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INTEGRATING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION INTO THE SPIRITUAL
FORMATION PROCESS OF SUMMIT CHURCH IN
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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INTEGRATING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION INTO THE SPIRITUAL
FORMATION PROCESS OF SUMMIT CHURCH IN
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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To Vicky,
my wife, best friend, and the love of my life.
You are, by far, the greatest and most influential
theology teacher I have ever learned from.

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PREFACE

It has been a tremendous grace to study at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Over these years, the Lord has shaped me, along with my family and church, in profound ways. I am grateful to Jeff Walters for welcoming me in to the program, my supervisor, James Hamilton, for his guidance, Marsha Omanson for her kind and thorough corrections in formatting, the men in my cohort for their friendship, and to all that have played a part in helping me get to this point.

Throughout this endeavor, I have become increasingly aware of the privilege God has given me to be one of the pastors of Summit Church. Summit is a church like no other, and I pray the Lord gives me many more years of walking alongside of, learning from, and worshiping Jesus with the people of Summit Church.

One of the great joys in my life is serving at Summit with some of the most committed, godly men and women I have ever known. The elders I labor alongside of are faithful men of God, and I am thankful for the grace of shepherding with and being shepherded by them. Also, the staff of Summit is filled with gracious, talented, devoted, Christ-like men and women who teach me what God-glorifying, gospel-centered, missionally-driven, disciple making ministry looks like.

I am extremely grateful to my parents, Jack and Diane Stinziano, and my brothers, Jason and Jordan Stinziano, for their love and support. They have each taught me what faithfulness to Christ looks like, and have modeled for me a life lived in step with the Spirit.

I am blessed to be the father of three daughters, Ellia, Cianna, and Nya, who show me love in unimaginable ways. That God would give them to me is a kindness I do not deserve. And that they have been willing to share their dad with other people and things, this project included, speaks to the character God the Father is developing in them.

Throughout this process, I have been buoyed by the love and encouragement of my wife, Vicky. There is no person God has used more to grow me in my understanding of himself and to shape me into the man I am today than Vicky. Her commitment to Christ is worthy of imitation and I hope to be like her some day. I am pleased to share the accomplishment of this degree with Vicky, as without her it most certainly would never have happened.

And finally, I am thankful to God, most notably for his faithfulness to himself and his faithfulness for me. His grace is amazing, and his works are beyond compare.

Jamin Stinziano

Fort Myers, Florida

December 2015

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to mature the body of Christ at Summit Church in southwest Florida by integrating theological education into the spiritual formation process in the hopes of producing a more faithful, biblically sound, and theologically trained group of Christ followers who are intimately pursuing Christ and committed to partnering with God through missional living.

Goals

In order to evaluate the growth of the body of Christ through the integration of theological education into the spiritual formation process of Summit Church, five goals were established. The first goal of the project was to grow the participants of the project in their intimacy with God by providing them with a basic but thorough understanding of theology. In the book of *Hosea*, God declares through his prophet, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge . . .” (Hos 4:6).¹ When people have a right view and knowledge of God and his ways, it should drive them into more intimate communion with the Creator. This goal was measured by the taking of pre-class and post-class anonymous surveys.

¹Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture is taken from the English Standard Version.

The second goal of the project was to grow the people of Summit Church in their understanding of theology as it applies to an energized, missional lifestyle intent on representing the gospel to every man, woman, and child. The motivation behind this goal was to see knowledge of God's character and activity applied to an individual's life, resulting in transformed convictions and practices that represent the heart of God.

The third goal of the project was to grow the people of Summit Church in their ability to communicate and apply the truths of the faith. When individuals grow in their knowledge and understanding of God, they ought to be able to communicate that knowledge and apply it to their everyday lives. A person with a firm grasp of right theological concepts ought to be able to express those concepts with his or her words and lifestyle. This goal was measured by an evaluation of the pre-class and post-class surveys.

The fourth goal of the project was to grow the people of Summit Church in their understanding of the nature and purpose of Christ's Church. In Ephesians 2, the apostle Paul writes of the Church being "... the household of God ... a holy temple in the Lord ..." and "... a dwelling place for God by the Spirit" (Eph 2:19-22). When individuals grow in their understanding of the nature and purpose of Christ's church, they should grow in their understanding of how they fit in the life and mission of the church and how their presence and participation is necessary for personal growth and world impact.

The fifth goal of the project was for me to grow as a teacher capable of imparting theological knowledge that is both transformative and applicable. As a communicator, I hoped to grow as I was challenged to study anew the truths of the faith

and teach them in a way that engages both the mind and the heart.

Ministry Context

Summit Church was planted in September 2003. It is a local expression of the universal church, called to be a part of the people of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit in southwest Florida. Summit Church is one church with three congregations in the Fort Myers, Naples, and Gateway areas. Summit Church is a member of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Acts 29 Network.

Summit Church exists to glorify God by making disciples who represent the gospel to every man, woman, and child. Summit exists solely for the glory of God. Thus, the heart of Summit Church is that his people in southwest Florida would worship him in his glory, display his glory in their lives, and point others to his glorious activity all around them. As his glory is displayed, the truth of his gospel is communicated—that Jesus Christ lived a perfect life, died a blameless death on the cross, was raised from the dead, ascended to the Father, and made a way for salvation and transformed living. Though God has chosen, in his sovereignty, who will enter into his salvation, the invitation to know him goes out indiscriminately to every man, woman, and child, giving them repeated opportunities to hear, see, feel, and respond to the gospel. The people of Summit Church long to see those who are alienated from God connect into a loving relationship with Jesus Christ and see them grow as they are connected with him and other individuals.

At Summit, there is an intentional, target-driven ministry approach. Missiologist Dwight Smith writes, “Churches that capture the nature of the Church as described in the New Testament, start their thinking not with the church, but with the

place into which God has placed them.”² In addressing the disciples before his ascension, Jesus said, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Jesus gave his disciples very specific and measurable targets. At Summit Church, primary attention is given to specific geographic targets, each one referred to as a “Circle of Accountability” (COA). A local COA is a five-mile radius that surrounds the local church. Because Summit Church currently has three campuses, there are three COAs. In being target driven, the mission is, in part, to make certain that every man, woman, and child living within those three circles has repeated opportunities to experience in some way the good news of Jesus Christ and also has various opportunities to grow as a Christ-follower.

The Fort Myers campus has a Circle of Accountability with 46,457 people living in it. This COA is made up of a large variety of lifestyle segments, with the largest segment, “Young Suburban Families,” comprising 27.4 percent of all households. This population is expected to increase by over 22 percent in the coming years. There is also a variety of age ranges present in the Fort Myers COA, the largest being “Boomers” ranging between the ages of 52 to 69. The education level of the Fort Myers COA is somewhat low. According to the Percept Group, “While 86.7% of the population aged 25 and over have graduated from high school as compared to the national average of 80.4%, college graduates account for 22.1% of those over 25 in the area versus 24.4% in the U.S.”³ In regard to issues of faith, 84.9 percent of the individuals in the Fort Myers

²Dwight Smith and Robert Mountford, *Renovation: Reformational Thoughts & Practices On Church Leadership* (Columbia, SC: Infinity Alliance, 2008), 53.

³Percept Group, *Ministry Area Profile: Summit Church University Campus* (prepared December 23, 2008), 1.

COA say they believe in God. Also, 33.9 percent are, in their estimation, strongly involved with their faith, and 18.8 percent of the households represented prefer a church in the Baptist tradition.

The Naples campus has a Circle of Accountability with 49,301 people living in it. This COA is also made up of a large variety of lifestyle segments, with the largest segment, “Prosperous New Country Families,” comprising 23.6 percent of all households. Over the coming years, this population is expected to increase by over 21 percent. There is also a variety of age ranges present in the Naples COA, the largest being “Survivors” ranging between the ages of 31 to 51. The education level of the Naples COA is somewhat high. According to the Percept Group, “While 89.3% of the population aged 25 and over have graduated from high school as compared to the national average of 80.4%, college graduates account for 37.6% of those over 25 in the area versus 24.4% in the U.S.”⁴ In regard to issues of faith, 81.4 percent of the individuals in the Naples COA say they believe in God. Also, 31.9 percent are, in their estimation, strongly involved with their faith, and 17.6 percent of the households represented prefer a church in the Baptist tradition.

The Gateway Campus has a Circle of Accountability with 18,161 people living in it. This COA consists of a very low variety of lifestyle segments, with the largest segment, “Prosperous New Country Families,” representing 76 percent of all households. By 2017 this COA population is expected to grow by 25.4 percent. In this low variety of lifestyle segments, the largest age group, “Survivors” ranging from ages 31-51, consists

⁴Percept Group, *Ministry Area Profile: Summit Church Naples Campus* (prepared December 23, 2008), 1.

of 26.4 percent of the population. The second largest group is “Boomers,” ranging from ages 52-69, making up 22.2 percent of the population. The education level of the Gateway COA is somewhat high. According to the Percept Group, “While 94.4% of the population aged 25 and over have graduated from high school as compared to the national average of 85.1%, college graduates account for 38.7% of those over 25 in the area versus 27.8% in the U.S.”⁵ In regard to issues of faith, 26.1 percent of the population claim to have increased involvement with their faith in the last 10 years, while 21.9 percent have a decreased participation with their faith. Also, 33.3 percent are, in their estimation, strongly involved with their faith, and 18.8 percent of the households represented prefer a church in the Baptist tradition.

Though there has been great excitement at Summit Church over the past twelve years, there is also a great burden brought about by what is perceived to be a lack of discipleship and spiritual formation in many who make up the church body. When Summit Church was planted, the planting pastors had the capacity to meet with and help almost everyone who called this church his home. Attendance grew quickly, however, and the leadership soon had less of a grasp on the spiritual condition of the people.

Summit Church has four distinctive values that describe its approach to church life and ministry. Summit seeks to be engaged and give its efforts to activities that are (1) God-glorifying, (2) Gospel-centered, (3) missionally-driven, and (4) disciple-making. As people build their lives upon these foundational standards they will hopefully see transformation in their lives. At Summit Church, five transformational outcomes are

⁵Percept Group. *Ministry Area Profile Summit Church Gateway Campus* (prepared June 27, 2012), 1.

looked for in the life of a disciple who is building his or her life upon the distinctive values. These discipleship outcomes are (1) intimacy with God, (2) fruit of the Spirit, (3) stewardship of life, (4) grace story, and (5) personal mission.

“Intimacy with God” is defined as a detailed knowledge and understanding of God that comes through pursuing him as the greatest treasure. “Fruit of the Spirit” is defined as the acting presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer that demonstrates the character of Christ and distinguishes his people from an unbelieving world. When an individual is growing in his or her “stewardship of life,” it means that he or she is faithfully using all that God has entrusted to him or her to reflect his glory. “Grace story” is defined as embracing the fullness of the gospel and being transformed by it in such a way that an individual desires to live out and share God’s message with others. Finally, “personal mission” is defined as discovering and fulfilling your God given purpose in the church and in your community.

In recent years, the leadership of Summit has developed the “Spiritual Formation Process,” which is meant to help people grow in the five outcomes of discipleship. While it is recognized that the completion of a discipleship program cannot ensure life-transformation, there is also a recognition that leaders have a responsibility to put environments in place, both long-term and short-term that will stimulate Christ-like growth in the hearts and lives of Christ’s people. As Chuck Lawless asserts,

Making disciples is . . . an equipping *process* rather than a program . . . A disciple is always in the process of becoming like Jesus. In some churches . . . believers study randomly chosen, short-term courses, and those who complete the courses are ‘discipled.’ I affirm the validity of these short-term studies, but only within the context of an overall . . . strategy addressing the totality of Christian living.⁶

⁶Chuck Lawless, *Discipled Warriors: Growing Healthy Churches That Are Equipped for Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Kregal Academic & Professional, 2002), 47.

Some of the long-term environments in place would be small-groups, a recovery program, a women's discipleship ministry, and an emerging leaders track. The short-term environments put in place are meant to encompass everything from new member classes to shorter but focused study opportunities.

Summit Church is a Southern Baptist church, but most of its people do not come from a traditional Southern Baptist background. Roughly two-fifths of the congregants are new to faith in Christ, new to church attendance, or coming back to a church setting for the first time in years. Summit also has a significant representation of people from different Christian traditions, both evangelical and mainline. Many of these individuals are responding to an authentic, life-changing experience they have had with God. And at the same time, many are, as is common in twenty-first-century American Christianity, mirroring culture as consumers shopping for a place that will meet their needs.

Rationale

As has been stated, as Summit Church has grown, thorough discipleship has been difficult. One area of weakness is in the area of theological training. Though the teaching in the weekend services is biblically robust and strong in gospel proclamation, the limited amount of time individuals spend in a worship service is not enough to sustain discipleship. The people of Summit need to be challenged and trained to cultivate their faith, to walk with others through life, and to teach others what it means to follow Christ.

In creating humanity in his own image, God fashioned men and women with the ability to know him intimately. King David declared, "Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of

my salvation; for you I wait all the day long” (Ps 25:4-5). God desires that his people would pursue him in knowledge. As they pursue God in this way, his Spirit will fill them with an intimate awareness of truth and how they might walk in it. Theological training must take place at Summit Church because God’s people must know his truth and what it means to apply it in their everyday lives.

