

“Bible Doctrine”: Wayne Grudem
Chapter 1: Introduction to Systematic Theology
Notes: Pastor Keith McMinn

I.Explantation and Scriptural Basis

A. Definition of Systematic Theology

Systematic theology is any study that answers the question, “What does the whole Bible teach us about any given topic.” Example: Salvation, Scripture, Church, & etc.

1. Other Disciplines

- a. Historical Theology:** a historical study of how Christians in different time periods have understood various theological topics. (Carl Trueman, 1967- present)
- b. Philosophical Theology:** studying theological topics largely without use of the Bible, but using the tools and methods of philosophical reasoning and what can be known about God from observing the universe. (Augustine of Hippo; 354-430)
- c. Apologetics:** providing a defense of the truthfulness of the Christian faith for the purpose of convincing unbelievers. (Example: Francis Schaeffer; January 30, 1912 - May 15, 1984)

“While these other areas of study help us to understand theological questions, only Scripture has the final authority to define what we are to believe, and it is therefore appropriate to spend some time focusing on the teaching of Scripture itself.” (Grudem, p.2)

- d. Christian Ethics:** any study that answers the question, “What does the whole Bible teach us about which acts, attitudes, and personal character traits receive God’s approval, and which do not.” (Russell Moore, 1971- present) Example: Capital Punishment, Suicide, Self-defense, & abortion)

Theology tells us what we should think and ethics says how we should live.

- e. Old & New Testament Theology:** What does Isaiah say about prayer? What does the whole Old Testament say about prayer? What does John say about prayer? What does the whole New Testament say about prayer? (Daniel Block, 1943- present)
- f. Biblical Theology:** the larger category that contains both the Old Testament and New Testament. Biblical theology traces historical development from the Biblical audiences.

Chapter Review Questions

1. What is systematic theology? Restate the definition in *Bible Doctrine* in your own words.
2. How is systematic theology different from biblical, historical, and philosophical theology?
3. Draw a line to connect each following question with the proper category? (See guide)
4. Why does systematic theology use terms that are not found in Scripture?

5. Fill in the blank: The adjective *systematic* in systematic _____ should be understood to mean something like “_____ organized by _____.”

2. Application to Life

“All doctrines should be seen in terms of their practical value for living the Christian life. Nowhere in Scripture do we find doctrine studied for its own sake or in isolation from life. The biblical writers consistently apply their teaching to life.” (Grudem, p. 3)

3. Systematic and Disorganized Theology

Careful organized attention in anything can help you understand each component and how they work together. We are all theologians: either we are good ones or bad ones.

- a. **Carefully Organized:** When we are careful and thorough all areas of theology will be covered and thus not neglected. One area of theology most often connects to another. For example: When we study God’s attribute of “grace,” it is helpful to also think through the doctrine of salvation.
- b. **Much More Detail:** Studying theology deeply helps us to understand areas in greater detail. Our positions can be more thought through with much scriptural support.
- c. **Much More Accuracy:** A formal study can give you a “sum” of a summarized position on biblical teaching.
- d. **All the Relevant Bible Passages:** Looking at all the relevant texts on a particular topic will help you be faithful to all that the Bible teaches about every aspect of the doctrine. Sometimes we like to hang on to one aspect only which can prohibit us from having a totally accurate position.

Chapter Review Questions

6. According to Dr. Grudem, the opposite of systematic theology is:

- A. randomly arranged
- B. Clear
- C. Disorganized
- D. Ordered

7. What is the difference between how most Christians do systematic theology and the more formal study of systematic theology found in this book?

8. Why should someone change their mind regarding a particular doctrine?

- A. a teacher/pastor/mentor told them to
- B. based upon a particularly compelling sermon or argument
- C. because the Bible teaches differently than their formal belief

D. based solely upon a dream or vision

4. What are doctrines? (Grudem's Book Major Sections/Doctrines)

a. The Doctrine of the Word of God- the authority, sufficiency and inerrant Word

- Authority and Inerrancy of the Bible
- The Clarity, Necessity, and Sufficiency, of the Bible

b. The Doctrine of God- theology proper/the study of God's Attributes

- The Character of God: Incommunicable Attributes- God is different from us,
- The "Communicable" Attributes of God- How Is God like us?
- The Trinity
- Creation
- God's Providence
- Prayer
- Angels, Satan, and Demons

c. The Doctrine of Man- who man is and His relationship to God

- The Creation of Man
- Man as Male and Female
- Sin

d. The Doctrine of Christ- who Jesus is and His work

- The Person of Christ
- The Atonement
- Resurrection and Ascension

e. The Doctrine of the Application of Redemption- salvation and sanctification

- Common Grace
- Election
- The Gospel
- Call
- Regeneration
- Conversion (Faith and Repentance)
- Justification and Adoption
- Sanctification (Growth in Likeness of Christ)
- The Perseverance of the Saints (Remaining a Christian)
- Death, the Intermediate State and Glorification

f. The Doctrine of the Church- who is the church, membership, church polity

- The Nature of the Church
- Baptism
- The Lord's Supper
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit (I): General Questions

