

Foundations of Good Theology – Outline

I. Basic Assumptions

- A. *God Exists: It is no Pointless Pursuit to Study Him!* (Heb. 11:6)
- B. *God is Imminent: He is Involved in His Creation* (Acts 17:24-28)
 - 1. Thus We Can Know Him
 - 2. Thus the Supernatural is a Reality in Nature
- C. *The Knowledge of God*
 - 1. It is Available
 - 2. It is Knowable
- D. *Scripture* (2 Timothy 3:16-17 / 2 Peter 1:19-21)
 - 1. Is God-Breathed in all its Breadth and Depth
 - 2. Is Infallible as a True Testimony and Revelation
 - 3. Is Authoritative in All our Studies and Actions
 - 4. Is Sufficient for Every Theological Pursuit
- E. *Truth*
 - 1. Is Exclusive: There is only one faith that we are called to defend and uphold (Jude 3)
 - 2. Is Central
 - a. Truth in worship (Jn 4:24)
 - b. Truth not to be sold for anything at all (Prov. 23:23)
 - c. Truth in love (Eph. 4:15)
 - d. Truth as an object for meditation (Phil 4:8)
 - e. Truth holds in place the other Christian armour (Eph. 6:14)
 - f. Truth as a primary assembly occupation and focus (1 Tim. 3:15)
 - 3. Is Clear: Theology is primarily about explaining clear Biblical doctrines, not speculating about unfounded theories

II. What We Assume About Personal Understanding

- A. *The Knowledge of God is Given by God Alone* (Prov. 2:6)
 - 1. This requires grace
 - 2. This requires personal examination to receive this knowledge
 - a. Being Unregenerate (Jn. 14:17)
 - b. Grieving the Spirit (Eph. 4:30)
 - c. Resisting the Spirit (Acts 7:51)
- B. *Man Has a Special Capacity for Knowing God*
 - 1. Because we are made in His image (James 3:9)
 - 2. Because we, at salvation, partake of His Divine Nature (2 Peter 1:4)
- C. *The Knowledge of God Requires a Passionate Pursuit and Ceaseless Effort* (Prov. 2:3-5)
- D. *The Knowledge of God Will Require the Entirety of Our Beings*
 - 1. Spirit – Theology leads us into closer communion with God
 - 2. Soul – Theology must take root inwardly (Mk. 12:30 / Eph. 3:16)
 - a. Heart: affection and appreciation intensified by truth
 - b. Mind: intellect active in discernment and comprehension

- c. Strength: effort necessary to make any progress
- 3. Body – Theology will be practiced in life
- E. *The Knowledge of God is Entrusted to Men of Integrity, not Simply Intellectuals (Prov. 2:7)*

III. What We Assume About How God Reveals Himself

- A. *General Revelation*: – Gives us basic insights into God's essential nature, but cannot give us enough basis for knowing God or being saved. It only makes us accountable.
 - 1. The Natural Sphere: Reveals God's eternal power and divinity.
 - 2. The Internal Sphere: Points to basic truths about morality and the insufficiency of this life in a fallen world, but cannot grant knowledge for knowing God. It only makes us more accountable.
 - a. *Conscience*: Reveals God as Lawgiver and embeds in man the consciousness of a law higher than himself.
 - b. *Intrinsic Responsiveness*: Whether positive or negative responsiveness, God is the center of man's dealings and thoughts. Quickly it turns into paganism and rebellion, since there is “none that seek after God” in a meaningful sense. True religion, idolatry, and atheism – all center around God in some way, showing God-consciousness as something to take for granted.
 - c. *Personal Experience*: This is not to promote mysticism or specific communication from God to a man's soul apart from Scripture. Rather, it coincides with the concept that “the goodness of God leads you to repentance.”
- B. *Special Revelation* – God's Personal Unveiling of Himself and His Purposes, the Substance of Which Must be Illuminated to the Mind for True Understanding.
 - 1. The Living Word: God Manifested In the Flesh – God's utmost and complete revelation of Himself by Whom we know Him personally.
 - a. “And we know that the Son of God is come [Incarnate revelation], and hath given us an understanding [He opens blind eyes unto the knowledge of God], that we may know him [He makes truth a relational reality] that is true [knowledge of God inseparable from truth], and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. [Christ, the sufficient God-Revealer and Life-Giver]” (1 John 5:20)
 - b. By this we understand that knowing God through theology is active interaction with Him
 - 2. The Written Word: Scripture, and What it Gives Testimony To – Our central source of revelation, the means by which we interpret general revelation and internal revelation, as well as the means by which we know God's Personal Revelation in Christ.