As God’s people walk in the truth of who he is, they should come to embrace the value of truly knowing him. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians, “But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord” (Phil 3:7-8). In embracing God for who he is, God’s people are driven to worship and serve him in his majesty and splendor. As Psalm 70 states: “May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you! May those who love your salvation say evermore, ‘God is great!’” (Ps 70:4).

Definitions and Limitations

The purpose of this project was to train the people of Summit Church to think theologically in a way that impacts their discipleship, and especially their intimacy with God and missional engagement. According to Robert Mulholland, “Spiritual formation is a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others.”⁷ In speaking of the “Spiritual Formation Process” at Summit Church, what is being referred to is the intentional discipleship process individuals are brought through in which Christ-like transformation is hopefully taking place. According to Brad J. Waggoner, the word *disciple* means, “. . . to be a learner and a follower of Jesus Christ. It implies obedience.

⁷M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 12.

It implies a lifestyle that demonstrates spiritual formation in terms of character and service.”⁸ Waggoner continues, “The word ‘discipleship’ refers to a deliberate process of moving Christians forward spiritually.”⁹ As disciples of Jesus Christ, the people of Summit Church ought to have their discipleship, or movement toward Christ-likeness, informed by a right understanding of God and his ways. The way Summit has purposed to inform disciples is, in part, through theological education in a learning community, a voluntary twelve-week class held on Monday evenings at Summit Church.

One limitation of this project was that the class was limited to fifteen weeks. The fifteen weeks consisted of two preparatory weeks in which pre-class surveys were taken and pre-class reading was completed, twelve weeks of theological training, and one week in which post-class surveys were taken and evaluated.

One delimitation of this project was that it only evaluated those who volunteered to be part of the fifteen-week process. This study was not an evaluation of Summit Church as a whole, but rather of participants from all three congregations that decided to be a part of the integration of theological education into the spiritual formation process of Summit Church.

Research Methodology

The first goal of the project was to grow the participants of the project in their intimacy with God. The main portion of the project consisted of a twelve-week class on theology where the participants were taught doctrine in a systematic way that built upon

⁸Brad J. Waggoner, *The Shape of Faith to Come* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 14.

⁹Ibid.

biblical, historical, and practical theology. Before the twelve-week class, the participants were given a spiritual formation assessment in which they gauged their own knowledge and understanding of God that comes through pursuing him as their greatest treasure. Each interaction with a theological concept covered in the twelve-week class involved a discussion of how an accurate understanding of the concept at hand leads a disciple into more intimate communion with God. After the twelve-week class, the same survey was given and the results of both the pre- and post-class surveys were analyzed.

The second goal of the project was to grow the people of Summit Church in their understanding of theology as it applies to an energized, missional lifestyle intent on presenting the gospel to every man, woman, and child. Before the twelve-week class, the participants were given a spiritual formation/theology assessment in which they gauged their own engagement in missional activity such as communicating the gospel verbally or serving the community with the intent of sharing the gospel. In order to emphasize this goal, class discussions consistently and intentionally focused on the impact of the truth at hand on their missional outlook and behavior. Upon completion of the class, the same survey was given and the results of both the pre- and post-class surveys were analyzed.

The third goal of the project was to grow the participants in their ability to communicate and apply the truths of the faith. Before the twelve-week class, the participants took a spiritual formation/theology survey in which they answered questions about their understanding of key theological concepts. Each week, the class participants were given the opportunity to review and communicate the truths already studied in previous weeks. After the class was completed, the same survey was given and the results of both the pre- and post-class surveys were analyzed.

The fourth goal of the project was to grow the participants in their understanding of the nature and the purpose of the church and their role in its mission. Each week in the twelve-week class there was a discussion about how the theological concept at hand impacts the church and those who make it up. This goal was measured in an evaluation of both the spiritual formation and theological understanding surveys. Upon completion of the fifteen-week process, by evaluating the pre- and post-class surveys, the effectiveness of the project and its impact on those who went through the class was determined.

The fifth goal of the project was to grow myself in the area of theological understanding and teaching. As I prepared for the class and taught the truths of God's character and activity in a smaller context, I grew in my own intimacy with God. As I matured in my understanding of key biblical truths, it dramatically impacted the urgency I sensed to live on mission, as well as my ability to teach theological truths in a larger setting.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter 1 provides an explanation of Summit Church and its need for theological education. This chapter provides a history of Summit Church, its mission, and its philosophy of ministry. Included in the first chapter is a demographic description of southwest Florida and the specific COAs in which Summit Church focuses. Also included in chapter 1 are the goals for the project and the rationale for integrating theological education into the Spiritual Formation process of Summit Church.

Chapter 2 offers a biblical and theological basis for integrating theological education into the spiritual formation process of Summit Church. Specifically, this

chapter describes in detail the theological foundation for integrating such a study into the life of Summit Church. In consideration of the theological foundation, chapter 2 looks at six biblical selections that provide a basis for having a thorough knowledge of God: Job 19, Isaiah 6:1-7, Proverbs 19:2, Romans 11:33-12:1-2, Hebrew 5:11-6:2, 2 Peter 3:14-18. Chapter 2 concludes with an exposition of two biblical selections that describe the importance for those in ministry leadership to teach and impart theological knowledge to those under their care: Hosea 4:1-6 and Ephesians 4:11-16.

Chapter 3 examines the practical considerations of the project, looking at the typical approaches to education within the church body. Chapter 3 also examines the role of spiritual formation in the life of Summit Church and the challenges to integrating theological education into the spiritual formation process.

Chapter 4 describes the method of research and implementation of the project. This chapter explains the two-week survey preparation, the twelve-week integration of theology into the spiritual formation process of Summit Church, and the one-week survey conclusion.

Finally, chapter 5 assesses the entire project. In this chapter, the effectiveness of the project is evaluated in light of the goals of the project. This assessment includes both objective and subjective reflections and helps determine the value and future of theological education in the spiritual formation process of Summit Church.

CHAPTER 2

A BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR INTEGRATING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION INTO THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION PROCESS

The Spiritual Formation Process of Summit Church is meant to grow disciples in Christ-likeness as expressed in the five outcomes of Summit Church. If the Spiritual Formation Process is to be successful in growing disciples in this way than it must be based in a thorough understanding of the biblical text and its theological implications. In his book *Dug Down Deep: Unearthing What I Believe and Why It Matters*, Joshua Harris writes, “Doctrine can never take the place of Jesus himself, but we can’t know him and relate to him in the right way without doctrine. This is because doctrine tells us not only what God has done but also what his actions mean to us.”¹ Thus, an understanding of what the Bible teaches about God and what he has done throughout history is a foundational element for integrating theological education into the local church. As has been stated, discipleship, according to Brad J. Waggoner, “. . . refers to a deliberate process of moving Christians forward spiritually.”² This area of discipline deals with what Bill Hull describes as “the ongoing life of the disciple.”³

¹Joshua Harris, *Dug Down Deep: Unearthing What I Believe and Why it Matters* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2010), 31.

²Brad J. Waggoner, *The Shape of Faith to Come* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 14.

³Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006), 35.

Along with preaching the gospel, the apostle Paul saw discipleship as one of his primary concerns in the church. He wrote “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me” (Col 1:28-29). For Paul, discipleship began with a declaration of who God is and what he has done for humanity. Paul knew that to begin anywhere else was to proclaim an incomplete gospel. As a steward of the gospel, Paul understood that he was called to proclaim Jesus Christ.

As the apostle Peter wrote about in his letter to the scattered church, the birthright of every Christian includes the privilege of proclaiming Christ. He writes, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9). The calling of every Christian is to pursue discipleship in the lives of others by proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. As David Platt writes, “Any Christian can do this. You don’t need to have inordinate skill or unusual abilities to make disciples. You don’t need to be a successful pastor or a charismatic leader You don’t need to be a great communicator or an innovative thinker to make disciples. That’s why Jesus says every Christian must do this.”⁴

According to Colossians 1, Paul also understood that discipleship involves warning others. An important facet to biblical community is that each member of the community takes the responsibility to warn one another. The appropriate way to warn

⁴David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 2010), 90.

others in this way is to use the Word of God. Going back to Paul's declaration to Timothy, the Word of God exists, in part, "for reproof" and "for correction" (2 Tim 3:16).

Paul also knew that the Word of God is useful "for teaching" (2 Tim 3:16). Waggoner writes, "Then, for those who repent and believe, we teach them God's wisdom, God's Word. And we do so with the goal of Christ-like maturity. We are not satisfied with people just sitting in a pew. We aim for far more than attendance. We seek life transformation."⁵

The goal of every church should be to produce disciples. If the church is not producing disciples than it is failing to meet the demands of Jesus. In the Great Commission, Jesus charged the people of God to "make disciples" by "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:18-19). This mandate was taken seriously in the early church, and if the church is to meet the demands of its Head, Jesus Christ, than it must take the mandate seriously today. As Chuck Lawless asserts,

The healthy church builds on its solid biblical and theological foundation to make disciples. Disciple-making bodies teach their members all that Jesus commanded. They teach the purposes of the church. They guide in learning to worship. They teach how to serve, evangelize, pray, equip, and fellowship. They help believers apply and evaluate this faith in every area of their lives.⁶

In understanding the basis for integrating theological education into the life of the church, it is necessary to consider what the biblical text says. According to the Old Testament, a right understanding of God and his attributes gives a proper understanding of oneself and the mission in which God's people are called to engage. A right

⁵Waggoner, *The Shape of Faith to Come*, 14.

⁶Chuck Lawless, *Discipled Warriors: Growing Healthy Churches That are Equipped for Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2002), 47.

understanding of God and his attributes also prepares a man for life's circumstances and sustains him through even the most difficult times. And finally, a right understanding of God and his attributes shapes an individual's passions and desires.

In the New Testament, the biblical text teaches that a right understanding of God fuels an individual in living a transformed life. Also, according to the New Testament, a right understanding of God and his attributes transitions an individual from the elementary teachings of the faith to a more mature, satisfying level of the Christian faith. And finally, the New Testament teaches that a right understanding of God and his attributes enables God's people to stand in confidence against theological error.

In both the Old and New Testaments, it is clear that God expects those in leadership to care for and lead his people. One way in which these individuals are called to care for and lead God's people is by showing them who God is and what that knowledge means for their everyday lives. It is clear that God desires for his people to be protected by a right understanding of himself and to know how to stand in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation.

Theological Understanding in the Old Testament

A View of God's Holiness

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin

atoned for." And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." (Isa 6:1-8)

The sixth chapter of Isaiah demonstrates what happens when an individual has an encounter with the reality of who God is and what that means in his life. God, as seen in Isaiah 6, is entirely holy and that holiness demands a response. According to Brevard S. Childs, "Holiness in the Old Testament is not an ethical quality, but the essence of God's nature as separate and utterly removed from the profane. Holiness, the 'glory of his majesty,' strikes terror in the unholy and proud . . . but to his attendants awe and reverence."⁷ Of the same encounter, Otto Kaiser writes, "We should be impressed by the tremendous magnitude of this deity whose holiness is celebrated by those who keep watch round his throne and whose figure is too great for any earthly house."⁸

God, according to Isaiah's vision, is the King. The earthly king, Uzziah, had died, and uncertainty was ahead for God's people. Regardless of what would come about, however, God was still enthroned upon high. Of this picture, Gary V. Smith writes,

The earthly king of an empire was the most powerful ruling authority in the world, so it is natural that God would reveal himself as the great sovereign king over the whole earth. Kingship is a concept that synthesizes in human terms God's many functions. God's roles as creator, protector, savior, lawgiver, warrior in chief, and judge were perceived as comparable to the roles of earthly kings...so kingship terminology provided an appropriate metaphor to summarize God's various relationships to mankind.⁹

⁷Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 55.

⁸Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, trans. John Bowden, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983), 125.

⁹Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, The New American Commentary, vol. 15A (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 187-88.

In showing himself to Isaiah as King, God established for the prophet a right understanding of his position over all creation. He is sovereign and most worthy of praise. As John Goldingay states, “Regardless of what is happening to the human monarchy, it is this monarch who counts.”¹⁰

A second observation seen in Isaiah chapter 6 is man’s natural condition and how God deals with that condition. Having encountered the glory of the Lord, Isaiah found himself acutely aware of his human condition and its deficiency in God’s presence. A right understanding of God drove him to a right understanding of himself. In response to God’s holiness, Isaiah cried out “Woe is me!” Of this personal indictment, Gary Smith writes, “The reason for Isaiah’s recognition of guilt is simple: he has seen the King, the Lord Almighty. . . . The necessary step before any true confession of sin is having an understanding of the glory and holiness of the Almighty God who rules the heavens and the earth.”¹¹

Isaiah knew that the only way he could stay in the presence of a holy God was if that holy God would take away his guilt. Again, Smith writes, “Once Isaiah confessed his sinfulness and his need for deliverance . . . God reached out through the instrumentality of a seraph to bring atonement. This was an act of God’s grace; Isaiah did nothing to accomplish this atonement.”¹² Otto Kaiser writes, “From the holiness of God there goes out to mankind the call to be holy themselves (Lev. 19.2). Because God

¹⁰John Goldingay, *Isaiah*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001), 59.

¹¹Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, 192.