- Gifts of the Holy Spirit (II): Specific Gifts

g. The Doctrine of the Future- deals with end times/last days/timing of events (Revelation)

- The Return of Christ: Where and How?
- The Millennium
- The Final Judgment and Eternal Punishment
- The New Heavens and New Earth

5. Major and Minor Doctrines

“A major doctrine is one that has a significant impact on our thinking about other doctrines or that has a significant impact on how we live the Christian life. A minor doctrine is one that has very little impact on how we think about other doctrines and very little impact on how we live the Christian life.” (Grudem, p.6)

Chapter Review Questions

9. How does Dr. Grudem define doctrine? Rewrite the definition in your own words.
10. What is the distinction between a major and minor doctrine? Give a few examples of each.

B. Initial Assumptions of This Book

- that the Bible is true and our only absolute standard of truth.
- that the God who is spoken of in the Bible exists, and that he is who the Bible says he is: the Creator of heaven and earth and all things in them.

C. Why Should Christians Study Theology

1. **The Basic Reason-** obeys the great commission “teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you.” Studying theology serves to help us obey the commands of the Savior. We tend to think this is just for evangelism but it is also for a believer growing in their sanctification/gospel growth.

“The basic reason for studying systematic theology, then, is that it enables us to teach ourselves and others what the whole Bible says, thus fulfilling the second part of the Great Commission.” (Grudem p.8)

2. **The Benefits to Our Lives-** a means of obedience.

- Overcome wrong ideas
- Able to make better decisions later
- Help us grow as Christians

3. **A Note on Objection-** *Not needed for class instruction*

D. How Should Christians Study Systematic Theology

1. **With Prayer-** *Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.* (Psalm 119:18)

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

2. With Humility

Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (1 Peter 5:5)

Let’s seek to not boast in our understanding but walk in humility.

3. With Reason- We can seek to use reason to work out logic as we see truths.

4. With Help from Others- growth can help well when we talk with others about what we are learning. Doxology Matters Fall Series

5. Collecting and Understanding-

- Find all relevant passages
- Read, take notes, and try to summarize
- Read in additional systematic theology books

6. With Rejoicing and Praise- Lets seek to have rejoicing hearts as we learn deep truths.

Special Terms

- 1. Apologetics-** providing a defense of the truthfulness of the Christian faith for the purpose of convincing unbelievers
- 2. Biblical Theology-** the larger category that contains both the Old Testament and New Testament. Biblical theology traces historical development from the Biblical audiences.
- 3. Christian Ethics-** any study that answers the question, “What does the whole Bible teach us about which acts, attitudes, and personal character traits receive God’s approval, and which do not.”
- 4. Contradiction-** a situation in which inherent factors, actions, or propositions are inconsistent or contrary to one another (Webster’s Dictionary)
- 5. Doctrine-** a principle or position or the body of principles in a branch of knowledge or system of belief (Webster’s Dictionary)
- 6. Historical Theology-** a historical study of how Christians in different time periods have understood various theological topics
- 7. Major/Minor Doctrine-** A major doctrine is one that has a significant impact on our thinking about other doctrines or that has a significant impact on how we live the Christian life. A minor doctrine is one that has very little impact on how we think about other doctrines and very little impact on how we live the Christian life.

8. **OT & NT Theology**- What does Isaiah say about prayer? What does the whole Old Testament say about prayer? What does John say about prayer? What does the whole New Testament say about prayer?
9. **Paradox**- one (such as a person, situation, or action) having seemingly contradictory qualities or phases (Webster's Dictionary)
10. **Philosophical Theology**- studying theological topics largely without use of the Bible, but using the tools and methods of philosophical reasoning and what can be known about God from observing the universe
11. **Presupposition**- to suppose beforehand (Webster's Dictionary)
12. **Systematic Theology**- any study that answers the question, "What does the whole Bible teach us about any given topic."

Memory Verse

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)