28a

5 **With Praise**- "Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever. For they are the rejoicing of my heart." Psalm 119:111

6 **With a focus on application** - "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man [child] of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16 - 17



# So What

In the first several centuries, theology was (a) a response to public debate about this new Christian faith and (b) response to questions new believers were asking. We study theology today for the same reasons: to respond to the questions that a new generation of believers is asking - and to wisely respond to the world's opinions and questions about life.

The world is very active and skilled at dispensing its view of how it believes we should live. As Christians, we need to have a solid biblical understanding of what we believe and why we believe it in order to be armed and able to understand the world's deceptions and to live life with a biblical worldview.

An unsteady grip of our Christian beliefs allows the world to influence us, rather than us influencing the world for Christ.

# Now What



If you are not a Christian, pray now and tell God you are sorry for your sins, confess with your mouth that Jesus is your Lord, believe in your heart that He died for your sins, and that God has raised Him from the dead for your justification.

Pray that the Holy Spirit gives you understanding and a good grasp of this, and all upcoming lessons.

Talk about this lesson with your friends and family; talking with others is the best way to learn and remember.

Begin to read the Bible in the context of the *things which become sound doctrine*.