¹²Ibid.

is other than all the world, those who belong to him are also to correspond to him in their purity and righteousness.”¹³

Isaiah’s encounter did not just end with a right understanding of God, however. Isaiah’s experience of God was sealed with a commissioning. He was to know God and he was also to go as a representative for God. This was Isaiah’s mission. He was to join God in his redemptive mission that had been moving from the foundations of the world by speaking for God and spreading the fame of his glory. Isaiah had a true encounter with God and that encounter sent him forth on the mission of God. And this was not just Isaiah’s mission, but it is the mission of all God’s people. As Bruce Ashford writes, “Mission finds its origin in God. Mission is God-centered, being rooted in God’s gracious will to glorify himself. Mission is defined by God. It is organized, energized, and directed by God. Ultimately, it is accomplished by God. The church cannot understand its mission apart from the mission of God.”¹⁴

In analyzing Isaiah’s encounter with God, the King, it is evident that a right understanding of God leads one to serious life change. Isaiah was in desperate need of purification and it only came when his eyes were opened to the reality of God’s character and activity. Isaiah was also in need of a mission and it only came when he beheld the nature and character of God. The primary motivation for integrating theology into the spiritual formation process of Summit Church is to help people come to a point of realization about God, themselves, and the mission for their life. An integration of theology in the discipleship process is meant to uphold the supremacy of God in all

¹³Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, 126.

¹⁴Bruce Riley Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church, and the Nations*, ed. Bruce Riley Ashford (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011), 299.

creation and what that means for human beings in relation to the Creator. And if it is necessary for humanity to have a right knowledge of the Creator in relation to his creation than it is mandatory for true spiritual formation in the people of God.

A Sure Foundation – The Book of Job

In the Old Testament one also sees the need for a right understanding of God in regard to pain and suffering. Nowhere is this need more evident than in the account of God’s servant, Job. The Bible makes it clear that Job was a man whom God could count on. He was faithful and consistent in his lifestyle. In relation to God, Job was, like King David, “a man after his own heart” (1 Sam 13:14). The first chapter of the Book of Job describes him in this way: “There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil” (Job 1:1). Job lived his life consistent with God’s Word as seen in the Proverbs: “Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil” (Prov 3:7). Job had a holy fear of God that caused him to live a life that honored the one whom he feared. Again, Job’s life reflected the way of wisdom: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov 1:7). In regard to this fear, Gerald H. Wilson writes,

This invisible inward relationship to God is at the core of Israelite faith and practice Fear of Yahweh is more than simple terror . . . or even reverent awe at the ‘otherness’ of the deity. It is the appropriate humility with which humans recognize and accept their absolute dependence on God for life, forgiveness, restoration and salvation.¹⁵

Because of Job’s appropriate fear and faithfulness, God allowed him to go

¹⁵Gerald H. Wilson, *Job*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 18-19.

through immense suffering at the hands of Satan. Job chapter 1 recounts the conversation between God and Satan:

And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. (Job 1:8-12)

As Mark R. Talbot writes, God put Job in "Satan's gunights."¹⁶ Satan, the text goes on to explain, did cause Job severe pain but did not touch his body. Through all of this, "Job did not sin or charge God with wrong" (Job 1:22).

The second chapter of the Book of Job recalls how God gave Satan permission to test Job a second time and to go even further than he had gone before. Wilson remarks, "Although . . . Satan appears to be the active party here, it is obvious . . . that he acts only with the permission of, and within the limits set by, God."¹⁷ Satan then inflicted Job with "loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head" (Job 2:7).

The rest of the book of Job is a description of Job's encounters with his friends, family, and God in relation to his suffering. Job is a difficult book to process but is helpful in formulating a working knowledge of God and his relation to creation. As Robert Alden writes in the introduction to his commentary on the book of Job, "It

¹⁶Mark R. Talbot, *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God*, ed. John Piper and Justin Taylor (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 47.

¹⁷Wilson, *Job*, 31.

reflects, cogitates, and deliberates at great length on the character of God and the problem of a good man's unexplained suffering.”¹⁸

In reading the book of Job, one comes to understand that God is bigger than humanity and God does what he sees fit. One comes to recognize that God is not subject to human criticism and one steps back, figuratively, to ponder the words of God spoken to Job: “Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge” (Job 38:2)? God's people are filled with questions because they have been created in the image of God. Whether those questions are voiced or not, they are being asked in the hearts and minds of God's people. And if God's people do not understand the nature, character, and activity of God, then the questions they are asking will remain uninformed. And if their questions remain uninformed, it would seem, then so are the lives they are living.

Tethered Desire

Desire without knowledge is not good,
and whoever makes haste with his feet misses his way. (Prov 19:2)

In the Old Testament, the word “desire” was meant to encompass the whole of one's being. According to *The New Bible Dictionary*, “In the OT ‘desire’ means much more than merely ‘to long for’, ‘to ask for’ or ‘to demand’. In Heb. psychology the whole personality was involved in desire.”¹⁹ According to the writer of Proverbs 19, desire that is not tethered to knowledge is “not good.” That is, when the whole of one's person is consumed without a proper knowledge of the subject in view it is “not good.”

¹⁸R. L. Alden, *Job*, The New American Commentary, vol. 11 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 39.

¹⁹I. H. Marshall, et al., eds., *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 276.

When relating that knowledge to a proper knowledge of God, the proverbial warning becomes more severe. A person who applies the whole of himself to God's purposes without a right knowledge of God is moving toward failure and possible ruin. If God's people do not know God intimately and do not know about him—his nature, character, and activity—they run the risk of being destructive to the overall mission of God. As John Kitchen writes, "If it is a great tragedy for a person to stand uninformed about God and his circumstances, how much worse that, in zealous haste, he actually act upon such ignorance and end up with the consequences!"²⁰

In looking at these Old Testament texts, it is clear that a right understanding of God and his attributes gives a proper understanding of oneself and the mission God's people are called to engage in. A right understanding of God and his attributes also prepares one for life's circumstances and sustains an individual through even the most difficult times. And finally, a right understanding of God and his attributes should shape the passions and desires of each child of God.

Theological Understanding in the New Testament

In the New Testament, the idea of knowledge is compounded by the fact that there is a deeper level of knowledge to be experienced by those who have the Spirit of God stirring inside of them. As the apostle Paul writes, "No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God" (1 Cor 2:11-12).

²⁰J. A. Kitchen, *Proverbs*, Mentor Old Testament Commentary (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2006), 412.

Transformed by Truth

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Rom 11:33-12:2)

In his letter to the church in Rome, the apostle Paul purposed to give a clear description of the gospel message and its implications. In writing about the gospel, which, according to Paul, is “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom 1:16), the author made sure to anchor everything in the nature, character, and activity of God.

In writing about the “depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God” Paul used the word “bathos,” which means “an extreme point on a scale of extent—‘extremely, exceedingly great, very very’.”²¹ The word gives the picture of the unfathomable depths of the ocean waters. Paul is pressing down the reality that God is beyond any human being’s ability to comprehend. Yet still, there is an invitation to dig deeper into the knowledge of God—a knowledge that comes from understanding God’s revelation of himself. As J. I. Packer writes,

God is not the sort of person that we are; his wisdom, his aims, his scale of values, his mode of procedure differ so vastly from our own that we cannot possibly guess our way to them by intuition or infer them by analogy from our notion of ideal manhood. We cannot know him unless he speaks and tells us about himself.

But in fact he has spoken. He has spoken to and through his prophets and apostles, and he has spoken in the words and deeds of his own Son. Through this

²¹J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 2nd ed., Logos electronic format (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996).

revelation, which is made available to us in Holy Scripture, we may form a true notion of God; without it we never can.²²

This revelation of the depths of God, much like God's revelation of his holiness to the prophet Isaiah, does not conclude with the revelation. God's choice of revelation produces a profound response in the individual. According to Paul, a right understanding of God inevitably leads to a transformed life. With Paul's use of the word "therefore" in Romans 12:1 he links the longing for deep, theological understanding with the practical implications of such a pursuit. As Robert Mounce writes, "It marks the transition from the theology of God's redemptive act in Christ Jesus to the ethical expectations that flow logically from that theological base."²³ God's people are called to join him in his redemptive work by living in representation of him. This representation is forged as the Spirit of God renews the minds of those who are diving into the deep revelation of the knowledge of God.

Growing in Truth

About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. (Heb 5:11-6:2)

²²J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 1973), 48.

²³R. H. Mounce, *Romans*, The New American Commentary, vol. 27 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2001), 230.

In Hebrews 5-6, the author stresses the importance of growing in knowledge and understanding so one might advance in spiritual maturity. It is clear in this section of Scripture that God desires for his children to grow in the grace of knowledge and in their ability to communicate these truths to others. However, many are stalled in the maturation process, especially in their understanding of Jesus Christ. In verse 11, the author admits that there is much more to say about the idea of Jesus as High Priest but he cannot move into those thoughts because the people are not ready to receive them. Their “powers of discernment” have not been “trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil” (Heb 5:14). Of this indictment, David L. Allen writes, “In summary, Heb 5:11–14 gives three indicators for the immaturity of the readers. First, their inability to teach others; second, they need “milk” and not solid food; third, they are spiritually untrained in distinguishing good from evil.”²⁴

Chapter 6 of Hebrews begins with an exhortation to move forward in maturity. Those who are stuck in their faith progression do not need to stay stuck. There is hope for growth, a hope that is realized as God’s people make decisions that reflect their partnership with God in the process of sanctification. Again, Allen writes,

The goal is “maturity” and pressing on is the means by which the goal is reached. The verb *pherōmetha* indicates swift and energetic movement. The verb may be construed in the middle voice in the sense of “to bring oneself forward,” but most likely it should be taken as passive, suggesting God as the one who moves the readers along to the desired goal. Christians are dependent upon God and his grace to enable them to press forward to maturity.²⁵

This process of pressing on is essential for each Christian. The purpose of

²⁴D. L. Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary, vol. 35 (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2010), 338-39.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 340.

understanding theology is not so an individual might become puffed up with knowledge but rather that he or she might grow as he or she was meant to grow. As Wayne Grudem writes, “The more we know about God, about his Word, about his relationships to the world and mankind, the better we will trust him, the more fully we will praise him, and the more readily we will obey him. Studying [theology] rightly will make us more mature Christians. If it does not do this, we are not studying it in the way God intends.”²⁶ Growth in knowledge and understanding is at the fabric of human development and is at the heart of God’s plan for his people. The only way God’s people will grow as they were meant to grow is by giving themselves to the pursuit of the deep things of God. As A. W. Pink writes, “Such capacity is only attained by the Christian through a constant and sedulous application of himself to the things of God.”²⁷

Standing against Theological Error

Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (2 Pet 3:14-18)

In his second letter to the dispersed church, the apostle Peter warned that there were those who not only desired to, but also inevitably would, “twist” the Word of God to suit their own understanding and beliefs. These men and women would be a threat to

²⁶Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 29.

²⁷A. W. Pink, *An Exposition of Hebrews* (Swengel, PA: Bible Truth Depot, 1954), 258.

the community of faith and may carry others away who were not anchored in the truths of God's Word. Peter knew full well that theological error had the ability to weaken the faith of the Christian community because it made room for the justification of immoral life choices. This sort of twisting was enough to bring about damnation. As Thomas R. Schreiner writes, "Their culpability is evident, for Peter went on to say that they did so 'to their own destruction'. . . . Their errant use of Paul's writings landed them in hell—hardly an innocent peccadillo."²⁸

Peter's concern is that the people of God would be "carried away" by false teaching. His exhortation to the people, therefore, is, in part, that they would "grow in the . . . knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet 3:18). This type of knowledge, to Peter, was of utmost importance if they were to persevere to the end. Again, Schreiner notes, "Growing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ . . . is not optional. It is essential for eternal life."²⁹

As was the case in the days of Peter's writing, the church today is in grave danger of being "carried away" by the false teaching of the world it resides in. Far too many people have experienced the shipwreck of their faith because they were not anchored in the truth of God's Word. In writing about an overall lack of concern for right theology in the life of the church, Brad J. Waggoner writes, "In our day we have downplayed the role of doctrine at times, perhaps because we have been influenced by our relativistic culture, which insists that one person's truth is as good as another's. Yet

²⁸Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 397.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 401.

we diminish our emphasis on doctrinal truth to our own harm.”³⁰ Waggoner goes on to write, “We are like the captain who is unconcerned about the leak in his ship. While it may not seem like a big deal at the time, eventually it will sink the ship.”³¹

Peter, whose primary aim was the glory of God, knew that if God’s people did not know God and his character they would be led away into folly and destructive living. This sort of life—a life that is shallow and weak—will never produce the praise and adoration that God so richly deserves. And it is the Bible’s assertion that a life that is growing in grace and growing in knowledge is a life that brings honor to the Creator—a life that declares, “To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen” (2 Pet 3:18). This type of growth and proclamation is the aim of biblical and theological teaching.

In looking at these New Testament texts, it is clear that a right understanding of God fuels an individual in living a transformed life. Also, according to the New Testament, a right understanding of God and his attributes transitions an individual from the elementary teachings of the faith to a more mature, satisfying level of the Christian faith. And finally, the New Testament teaches that a right understanding of God and his attributes enables God’s people to stand in confidence against all theological error.

Theological Education and Those Who Minister

It is clear from Scripture that God has the expectation that those who serve him in a leadership capacity are to glorify him by teaching rightly about him.

³⁰Waggoner, *The Shape of Faith to Come*, 26.

³¹*Ibid.*, 26-27.

Faithless Priests and Prophets

Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O priest. You shall stumble by day; the prophet also shall stumble with you by night; and I will destroy your mother. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. (Hos 4:4-6)

Hosea 4 is a scathing indictment from God. The people of God were thinking and living in ways that were contrary to the desires of God. They were sinners, and their profanity was known throughout the region. The prophet Hosea described it as such: “There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land; there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed” (Hos 4:1-2). In summarizing the condition of God’s people as lacking integrity, compassion, and knowledge, Duane A. Garrett writes, “We could rightly describe these three elements . . . as describing the meaning of the Christian faith. All of Hosea’s accusations sprang from the fact that these were lacking in his people.”³²

However, though their lack of godliness was enough to draw an indictment from God, this particular indictment was not against the people. God’s primary concern was what was lacking in the leaders and in their leadership of the people. God said, “for with you is my contention, O priest” (Hos 4:4). God’s indictment was against the priests, the prophets, and the other leaders who had failed to rightly inform the people about their God, and had failed to teach the people what was expected from them. Again, God spoke through Hosea saying, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos 4:6). The

³²D. A. Garret, *Hosea, Joel*, The New American Commentary, vol. 19A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 111.

people of God were not entirely to blame for their destruction for those who were given charge of them refused to teach them right theology. Again, Garret notes, “Knowing God has both objective and subjective poles. Objectively, it is correct doctrine about God Subjectively, it is the personal relationship one has with God whereby one can honestly say, ‘You are my God’ (Hos 2:23).”³³ They were suffering because they did not know any better. They did not have a subjective or objective knowledge of God, and that lack of knowledge was the direct result of the leadership’s rejection of God himself. In response to this rejection, God spoke, “Because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children” (Hos 4:6).

In writing about faithful, Christ-centered, pastoral ministry, Fred Malone writes, “Your mission . . . is to be a prophet of the Lord Jesus Christ. A prophet doesn’t make up his message but faithfully delivers the message he has received. The very doctrine that was so dear to our Lord’s heart must be dear to ours as well. So watch your doctrine and be faithful to teach all that God has delivered to us in His Word.”³⁴ This careful treatment of right knowledge was the exact opposite of what the priests and prophets had done in the days of Hosea. They were not concerned with what was dear to the heart of God nor did they express those ideas to the people under their care. They were faithless in their leadership because they did not represent God well and they did not teach his character and laws appropriately.

³³Garret, *Hosea, Joel*, 110.

³⁴Fred Malone, *Dear Timothy: Letters on Pastoral Ministry*, ed. Thomas K. Ascol (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2004), 185.

God desires that his people know him, both subjectively and objectively. This does not happen if the people whom God has placed in leadership do not communicate the things of God faithfully. The people in Hosea's day were oppressed by their lack of knowledge. Many people in today's church are oppressed in the very same way. This oppression and inevitable destruction is often times the direct result of faithless church leaders, and God does not take faithlessness lightly.

Building Up the Body of Christ

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Eph 4:11-16)

In writing to the church of Ephesus, the apostle Paul gave a foundational understanding of the true nature and purpose of Christ's church. In the middle of this letter, Paul describes the purpose behind church leadership. It does not exist to be seen or celebrated as much as it does to equip and build up the people of God. In a manner similar to his letter to the church of Colossae, Paul maintained that his goal, and the goal of all church leadership, must be to help others mature in Christ. He desired to bring them "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:13).

In writing about the early church, J. I. Packer and Gary A. Parrett write, "It is apparent that the Christian pioneers took the terms of Jesus' commission very seriously, for there is a kind of drumbeat with regard to teaching that resonates throughout the New

Testament.”³⁵ Jesus was a teacher and his disciples understood their responsibility to be teachers as well. In the closing of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus’ commissioning words are recounted: “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you’” (Matt 28:18-20). If the gospel message was to be communicated and if the people of God were to be brought to maturity, it would come, in part, through the means of teaching right things about God. Again, Packer and Parrett write, “Teaching, not just for the correcting of current errors . . . but for the maturing of the faithful in themselves, was at the heart of their church life.”³⁶

In looking at these texts from the Old and New Testaments, it is clear that God expects those in leadership to care for and lead his people. These individuals are called to care for and lead people by showing them who God is and what that knowledge means in their everyday lives. God has positioned ministers as shepherds over his people because he desires for them to be protected by a right understanding of himself and to know how to stand in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation.

Conclusion

In an age of celebrity pastors and consumer congregations, the dissemination of theological truth has fallen on hard times. Many pastors have neglected their responsibility to equip and build up the people, and many congregations have stopped

³⁵J. I. Packer and Gary A. Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010), 15.

³⁶*Ibid.*

expecting this type of shepherding from their leaders. It was the assertion of Paul that a primary purpose of pastoral ministry was to teach God's people about the things of God.

If a pastor is going to do ministry in a manner consistent with the biblical model of ministry, he must embrace the responsibility of teaching theology to his congregation. In assessing the integration of theological education into the spiritual formation process of the church, it is clear that the need for integration is of utmost importance and the responsibility for such integration rests on the ministers of Christ's church. If any spiritual formation efforts are to be successful in growing disciples than they must be based in a thorough understanding of the biblical text and its theological implications.

CHAPTER 3

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN INTEGRATING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION INTO THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION PROCESS

In his book *Concise Theology*, J. I. Packer writes, “As I often tell my students, theology is for doxology and devotion—that is, the praise of God and the practice of godliness. It should therefore be presented in a way that brings awareness of the divine presence.”¹ In integrating theological education into the spiritual formation process of Summit Church, it is first necessary to identify the need for this type of education. Second, it is necessary to examine how the church has traditionally brought “awareness of the divine presence” to the hearts and minds of its people, and finally to assess how effective those practices have been. Upon deeper inspection, it will be seen that integrating theology into the spiritual formation process through a smaller learning environment, along with theologically rich preaching and some form of catechesis, will faithfully produce spiritually formed disciples growing in the way they image God in the world today.

Spiritual Formation and Discipleship

The “Spiritual Formation Process” of Summit Church is a process that includes

¹J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1995), 1.

discipleship and the forming of Christ-like character in the people of God. The intention behind this formation is to grow disciples of Jesus. Thus, looking at the fabric of spiritual formation and how it has been approached historically within the church is of utmost importance. In some circles, the term “spiritual formation” is used synonymously or even as a replacement for the word “discipleship.” Though they are distinct, the terms are no doubt tethered to one another, so much so that each could be seen as necessary for the other to fully find its meaning.

According to Bill Hull, “The term *spiritual formation* is derived from Galatians 4:19: ‘My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.’”² In his book *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered*, James C. Wilhoit defines spiritual formation as “. . . the intentional communal process of growing in our relationship with God and becoming conformed to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.”³ Spiritual formation describes the positive change toward imaging Christ that takes place in a person who identifies himself or herself as a Christian.

Though there is no mention of the word “discipleship” in the Bible, the idea and practice of discipleship is woven throughout the biblical text. The word “disciple” gives the sense of being a “learner.” In relationships between people like Joshua and Moses, Timothy and Paul, or many others we read about, the picture of discipleship is not

²Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006), 35.

³James C. Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 23.

only present but is also paramount for the development of those being formed. The idea, though, finds its deepest meaning in relation to Jesus and his disciples. The years they spent together were discipleship in its purest sense. Christian discipleship is like that of Jesus' disciples. Discipleship is the intentional following of Jesus, learning to be like him and doing the things he did. As Brad Waggoner writes in his definition of discipleship, it “. . . means to be a ‘learner and a follower of Jesus Christ.’ It implies obedience. It implies a lifestyle that demonstrates spiritual formation in terms of character and service. It means ‘to be like Christ.’ The word *discipleship* refers to a deliberate process of moving Christians forward spiritually.”⁴

Spiritual formation will not take place in an individual who is not growing in discipleship by following and learning from Jesus. And discipleship will not take place in the life of an individual who is not being formed by the character of Christ through intentional practices. Thus, for the sake of this study, “spiritual formation” and “discipleship” will be held together as two sides of the same coin of faithfully growing and living in the image of God.

Producing Spiritually Formed Disciples

In Matthew's Gospel, just before his ascension, one reads Jesus' words to the disciples, the first members of Christ's church,

And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe

⁴Brad J. Waggoner, *The Shape of Faith to Come: Spiritual Formation and the Shape of Discipleship* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group), 14.

all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age' (Matt 28:18-20).

This charge of making disciples is Jesus' primary commission to the church, the instrument God has reconciled, through the Son, to live in relationship with. At the core of its identity, the church is purposed to live in representation of its head, Jesus Christ. And the charge of this commission is made up of two distinct dimensions—seeing people trust in Christ, and seeing people grow in their understanding and imitation of Christ. Jesus charged the disciples with, and thus the church universal as well, a mandate to make disciples who go on living as disciples—men, women, and children becoming followers of Christ and learning to live more and more like Christ.

Spiritual formation is the process of discipleship within the church that provides definition and development in the life of a disciple. As Harry Shields defines it, “Spiritual formation can be described as any ministry extended to a believer in the power of the Holy Spirit so that a person can live, act, and think as Christ himself lives, acts, and thinks.”⁵

The Need for Spiritually Formed Disciples

But, while discipleship remains the primary task of spiritual formation, sadly, it has often been relegated to, at best, second-tier church programs or para-church organizations. Again, James C. Wilhoit writes,

Spiritual formation is *the* task of the church. Period. It represents neither an interesting, optional pursuit by the church nor an insignificant category in the job description of the body of Christ. Spiritual formation is at the heart of its whole

⁵Harry Shields, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ*, ed. Paul Pettit (Grand Rapids: Kregal Academic & Professional, 2008), 247.

purpose for existence. The church was formed to form. Our charge, given by Jesus himself, is to make disciples, baptize them, and teach these new disciples to obey his commands (Matt. 28:19-20). The witness, worship, teaching, and compassion that the church is to practice all require that Christians be spiritually formed. Although formation describes the central work of the church, and despite a plethora of resolutions, programs, and resources, the fact remains that spiritual formation has not been the priority in the North American church that it should be.⁶

But what if the church took seriously its responsibility to spiritually form disciples?

What would change? And how would that change make an impact in the world around those disciples? In examining the spiritual formation of disciples, four obvious needs arise.

The paramount need, above all else, is for the people of God to have a deep intimacy with Him. As Mulholland writes of discipleship, “Everything that God has done, is doing, and ever will do in our lives to conform us to the image of Christ (which is our wholeness) . . . has as its sole purpose that we might become what God created us to be *in relationship with God and with others*.”⁷ It is this relationship with God that grows disciples in deep intimacy with him, and in turn affects others as a zeal for missional engagement is fueled.

The second need is the dissemination of theological teaching into the spiritual formation of Christian disciples. This must be accomplished in both organized and organic ways and is an essential aspect for spiritual formation within the church.

⁶Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered*, 15-16.

⁷Ibid., 40.

Though it is just one vital aspect necessary in the process of spiritual maturity, it is the primary focus of this study. After briefly addressing the other two identified needs, this need will be the concentration of the remainder of the chapter.

In the introduction to his book, *A Foundation for Life: A Study of Key Doctrines and their Application*, Michael Haykin writes,

Absolutely central to Christianity is the fact that it involves a personal relationship with the one true, living God Like all good relationships that one treasures, it must be nurtured and developed. Nurturing this relationship . . . involves two important dimensions. First, there are spiritual disciplines that are vital And second, there is learning the Christian worldview and the fundamental beliefs Christians have held throughout the history of Christianity Both of these dimensions of Christianity are utterly necessary to keeping the relationship with God alive and well.⁸

For a disciple to be fully formed, at a minimum, he or she must have some sort of engagement with the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. As Wayne Grudem says in the preface to his work, “Knowing and understanding basic Christian beliefs is important for every Christian. People who don’t know what the Bible teaches will have no ability to distinguish truth from error, and they will be like ‘children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine’ (Ephesians 4:14).”⁹

In addressing these concerns, the Apostle Paul wrote, “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths” (2 Tim 4:3-4). What Paul recognized is that the

⁸Michael Haykin, *A Foundation for Life: A Study of Key Doctrines and their Application*, ed. Michael Haykin (Dundas, ON: Joshua Press, 2002), xiii.

⁹Wayne Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know*, ed. Elliot Grudem (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 10.

experience and passion of people, without being tethered to the non-negotiable truth of what God says about himself and all he has created, will result in a spiritual deformation of people professing to be disciples of Jesus. This sort of deformation is evident in both the world and the church of today.

The third and fourth identified needs are informed by the first and second. As has already been stated in previous chapters, a right understanding of the character and activity of God shapes an individual's holiness and personal mission. The third identified need is for disciples of Jesus to grow in their imaging of God. In his book, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*, Robert Mulholland writes about discipleship being a process of being conformed into the image of Christ for the sake of others.¹⁰ If a church engages with the task it was created for, the outcome will be men, women, and children who look more like Jesus and who are growing in their imitation and representation of him. This will not flesh itself out in addition, but rather in multiplication as disciples make disciples who make disciples and so on.

This type of engagement involves different facets of providing definition and development in the life of a disciple in both organized and organic ways. Discipleship does not consist of one thing, but rather many things pressing down into the life of the one being formed.

The last identified need is for the people of God to represent him through engagement in missional activity. As Bruce Ashford and Keith Whitfield write, "Christian theology is disciplined reflection on God's *self-revelation*. The purpose of this

¹⁰M. Robert Mulholland Jr., *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 1993), 19-44.

reflection is *to equip the people of God to know and love God and to participate in his mission in the world.*"¹¹ In his letter to the Corinthian church, the Apostle Paul asserted that the reason he lived as an ambassador of Christ was because he had "... concluded this: that one has died for all . . ." (2 Cor 5:14). Paul had come to understand a core theological truth, and as a result, he gave his life to God's mission of proclaiming that truth. In the same way, the need for the people of God to represent God in the world today will be fueled through understanding and embracing core theological truths.

Necessary Components in Spiritual Formation

In writing about perspectives and practices in spiritual formation, Dallas Willard wrote, "I know of no current denomination or local congregation that has a concrete plan and practice for teaching people to do 'all things whatsoever I have commanded you'."¹² So what does faithful spiritual formation look like—formation that defines who and what a disciple is, but then also develops that disciple so his or her intimacy with God and missional engagement is strengthened? And more importantly, for the sake of this study, what does the faithful integration of theological education into the spiritual formation process look like and what are its necessary ingredients? To answer these questions, it is important to look at the distinctive components in the forming of God's people, and then to consider how they are experienced in the teaching of theology.

¹¹Bruce Ashford and Keith Whitfield, *A Theology for the Church*, 2nd ed., ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 3.

¹²Dallas Willard, "Spiritual Formation in Christ: A Perspective on What It Is and How It Might Be Done," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 28, no. 4 (2000): 256.

In addressing the needs of spiritual formation, Jonathan Morrow rightly states, “Spiritual formation is divinely enabled by God through three essential resources: God’s Word, God’s Spirit, and God’s people (the church).”¹³ So in meeting the needs of spiritual formation, it is necessary to highlight these active components of the Word, Spirit, and people of God within the spiritual formation process.

God’s Word in Spiritual Formation

In his second letter to Timothy, the Apostle Paul wrote, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17). Paul gives three major ideas within this thought process. Scripture is God’s Word, it is profitable or useful, and it has the intended outcome of maturing the sons and daughters of God. As the “breathed out” word of God, the Bible must be the dominant shaper of a disciple. There is nothing that stands over it in shaping God’s people, but instead, everything is to be in submission to it. In its usefulness it can be approached at all times with great confidence in the value of taking it in. And as a means to maturity, it can be trusted to develop the best of what God desires in his people.

But how does Scripture’s communication about itself specifically apply to the teaching of theology for the formation of God’s people? The purpose of integrating theology into any spiritual formation is to shape disciples with the truth of what God says about himself and all that he has created. In writing about God’s Word, Brad Waggoner writes, “God’s Word exposes things that are not true or perfectly aligned. It is our fallen

¹³Jonathan Morrow, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ*, ed. Paul Pettit (Grand Rapids: Kregal Academic & Professional, 2008), 45.

nature to think we are better, more mature or healthier than we really are. We must expose our thoughts, attitudes, and actions to God's Word. This is for our own good. We are never served by believing something false."¹⁴

It is through a right understanding of the Word of God that we gain a right understanding of God and all that he has created. In addressing the necessity of God's Word in the study of theology, John Frame writes, "So theology must be essentially a study of Scripture."¹⁵ A proper understanding of theological education and study is to see it simply as a study of God's Word. Frame writes of the 19th century theologian, Charles Hodge, who "... saw theology as a science that dealt with the facts of Scripture, as an astronomer deals with facts about the heavenly bodies and a geologist deals with facts about rocks."¹⁶ And just as a scientist or researcher would do in any field, proper theology uses all of God's Word to come to a consistent understanding of the topic or idea at hand.

God's Word is clearly not an optional component in the shaping of disciples. In fact, it is the authoritative lens through which all of spiritual formation is viewed, and thus, it is the lens through which disciples come to understand the revelation God has made regarding himself and all things. So faithful spiritual formation involves both the organic and the organized teaching of God's Word so that followers of Jesus might truly know who God is, how God has acted in the past, how God is acting in the present, and how God will continue to act in the future.

¹⁴Waggoner, *The Shape of Faith to Come*, 298-99.

¹⁵John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010), 272.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 273.

God's Spirit in Spiritual Formation

As Jesus was nearing the end of his earthly ministry, he made a promise to his followers that the “Helper,” the Holy Spirit, would come and indwell God’s people. In describing to his followers the benefit of the Spirit over his continued presence with them, he said, “It is to your advantage that I go away . . . I will send him to you And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth . . .” (John 16:7-13).

The promise and reality of God’s Spirit living inside his people is one of the great truths the Bible communicates. God’s Spirit is evidence that God did not leave his people on their own, but instead provided for them a way to know and be known by God. The Spirit of God teaches, directs, and shapes the people of God for the purposes of God. Bill Hull writes, “As disciples, we choose to live under the authority of Scripture and to submit to the will of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁷ Spiritual formation is an entirely Trinitarian activity in that God the Father is shaping his people into the image of the Son, Jesus, through the equipping and empowering of the Holy Spirit.

Because becoming a spiritually formed disciple—which includes the organic and organized study of theology—is a life-long process of submitting to the authority of God’s Word for the purpose of Christ-likeness, the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary in guiding God’s people. God’s Word speaks of the Spirit’s activity in this way,

For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received

¹⁷Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 190.

not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. 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. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. 'For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor 2:10-16)

In forming disciples with the truth of who God is and how he has revealed himself, the Holy Spirit guides the people of God, with the Spirit of God residing in them, "into all the truth" of God (John 16:13).

In writing about the Puritans understanding of the Holy Spirit and the truth of God's Word, Geoffrey Nuttall wrote, "They found that they read the Bible in a different way from the way in which they read other books. When they read the Bible something took place in their hearts, not only in their heads. The Holy Spirit was at work, illuminating what was written and enlightening their minds to understand it."¹⁸ And the same should be true for God's people today. The Holy Spirit forms the people of God by making clear the theological truths of God's Word so that his people know how to worship, and where to stand in the face of an aggressive and combatant culture.

God's People in Spiritual Formation

On the integral nature of Christian community for spiritual formation, Paul Pettit writes, "Spiritual formation involves members of the body maturing together toward Christlikeness, by the power of the Holy Spirit and according to biblical

¹⁸Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 22.

standards.”¹⁹ The idea of communal spiritual formation is a biblical concept. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul expressed a deep yearning for them, and he said it would last “until Christ is formed in you” (Gal 4:19). It is important to note that the “you” in that passage is written in the plural form. Paul is not talking about individual formation, but rather community formation.

Certainly, discipleship deals with the individual, but the truly formed disciple cannot be disconnected from the community of faith. Bill Hull writes, “We gain the most benefit from the Holy Spirit’s work and God’s communication to us through his Word in the context of community.”²⁰ Of this truth, Dallas Willard wrote, “Spiritual formation, good or bad, is always profoundly social. You cannot keep it to yourself. Anyone who thinks of it as a merely private matter has misunderstood it.”²¹

Jesus set the example by primarily forming his disciples in the context of community. Jesus rarely dealt with individuals, but even when he did, others were close by. The picture of Jesus with his disciples is a model for God’s people being used by God in the spiritual formation process. As James Wilhoit writes, “The Christian life is best lived in community, where worship, fellowship, and service are practiced, and spiritual formation takes place in, through, and for community. Spiritual transformation must extend beyond the individual to the church, the family, and society.”²²

¹⁹Paul Pettit, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ*, ed. Paul Pettit (Grand Rapids: Kregal Academic & Professional, 2008), 269.

²⁰Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 190.

²¹Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 182.

²²Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered*, 23.

And because faithful spiritual formation necessitates community, it stands to reason that theology done within the formation process ought to be done in the context of community as well. Stanley Grenz wrote, “Central to the knowing process is a cognitive framework mediated to the individual by the community in which one participates ‘Community’ is important . . . because it is central to the message of the Bible.”²³

One need only to look at the Trinity, one God in three persons, to see the importance God places on community. God does not only use one person of the Trinity, but rather uses the fullness of who he is—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—to form his children. And so it is with the people of God. God has purposed for an individual’s pursuit of him to be realized most fully in the greater context of the family of God. As Klaus Isler writes, “The fullest knowledge of God attainable by human beings will only come about within a growing and God-knowing community of saints. Thus, to know God more fully cannot be accomplished without the larger community of believers.”²⁴

This task of integrating theological education into the spiritual formation process with the Word of God, by the Spirit of God, in the people of God is ultimately about disciples being built up in Christ to live out of their true identity. As the Apostle Peter wrote, “You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 2:5).

²³Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 29-30.

²⁴Klaus Issler, *Wasting Time with God: A Christian Spirituality of Friendship with God* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2001), 26.

The Current Reality of Spiritual Formation

With the advent of modernity, and with transitions into post-modernity and now out of post-modernity, the church in the global west especially has weakened, and has, in most parts, grown disinterested at best. In writing about these not so subtle changes, especially in regard to the doctrine of salvation, John Killinger writes,

But while the traditional evangelical notion of salvation as redemption from eternal punishment continues to enjoy popularity in certain religious circles in America, it is also apparent that a major shift has taken place in the thinking of many Christians. It is a shift that began with a widespread acceptance of the contention of more liberal teachers and theologians that the Bible is not literally the Word of God.²⁵

Killinger goes on to write, “Once that contention was accepted, it was only a matter of time before people began to question the conclusions of a faith based on a literal reading of the scriptures.”²⁶

In the years 2007 and 2008, Brad Waggoner was part of a group that did a gap analysis of twenty-five hundred Protestant Christians. These individuals were part of local churches and were surveyed on specific beliefs they held. The intention of the survey was to understand the current reality of beliefs held by the participants and determine what steps might need to be taken to see a more desired reality. Waggoner writes, “The Christian faith has many important doctrinal components. Claiming to be a follower of Jesus Christ implies that a person embraces a Christian worldview. Over

²⁵John Killinger, *The Changing Shape of Our Salvation* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2007), 88.

²⁶Ibid.

time, a strong correlation must exist between a person's claim to believe in Jesus and his or her understanding and belief in what the Bible teaches."²⁷

Understanding this need for correlation to exist, Waggoner's group asked the participants questions about a small number of basic beliefs. Some of the more revealing findings follow: (1) When asked their level of agreement to the statement, "The Bible is the written Word of God and is totally accurate in all that it teaches," only 54 percent "agreed strongly." (2) When asked their level of agreement to the statement, "Christians must continually work toward their salvation or risk losing it," only 33 percent "disagreed strongly" or "disagreed somewhat." (3) When asked their level of agreement to the statement, "If a person is sincerely seeking God, he/she can obtain eternal life through religions other than Christianity," only 40 percent "disagreed strongly" or "disagreed somewhat." (4) When asked their level of agreement to the statement, "Jesus may have committed sins while in human form on earth," only 60 percent "disagreed strongly."

These questions represent one-third of the questions asked, and while they might be the most startling, the lack of unified, biblically sound thinking on behalf of this cross-section of American Protestants represented through the entire study is staggering. Waggoner writes, "An average of 58.5 percent of our sample provided a top or ideal response to the twelve doctrinal questions. These numbers are unacceptable."²⁸

The numbers, incomplete as they are, represent a discipleship crisis, and one of the main issues at the center of this crisis is the seeming absence of theological

²⁷Waggoner, *The Shape of Faith to Come*, 31.

²⁸Ibid., 49.

integration in an organized formation process. In his scathing indictment on churches regarding their propensity to prize learning in the clergy, but to ignore it in the laity, Edward Farley asks, “Why is it that *theological* education, ongoing studies in disciplines and skills necessary for the understanding and interpretation of Scripture, doctrines, moral principles and policies, and areas of praxis, defines something needed by Christian clergy but never by Christian laity?”²⁹ Farley points his finger at the church and its fundamental misunderstanding of purpose. He writes, “This gulf between theological education as ordered learning and ‘education’ in the church is not a surface or trivial phenomenon, but part of the deep structures of the church’s self-understanding.”³⁰

Approaches to Theological Education in the Spiritual Formation Process

It is not, however, that the church has not tried to engage people in theological education. Faithful men and women have labored to this end, but the results are hard to find, let alone measure. In writing about the lack of comprehensive work done to document and evaluate theological education in the church, Norma Thompson writes, “No adequate history traces the relation of theology to religious education. Such a work would provide an excellent resource for the study of this field, but it remains for the future.”³¹ Outside of academic settings, traditionally, there have been three primary

²⁹Edward Farley, *Theological Perspectives on Christian Formation: A Reader on Theology and Christian Education*, ed. Leslie J. Francis, Colin Crowder, and Jeff Astley (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 31.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 37.

³¹Norma H. Thompson, *Religious Education and Theology* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1982), 3.

approaches to disseminating theological understanding into the people of God—preaching, catechesis, and smaller groups or learning environments.

Preaching

The impact of the pulpit cannot be overstated when considering the importance of disseminating right theology into the lives of Christians being formed in the image of Christ. In his letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul wrote, “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching” (2 Tim 4:2). Of the necessity for theologically rich preaching, John Stott wrote,

The essential secret is not mastering certain techniques but being mastered by certain convictions. In other words, theology is more important than methodology. By stating the matter thus bluntly, I am not despising homiletics as a topic for study in seminaries, but rather affirming that homiletics belongs properly to the department of practical theology and cannot be taught without a solid theological foundation.³²

Faithful preaching is theologically informed, theologically delivered, and it develops theologically formed people. In a general sense, however, faithful preaching has fallen on hard times in the church today. Because of this reality, the people of God, generally speaking, struggle to engage with a God they barely know.

Catechesis

Though not as prevalent in evangelical protestant churches over the last 50 years, the process of catechesis has been used quite effectively for teaching and remembering the truths of the faith. The word “catechesis” comes from a Greek word

³²John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 246.

that means, “to resound or echo, to celebrate or imitate, to repeat another’s words and deeds.”³³ According to J. I. Packer, the use of catechesis, or catechisms, is “building believers the old-fashioned way,” and is “. . . the church’s ministry of grounding new believers in the rudiments of Christianity . . .”³⁴ Catechesis is the type of education that is pictured in the book of Deuteronomy when Moses instructs the people on how to remember and teach the instructions of the Lord. Moses said,

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

Packer explains the thinking behind this intentional type of education. He writes, “Those who became Christians often moved into the faith from radically different backgrounds and worldviews. The churches rightly took such conversions very seriously and sought to ensure that these life-revolutions were processed carefully, prayerfully, and intentionally, with thorough understanding at each stage.”³⁵ As has been stated, though, the use of catechesis within the church is not as prevalent as it once was, and few denominations and churches encourage this type of learning. Thus, the careful processing and formulation of theology that catechesis provides is mostly absent in the people of God.

³³John H. Westerhoff III, *A Faithful Church: Issues in the History of Catechesis*, ed. John H. Westerhoff III, and O. C. Edwards Jr. (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow Co., 1981), 2.

³⁴J. I. Packer, *Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010), 21-22.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 22.

Small Groups/Learning Environments

Other environments such as Sunday school, small groups, and missional communities have been established over the years to promote spiritual formation, and to some degree, these environments have been successful at developing certain areas of a disciple's life. An honest assessment of these types of environments in the Church today, though, causes one to see that in large part these environments do not accomplish robust discipleship. In fact, rather than the faithful forming of the people of God, these environments often foster a culture in which competition and consumerism win the day over feasting on the deeper things of God.

The Goal of Integrating Theology into Spiritual Formation

In his first letter, the Apostle Peter wrote, "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith . . . (1 Pet 5:8-9). The ambition of integrating theological education into a spiritual formation process is to undergird, protect, and prepare individuals to deal with the onslaught of a secular world and the flesh that wages war within them. Unless the church takes seriously certain methods of disseminating theological knowledge, it will continue to fall short in forming its people and equipping them to fight against the schemes of the enemy. In writing about the aim of this endeavor, Alistair McGrath writes,

Christian spirituality can be thought of as the attempt to bring into contact and correlate a set of theological beliefs on the one hand with a very specific set of personal and institutional factors on the other hand It arises from a creative and

dynamic synthesis of faith and life, forged in the crucible of the desire to live out the Christian faith authentically, responsibly, effectively, and fully.³⁶

A primary goal of discipleship, then, is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in working toward the development of Christian men, women, and children who reject the distortions of society and the lies of the Enemy. This development happens as a result of being anchored in a theological foundation that accurately presents the consistent truth of the Bible. As Chuck Lawless writes, “Churches without a biblical foundation have little to offer to a world searching for purpose. They certainly don’t alarm Satan very much.”³⁷ Of this reality, Wayne Grudem continues, “Christians who have a solid foundation will be more mature, will not be easily led astray, will have better judgment, and will ‘have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil’ (Hebrews 5:14).”³⁸ So it is necessary for the church, the primary agent God works through in forming his disciples, to teach people theological truth. This type of formation is a significant component to developing the type of disciple that Jesus desires—men, women, and children growing in their intimacy with God and missional engagement.

Theological Content of the Spiritual Formation Process

Understanding the nature and purpose of spiritual formation in the life of the church, as well as understanding the necessary components to the spiritual formation process, it is important to turn to the proper content of spiritual formation. James Wilhoit

³⁶Alistair E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 9.

³⁷Chuck Lawless, *Discipled Warriors: Growing Healthy Churches That Are Equipped for Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Kregal Publications, 2002), 27.

³⁸Grudem, *Christian Beliefs*, 10.

writes, “Christian spiritual formation should always be more than the teaching ministry of the church, but never less. True formational teaching is compressive, deeply orthodox, healthy, and anointed by the Spirit of God.”³⁹

So what is the proper content of faithful, formative theological teaching? And what is the most necessary content for the people of God to embrace in order for the church to accomplish the goal of spiritual maturity? The people of God must know the gospel and the essentials of their faith. Growing in an understanding of the gospel and the faith is of utmost importance for the church. Faithful spiritual formation necessitates this type of instruction. Of this, the apostle Paul wrote, “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me” (Col 1:28-29).

The Gospel

Faithful, formative theological teaching begins with the consistent and thorough explanation and application of the gospel message. The gospel is the only good news for both salvation and transformation. Again, James Wilhoit writes, “Much of our failure in conceptualizing spiritual formation comes from our failure to keep the gospel central to our ministry The gospel . . . is not merely what we need to proclaim to unbelievers; the gospel also needs to permeate our entire Christian experience.”⁴⁰

At the heart of the gospel is an invitation to men, women, and children from their Creator to be reconciled and radically reformed resulting in faithful representation.

³⁹Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered*, 139.

⁴⁰Ibid., 27.

This invitation is a call to discipleship. It is undeserved and involves the deliberate, intentional steps that God, the object of theological study, took to know his children and to be known by them. In teaching people the things of God, it is vitally important to keep the gospel at the center, for without the gospel, there would be no invitation and thus no growth in the true knowledge of God.

The Faith

Faithful, formative theological teaching continues with a dissemination of the essential doctrines of the faith. In defining this type of dissemination, Alistair McGrath writes, “The term ‘Christian theology’ refers to a set of ideas which are recognizably grounded in the Christian tradition, having its origins in the Bible and maintained and developed in the process of reflection, interpretation and transmission within the community of faith.”⁴¹ But because of the wide array of theological perspectives, it is important to establish the core doctrines of the Christian faith that should be part of spiritual formation. In his short article on the need for theological unity in the face of the cultural onslaught on Christian doctrine, R. Albert Mohler writes,

Today’s Christian faces the daunting task of strategizing which Christian doctrines and theological issues are to be given highest priority in terms of our contemporary context. This applies both to the public defense of Christianity in face of the secular challenge and the internal responsibility of dealing with doctrinal disagreements. Neither is an easy task, but theological seriousness and maturity demand that we consider doctrinal issues in terms of their relative importance. God’s truth is to be defended at every point and in every detail, but responsible Christians must determine which issues deserve first-rank attention in a time of theological crisis.⁴²

⁴¹McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 10.

⁴²R. Albert Mohler Jr., “A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity,” May 20, 2004, accessed July 16, 2014, <http://www.albertmohler.com/2004/05/20/a-call-for-theological-triage-and-christian-maturity-2/>.

The task of the teacher is to faithfully determine, by study of God's Word and consultation with the greater Christian tradition, which doctrines must be addressed as of first importance.

In his letter "to those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ," Jude exhorted the believers to "contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1-3). An exhortation like Jude's could only be given if the disciples he was writing had faithfully been taught the truths of the faith. They could not contend for what they did not know, and the same is true for today's Christians. As James Michael Lee writes, "The task of religious instruction is to act merely as a delivery system to faithfully transport theological content and processes intact from educator to learner."⁴³ As was addressed in chapter 2, the author of Hebrews had a clear expectation that the people he was writing to should already have been able to contend for the basics of the faith, as well as move on to the more complex doctrines. Yet they were not disciplined in their learning. He wrote,

About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. (Heb 5:11-14)

In properly teaching the faith, the people of God not only receive the truth but they are also given the opportunity to be more fully formed by it.

⁴³James Michael Lee, *Theological Perspectives on Christian Formation: A Reader on Theology and Christian Education*, ed. Leslie J. Francis, Colin Crowder, and Jeff Astley (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 49.

Conclusion

It is clear that the faithful communication, repetition, and internalization of biblical and theological principles through methods like preaching, teaching and catechesis cannot be replaced in the life of a spiritually formed disciple. And though this study focuses on one approach to the integration of theology—a smaller group learning environment—it is right to note that all three done together should provide a greater outcome. In the organized practice of integrating theology into the spiritual formation process, these biblical mandates continue to be the most effective practices in disseminating theology into the life of the people of God.

With the goal of spiritually formed disciples growing in how they image God in the world, the task of theological education for all of Christ's people is of utmost importance. The growth and faithful witness of the church necessitates it. Spiritually formed disciples of Jesus—individuals who are following and learning to be like Christ while his character is being formed in them—are both individually and corporately God's chosen instruments to represent the gospel to every man, woman, and child. Thus, pastors who wish to minister effectively must put into place multiple opportunities for the people of God to be shaped through a faithful study of God.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS OF THE PROJECT EXPLAINED

Preparation and Administration of a Theology Class

The integration of theological education into the spiritual formation process of Summit Church encompassed approximately fifteen weeks beginning in February 2015 and ending in May of 2015. The preliminary work of studying, along with creating the teaching materials, took place over three years leading up to the class. The announcement for the class and securing participants took place over the month of January 2015. What follows in this chapter will document the steps taken in implementing a systematic theology class for voluntary participants at Summit Church. The overall process included: the formation of a twelve-week theological curriculum, the announcement and signup of participants for the class, the administration of a pre-class questionnaire, the teaching of the class, and the administration of a post-class questionnaire.

The Formation of a Theological Curriculum

The initial task of preparing for the implementation of theological education into the spiritual formation process of Summit Church was to formulate an outline and curriculum. This curriculum was developed over time through studying doctrine, determining the most important areas of emphasis, and fashioning it into a twelve-week theology course. Various theological resources were used in putting the curriculum

together, with Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* providing a significant skeletal framework.

Announcement and Signup of Participants

It was determined that the best context for the class to be taught would be in "Monday School," a learning environment at Summit Church which consists of participants seated at round tables of six to eight people. Beginning in early January 2015, a video announcement for the class was shown at all three Summit congregations as well as being posted on social media. A write-up was also placed in the Summit information guide.

The registration for the class was higher than anticipated with 90 people initially choosing to participate. The demographic mix of the participants was varied, being made up of a multi-ethnic and multi-generational group of men and women from all three Summit congregations.

Administration of Pre-Class Questionnaire

After explaining the project and its purpose, a pre-class questionnaire was administered to the participants. The questionnaire consisted of two parts, (1) general information and (2) a self-assessment of the individual's intimacy with God, missional behavior, and theological understanding. There were twenty-four questions with most being measured on a 5-point Likert scale (appendix 1).

Monday School Theology Class

Each class began with group work. This time primarily consisted of the participants being assigned certain Scripture passages to consider and discuss around

their tables with the intention of gleaning why the doctrine being taught was necessary and worthy of thoughtful study. Each table would then share with the class what their assigned passage had to say and why it mattered for the task at hand.

The majority of each two-hour class was spent with me instructing on a specific doctrine or doctrines (Two classes were taught by a ministry resident, Carl Belcher). Throughout the instruction, the class was asked to either converse at their tables or sometimes together as a class about the ideas that had just been discussed and how those ideas might impact their intimacy with God and/or their missional behavior. This discussion was intended to be a time where the participants saw theology as more than an exercise of the mind and connected it to the whole of their lives.

Systematic Theology and the Doctrine of Scripture

In their book *The Convergent Church*, Mark Liederbach and Alvin Reid write, “Sound doctrine points us along on our journey into true joy.”¹ The first hour of session 1 was an attempt to help the class understand this joyous truth. This time consisted of defining systematic theology, talking about the necessity and accomplishment of it, and rejoicing in the journey of growing in the knowledge of God.

The second hour consisted of instruction on and discussion about the doctrine of Scripture. The reason the class began with the doctrine of Scripture was to set the standard that in studying theology, faithfulness demands that all thoughts, opinions, and answers are anchored in the revealed Word of God. This section began with a short

¹Mark Liederbach and Alvin L. Reid, *The Convergent Church: Missional Worshipers in an Emerging Culture* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2009), 182.

explanation of the history and make up of the biblical cannon. Also, because the grand theme of the biblical narrative is vitally important to any biblical study, time was spent on a thorough explanation of the discipline of biblical theology.

The bulk of the second hour consisted of a thorough explanation of the authority, clarity, necessity, and sufficiency of Scripture. In talking about the authority of Scripture, the class looked at the divine inspiration of Scripture as well as the inerrancy and trustworthiness of it. In studying the clarity of Scripture, time was spent rejoicing in the realities that God, to the degree he has seen fit, has made the Bible able to be understood and yet that there is still so much more that our finite minds cannot comprehend. In discussing the necessity of Scripture, time was given to remembering how God has made himself known, as well as the gospel message. In reflecting upon the sufficiency of Scripture, the class considered the certainty that God has given to his people everything they would need to know in order to live and please him.

The Doctrine of God: His Existence, Knowability, and Attributes

Class 2 began a three-week emphasis on the doctrine of God, the first focusing on the existence of God, how he is known, and what is known about him. Of the doctrine of God, Jonathan Leeman writes, “It’s essential . . . to get the doctrine of God right Either God will be the center of one’s doctrinal solar system or something else will. What we believe about God determines what we believe about everything.”² Because of

²Jonathan Leeman, “God: Not Like You,” in *Don’t Call It a Comeback: The Old Faith for a New Day*, ed. Kevin DeYoung (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 57.

this truth, it was important to take a longer amount of time to talk through the doctrine of God.

The introductory part of the class dealt with the existence and knowability of God. In discussing the existence of God, the class considered the biblical witness and what it says about God from the very beginning. First, the Bible begins in Genesis 1 with the assumption that God already exists. Second, not only is his existence assumed, but his existence is expected to be believed. The Bible never takes on the responsibility to convince the reader that God exists. And third, the existence of God is clear in all of creation, and all one needs to do to know that he exists is see what he has accomplished.

In dealing with the knowability of God, the class discussed Wayne Grudem's arguments for the knowability of God. First, the class looked at the scriptural evidence for Grudem's first claim: "We can never fully understand God."³ The God who is infinite created mankind to know him, but with finite minds he will never be fully understood. Though some might be discouraged by this fact, the class discussed the joy of having a God that is too great to be grasped in the feeble minds of men and women. Second, the class considered Grudem's second claim: "Yet we can know God truly."⁴ Though God cannot be fully understood by men and women, they can still know true and breathtaking things about him. His greatness cannot be wholly grasped, but that which can is more than enough.

The bulk of class 2 was spent on the attributes of God. The participants engaged in hearing, thinking, and talking about the incommunicable and communicable

³Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 149.

⁴Ibid., 151.

attributes of God. The goal of this time was to discuss the unique majesty of God and how his qualities and abilities make a difference in the world and in the life of his children. The questions during this section focused on the comfort from and confidence found in God's character that drives an individual deeper into intimacy with him and further out on his mission.

The Doctrine of God: The Trinity

Charles Haddon Spurgeon once said, "To believe and love the Trinity is to possess the key of theology."⁵ Class 3 dealt with an overview and understanding of Trinitarian thought. First, there was a thorough discussion of Trinitarian thought as it is outlined throughout the Old and New Testaments. Though the word "Trinity" is never found in Scripture, it is necessary to understand where the concept of the Trinity comes from and why it is non-negotiable for an orthodox theological understanding. Thus, part of the class consisted of addressing certain heresies that have at one time threatened the doctrine of the Trinity and even still might exist in some form. Considerable time was spent looking at these heresies, as they are still easy to step into without even knowing it.

The bulk of the class was spent walking through Wayne Grudem's explanation of the Trinity. According to Grudem, "God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God."⁶ In trying to understand Grudem's explanation of the Trinity, the class discussed and marveled in the mystery of the one God who eternally exists in three persons.

⁵Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 17 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1872), 389.

⁶Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 226.

The Doctrine of God: Creation and Providence

In the fourth gathering, the session focused on the originating work of God in creation and the sustaining work of God in his providence. In talking about the originating work of God in creation, the class first discussed God's activity of creating the world out of nothing, "ex nihilo." Second, the class discussed the reality that everything God created was good, meaning that it was useful and purposeful, and that though sin has marred God's creation, it still remains useful and purposeful. Finally, the class looked at the truth that God's creation was ultimately for his glory. Everything God does, including the originating work of creation, is for his fame and renown.

In talking about the sustaining work of God in his providence, the class focused on what the Westminster Shorter Catechism refers to as "his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing [of] all his creatures, and all their actions." For purposes of this discussion, God's providence was looked at through the lenses of his preservation, his concurrence, and his governing over all things. Included in the discussion on God's providence was a look at "theodicy" (the problem of evil), as well as the place of prayer in the life of the believer. The class ended by focusing on questions related to God's providence as it relates to our intimacy with God and our missional behavior.

Session 5: The Doctrines of Humanity and Sin

In the beginning part of class 5, the discussion focused on the doctrine of humanity. The doctrine of humanity begins with an understanding that though God did not need to create humanity, he chose to do it for his glory so that humanity might rejoice

in him and that he might rejoice over humanity. The biblical/theological story of humanity starts with the creation of humanity, moves to the fall of humanity, then to its redemption through Christ, and ultimately to its full restoration at the coming back of the God-Man, Jesus Christ.⁷

Any discussion of the doctrine of humanity necessitates a discussion on the dignity and difference in roles for men and women. In looking at the dignity and difference of the two, the class considered the interpersonal or interdependent relationship between men and women, the equality in personhood, and the difference in roles and authority.

The class then moved to a discussion on the doctrine of sin by looking at the different ways in which sin is referred to in both the Old and New Testaments. The fall, and the results of the fall, including Augustine's notion of "original sin," were considered along with the implications of total depravity. The class spent considerable time looking at the gospel and discussing the need for the gospel in light of humanity's sin condition.

The Doctrine of Christ: The Person of Christ

In session 6 the discussion moved on to the doctrine of Christ, specifically the person of Christ. According to Wayne Grudem, "Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man in one person, and will be so forever."⁸ First, the humanity of Christ was considered. In looking at the humanity of Christ, the virgin birth, the impeccability of Christ, and Christ's human limitations and weaknesses were studied. In viewing these

⁷Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 442-45.

⁸Ibid., 529.

realities, the theological necessity of Christ's humanity was reflected upon by the participants. It was then communicated that Christ's humanity was necessary so he could be our representative obedience, meaning that Jesus obeyed the law of God perfectly for his people. Jesus' humanity was also necessary so he might become the substitute sacrifice, meaning that he took the punishment that was necessary for the sins of humanity. Jesus also became the only effective mediator between God and man, a sympathetic high priest, as well as the true pattern or example for living.

The discussion then moved to a consideration of the deity of Christ, looking first at the Scriptural claims to Christ's deity, and then to direct evidence that Jesus possessed attributes of deity such as omnipotence, omniscience, and sovereignty. The incarnation was studied, taking considerable time to look at inadequate views of the incarnation so it might be seen through the proper lens.

In all, the purpose of this time was to challenge the participants to grow in their intimate pursuit of the God-Man, Jesus Christ, and to think about the way they represent him in the world they live in.

The Doctrine of Christ: The Work of Christ

Pastor-theologian John Piper once said, "O how we should meditate on the work of Christ. Because here we meet the work of God. If you want to know the love of God, know the work of Christ."⁹ In class 7, the discussion focused on the work of Christ in the hopes of knowing the love of God in deeper ways. The discussion on the work of Christ started with the offices of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King. Each of the offices

⁹John Piper, "Much More Shall We Be Saved By His Life," December 12, 1999, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/much-more-shall-we-be-saved-by-his-life>.

was considered in light of Christ's humiliation as the Suffering Servant and exaltation as the Triumphant King.

Next, the class focused on the atonement. In looking at the atonement, the discussion pressed down on the cause of the atonement (the love and justice of God), the necessity of the atonement, and the nature of the atonement (the active and passive obedience of Christ for us). In considering the nature of the atonement, the penal substitutionary atonement of Christ was discussed and looked at against lesser and inadequate views.

Following the discussion on the atonement, the focus shifted to the work of Christ in the resurrection. The conversation was largely centered on the theological significance of the resurrection, focusing first on our regeneration, then our justification, and finally on our resurrection bodies.

Lastly, the discussion culminated with an emphasis on the ascension of Christ. In this section, the class considered the truth that Christ ascended into heaven, received glory, and is now seated at the right hand of God, as well as the glorious implications of the ascension.

The Doctrine of Salvation: Common Grace, Election, and Calling

Class 8 began with the participants discussing around tables their answer to the question, "What does salvation mean to you, personally?" The intention of the question was (1) to stir gratitude, and (2) to force the participants to wrestle with the gospel and consider whether they actually knew what salvation really means. Did their personal definition of salvation match up with the biblical reality of what God has accomplished

for them through the work of Jesus Christ? After sharing around the tables and with the group as a whole, the class discussed the biblical meaning of salvation and looked at the activity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit in the grand scheme of salvation history. Finally, by way of introduction, what is commonly referred to as the “ordo salutis” or the “order of salvation” was discussed, as it would serve as the outline for the following weeks of discussion.

The first concept discussed related to the doctrine of salvation was common grace, which is the grace that all mankind receives from the hand of God. It is different from saving grace in that it does not result in salvation, it is given to those in the family of God and those outside the family of God, and it does not come as a result of Christ’s death on the cross. Common grace is the grace that all mankind receives that shows that God is a good, patient, and glorious God. In essence, common grace gives every man, woman, and child repeated opportunities to see and experience the good, patient, and glorious hand of God so that no man is without excuse.

Next, the class looked at the doctrine of God’s election of his sons and daughters. This was a new doctrine for many in the class so considerable time was spent on this section. Because this can be a difficult doctrine for many to work through, a considerable amount of time was spent looking at what Scripture has to say about the matter, allowing it to do most of the teaching. The class also studied John Calvin’s understanding of unconditional election and looked at common misconceptions of and objections to the doctrine of election. Considerable time was given to the ideas of predestination and reprobation, as well. Students were encouraged to wrestle with Scripture and to find their answers in the biblical text.

The class then ended with a short discussion on effectual or effective calling looking at Wayne Grudem's statement in which he writes, "Effective calling is an act of God the Father, speaking through the human proclamation of the gospel, in which he summons people to himself in such a way that they respond in saving faith."¹⁰

The Doctrine of Salvation: Regeneration and Conversion

Session 9 began with a follow up discussion to the previous week, as participants were encouraged to come back with questions they had regarding the doctrine of election. After a fruitful conversation, and after group work through Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus in John 3, the lesson on the doctrine of regeneration began. In an effort to define and bring light to regeneration, the class looked at the Westminster Confession of Faith, the 1689 2nd London Baptist Confession, and the Baptist Shorter Catechism. The class then discussed a monergistic work (the Spirit alone) vs. a synergistic work (the Spirit and man) of regeneration. It was put forth that regeneration is a mysterious occurrence brought about by the Spirit alone that precedes faith and shows itself in the fruit of the life of a believer. Considerable time was given to answering the question, "Can you be sure regeneration has taken place if a life does not seem to show the fruit of the Spirit?"

After discussing regeneration, the class looked at the doctrine of conversion. Though it seems to be an inseparable event, conversion only comes about once a person is regenerated. Whereas regeneration is a work of the Spirit alone, conversion takes place when an individual repents and places his or her faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

¹⁰Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 693.

Considerable time was spent discussing the true nature of conversion as most in the class had seen or heard it presented in a way similar to, “Just raise your hand or walk down this aisle and you are saved.” The intention of spending a longer amount of time on conversion was to (1) have the participants consider whether they themselves were true converts, and (2) to consider whether as missional ambassadors of Christ they were calling people to true conversion.

The Doctrine of Salvation: Justification

Class 10 began with another question to discuss around the table, “What do you find most amazing about grace and how does that inform the way you view the world and your place in it?” The intention of this question was to help the participants start thinking about the amazing reality of grace and how that reality can change not only how they relate to God but also how they relate to the world around them. This grace is understood, in part, in the doctrine of justification. The discussion on justification was broken into three major parts: the need for justification, the meaning of justification, and the means of justification.

In discussing the need for justification, J. I. Packer’s words were taken into consideration. He writes, “The basic fact is that the God who made us intends to take account of us, measuring us by his own standards, and from his imminent inquisition nothing can shield us.”¹¹ The two primary factors necessitating justification are the sin of humanity, which is rampant, and God’s judgment, which is non-negotiable against all that is unrighteous.

¹¹J. I. Packer, “Sola Fide: The Reformed Doctrine of Justification,” accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/sola-fide-the-reformed-doctrine-of-justification/>.

Because divine judgment demanded that human sin must be dealt with, either all humanity would have to pay the penalty of its sin or God would have to provide a different form of payment or justification. The second part of the class focused on God's choice to provide another form of payment through the life, death, and resurrection of his Son, Jesus. This justification God provided through Jesus is a legal declaration in which God's elect sons and daughters are considered just in the sight of God, meaning they are forgiven of their sins and made righteous. In making "him to be sin who knew no sin" (2 Cor 5:21), God reckoned our sin to Christ and reckoned his righteousness to us so that those who have repented and believed now stand fully justified.

The class then focused on the means of justification. According to Jay Harvey, "When we seek to justify ourselves by human effort of any kind, we undermine the sufficiency of Christ's atoning work."¹² With this truth in mind, the class considered two truths: (1) justification is by grace and not by individual merit ("sola gratia"), and (2) justification is through faith in Christ alone ("sola fide"). Because many of the participants in the class came from a Roman Catholic background, the class concluded by going through R. C. Sproul's short list from his book, *Justified By Faith Alone*, comparing the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification with the Protestant doctrine of justification.

¹²Jay Harvey, "Justification: Why the Lord Our Righteousness Is Better News Than the Lord Our Example," in *Don't Call It a Comeback: The Old Faith for a New Day*, ed. Kevin DeYoung (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 100.

The Doctrines of Sanctification and Perseverance

The eleventh gathering concluded the discussion on the doctrine of salvation by looking at the continuing activity of sanctification and the completing activity of perseverance. First, sanctification was considered. According to Kenneth Keathley, “Sanctification is God’s claiming and subsequent purifying of the believer as his possession.”¹³ In talking about sanctification, three specific stages were discussed.¹⁴ The first stage is the “definite beginning at regeneration.” During these moments, the participants were challenged to look at their own lives in an effort to identify the fruit of sanctification. Next, it was said “sanctification increases throughout life.” As J. I. Packer notes, “Christians become increasingly Christlike as the moral profile of Jesus (the “fruit of the Spirit”) is progressively formed in them.”¹⁵ It was in the context of this discussion that divine and human cooperation was considered. During this discussion, the class was asked to talk around their tables about the comfort they find in knowing that God is an active participant in their sanctification. They were then asked to discuss at their tables the activities of mortification and vivification. Finally, it was said “sanctification is completed at death (for our souls) and when the Lord returns (for our bodies).” The participants spent time considering this great hope and its implications for their present reality.

¹³Kenneth Keathley, “The Work of God: Salvation,” in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2007), 754.

¹⁴Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 747-76.

¹⁵J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993), 170.

That hope-filled discussion led into the study of the doctrine of perseverance, which Charles Spurgeon once said is “the badge of true saints.”¹⁶ The group was asked this question: Can truly converted people lose their salvation? Why or why not? After discussing their answers to this question around their tables, the class concluded by talking through the basic understanding of the reformed doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. First, the class discussed the truth that those who are sons or daughters of God will persevere, or as some would say, be preserved to the end. Second, the class discussed the truth that if someone does persevere to the end, that is evidence that they are truly a son or a daughter of God. The class also discussed that there will be some that seem to be sons or daughters of God who will not persevere to the end, and that will be grievous both to them and to God. The class ended with an explanation that the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, for those that have trusted in Jesus and see the fruit of the Spirit growing in their life, can be and should be a great encouragement in their ongoing walk with Christ.

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

The final session dealt with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, sometimes referred to as Pneumatology. Because the participants of the class came from a variety of church or un-churched backgrounds, they were asked to share around the tables what their previous experience had been regarding the Holy Spirit. They were also asked, in their opinion, what the dangers are in over-emphasizing and under-emphasizing the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church.

¹⁶Charles H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings*, new ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), under sec., “Evening, May 26,” Logos Bible Software.

After a thorough discussion around the tables, the class looked at who the Bible says the Holy Spirit is, what the Holy Spirit does, and how God's people are to respond to the Holy Spirit. The class concluded by considering at length these questions from J. I. Packer, "Do we honor the Holy Spirit by recognizing and relying on his work? Or do we slight him by ignoring it, and thereby dishonor not merely the Spirit but the Lord who sent him?"¹⁷

Administration of Post-Class Questionnaire

After completing the class, a post-class questionnaire was distributed. Of the 90 participants that started the course, 58 participants finished. Those individuals were given the post-class questionnaire so it might be measured against the pre-class questionnaires they had taken prior to the theology sessions. The data from the pre- and post-class surveys was then put into www.surveymonkey.com. The data was then analyzed in an attempt to measure possible growth in intimacy with God and missional behavior as a result of engaging in theological study. The results of the assessment, as well as an evaluation of the overall project, are explained and considered in the next chapter.

¹⁷J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 71-72.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

As was stated in the chapter 1, the purpose of this project was to mature the body of Christ at Summit Church in southwest Florida by integrating theological education into the spiritual formation process. The predominant hope was to produce a more faithful, biblically sound, and theologically trained group of Christ followers who are intimately pursuing Christ and are committed to partnering with God through missional living.

In chapter 1, the need for this project was considered. In chapter 2, the biblical and theological foundation for such a project was described. In chapter 3, some practical considerations for the project were examined. In chapter 4, a thorough description of the project was provided. In this final chapter, I will offer an evaluation of the project as a whole, considering the original goals of the project and whether they were accomplished or not. I will then highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the process, and finally offer my personal assessment of the project.

Assessment of Project Data

Before the class started, the participants were given the opportunity to anonymously assess their own spiritual life and understanding of the essential doctrines of orthodox Christian faith. The participants were then given the same assessment at the

culmination of the class in order to discern significant changes or distinguishable patterns. The pre-class and post-class assessment data was put into www.surveymonkey.com and then passed along to Ryan Kozey, a partner and statistician with Christ Together, a network of like-minded churches committed to seeing 320 billion Americans have repeated opportunities to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ.¹ Kozey received the data and met with me over the phone to discuss the goals of the project. Following that conversation, Kozey analyzed the data and met with me again to discuss the significant changes and patterns he observed from the pre-assessment to the post-assessment. The percentage data from both the pre- and post-class survey can be found in appendix 15, and the analyzed data from the pre- and post-class assessments can be accessed in appendix 16. Ryan Kozey's curriculum vita can be accessed in Appendix 17.

In analyzing the data by using the one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) test, Kozey was able to discern seven questions with significant statistical changes. The questions with a significant shift were as follows:

1. I meditate on God's Word often and recall it in given life situations
2. I experience personal worship throughout the week
3. I am seeing the fruit of the Spirit maturing in my life
4. I regularly submit to what God calls me to be and do
5. I look for opportunities to share my grace story with others
6. I am able to clearly communicate the gospel with those who do not know Christ
7. I have an understanding of the essential truths/doctrines of the Christian faith.

These questions along with some others will be discussed below in considering the goals of the project.

¹For more information about Christ Together, see www.christtogether.org.

The Goals of the Project Evaluated

Intimacy with God

The first goal of the project was to help the class participants grow in their intimacy with God. As was stated in chapter 1, Summit Church has five measurable discipleship outcomes that are used as a framework for gospel ministry. We believe that as people grow in their discipleship, they will exhibit certain qualities—intimacy with God being one of them. As an identified discipleship outcome at Summit Church, intimacy with God is defined as “a detailed knowledge and understanding of God's heart and activity that comes from pursuing Him as our greatest treasure.”²

Because theology is the study of God, and the primary revelation of God's character and activity comes from the Scriptures, theology rightly understood should fuel a desire for more interaction with God's Word. Among the data collected from the pre- and post-class surveys is the idea that engaging in the class did seem to affect a participant's intimacy with God. One of the questions on the survey that showed significant change was, “I meditate on God's Word often and recall it in given life situations.” On the pre-class survey, 13.8 percent of the participants marked “strongly agree,” whereas on the post-class survey 38.6 percent of the participants marked “strongly agree,” representing a 24.8 percent shift from before to after ($F(1, 113) = 11.13$, $p = .001$). The response to this question saw a shift in the mean from 3.7414 on the pre-class survey to 4.2281 on the post-class survey. The reality that individuals grew in their frequent engagement with God's Word is consistent with the answers given on another

²For a full description of the discipleship outcomes of Summit Church, see <http://summitlife.com/about-us/our-mission/>.

question, “I consistently pursue God through personal prayer.” Though not statistically significant, the answers to this question do show a trend toward significance ($F(1, 113) = 2.85, p = .094$). On the pre-class survey, 43.1 percent of the participants answered that they pursue God through prayer. On the post-class survey, 59.6 percent of the participants agreed that they regularly pursue God through prayer, representing a 16.5 percent positive change. Statistically, the survey analysis shows that as people engaged in theological thought, their desire to engage with Scripture and God increased. Also, it appears the increased taking in of Scripture enhanced the ability of the participants to recall it in the midst of everyday life.

Another question that showed a significant shift was, “I regularly submit to what God calls me to be and do” ($F(1, 113) = 7.349, p = .008$). The response to this question saw a shift in the mean from 3.4483 on the pre-class survey to 3.8246 on the post-class survey. This question hits on the idea of obedience in the life of a believer. As individuals grow in their intimacy with God they will see it played out in obedience to his Word and Spirit. On the pre-class survey, 3.4 percent of the participants marked “strongly agree.” On the post-class survey, the number more than quintupled with 19.4 percent of the class-members marking “strongly agree,” representing a 15.9 percent positive change. An analysis of this data concludes that the intentional integration of theology into an individual’s spiritual formation strongly affects his or her intimacy with God and the obedience that flows out of it.

When a thorough study of God is engaged, delight in and adoration of him should be the natural outcome. One survey question that showed significant statistical change in this area reads, “I experience personal worship throughout the week” ($F(1,$

113) = 4.17, $p = .044$). The response to this question saw a shift in the mean from 4.0862 on the pre-class survey to 4.386 on the post-class survey. Before the class began, 31 percent of the participants marked “strongly agree.” After the class ended, 49.1 percent marked “strongly agree,” representing a positive shift of 18.1 percent. A comparison of the pre- and post-class surveys shows that as men and women in the class studied theology week after week, they seemingly grew in their delight in and adoration of God.

Upon considering the data and applying it to the goal of growing the participants in their intimacy with God, it is clear that the project was successful in accomplishing this first objective.

Missional Behavior

The second goal of the project was to see the participants understand the mission of God and to see themselves commissioned as his faithful representatives. This goal coincides with the transformational outcomes of “fruit of the Spirit,” “personal mission,” and “grace story.” At Summit, the “fruit of the Spirit” outcome is defined as “the acting presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church that demonstrates the character of God and distinguishes His people from an unbelieving world.” The “personal mission” outcome is defined as “discovering and fulfilling our God given purposes in the church and in our community.” Finally, the “grace story” outcome is defined as “embracing the fullness of the Gospel and being transformed by it in such a way that we desire to live out and share God's message with others.” Understanding what we believe to be a biblical mandate to grow disciples in these areas, this goal was meant to help the participants grasp the purposes of God, and to see how their lives make a difference in the unfolding of God’s redemptive mission.

A thorough inspection of God and his character should force an individual to examine his or her life in light of the truth of that study. A question on the pre- and post-class survey that showed a significant statistical change and relates to this examination is, “I am seeing the fruit of the Spirit maturing in my life” ($F(1, 113) = 4.107, p = .045$). The response to this question saw a shift in the mean from 4.0517 on the pre-class survey to 4.3158 on the post-class survey. Before the class began, 25.9 percent of the participants marked “strongly agree,” whereas 40.4 percent of the participants marked “strongly agree” after the class. Thus, the data seems to lead to the conclusion that studying theology can and should positively impact an individual’s growth in godliness.

Another question on the survey that showed a significant statistical shift and that relates to the discipleship outcomes is, “I look for opportunities to share my grace story with others” ($F(1, 113) = 7.131, p = .009$). Theology rightly understood should motivate an individual to share the good news of the gospel and how it has altered his or her life. The response to this question saw a shift in the mean from 3.2414 on the pre-class survey to 3.7018 on the post-class survey. When asked this question on the pre-class survey, 34.5 percent of the participants marked “uncertain,” showing they either misunderstood what the question was asking or were not sure what the outcome meant for their own life. Those numbers changed significantly, however, on the post-class survey with only 15.8 percent of the participants marking “uncertain,” showing either a new understanding of the outcome or seeing better how it is realized in their own life. It is clear that many of the individuals who marked “uncertain” on the pre-class survey saw a change in the positive direction, as the percentage for “agree” rose from 36.2 percent to 56.1 percent and the percentage for “strongly agree” doubled, rising from 6.9 percent to

14 percent.

This question seems to be consistent with the findings of another question on the survey that shows significant statistical change, “I am able to clearly communicate the gospel with those who do not know Christ” ($F(1, 113) = 6.778, p = .010$). The response to this question saw a shift in the mean from 3.3276 on the pre-class survey to 3.7895 on the post-class survey. Again, in answer to this question, the percentage that marked “uncertain” dropped from 39.7 percent to 24.6 percent, with those marking “agree” rising from 29.3 percent to 40.4 percent and those marking “strongly agree” also doubling from 12.1 percent to 24.6 percent. It seems clear by looking at these questions that theology, rightly understood, affected the desire, ability, and commitment of many participants to share the gospel with those outside of the faith.

Upon considering the data and applying it to the goal of growing people in their missional behavior, it is evident that the intentional study of theology had a dramatic impact on the participants’ personal and public engagement in the mission of God.

Understanding and Communicating the Faith

The third goal of the project focused on a desire to see the class participants grow in their theological knowledge. This growth was not meant to be purely intellectual, but rather to serve as an impetus for applying right doctrine to the individual’s life and communicating it faithfully to others. While this goal hits on Summit Church’s “personal mission” discipleship outcome, it is also connected to our fifth outcome, “stewardship of life.” This outcome is defined as “faithfully using everything God has entrusted to us to reflect His glory.” Engaging in theological thought

is not an activity reserved just for the academy, but instead is an act of faithful stewardship for all who desire to glorify the Creator.

In order to apply and communicate the faith effectively, it is necessary to know true things about God. And in knowing true things about God, it is essential to understand how that truth impacts what one communicates to himself and to others. Studying theology rightly should press down transformative truth that impacts both verbal and non-verbal communication. As has been stated above, participants grew through the study in their desire and ability to communicate the gospel to others. But what exactly are they able to share in relation to the truths of the faith? The final question on the pre- and post-class survey, “I have an understanding of the essential truths/doctrines of the Christian faith,” shows significant statistical growth in the area of doctrinal comprehension ($F(1, 113) = 9.612, p = .002$). The response to this question saw a shift in the mean from 3.9310 on the pre-class survey to 4.4035 on the post-class survey. An area worthy of celebration is that the percentage of participants who answered “disagree” on the pre-class survey, 12.1 percent, shrunk to 0 percent on the post-class survey. There was also significant growth in the number of individuals who marked “strongly agree,” growing from 27.6 percent to 50.9 percent.

Upon considering the data and applying it to the goal of growing people in their understanding and communication of the faith, it is clear that not only did the participants grow in their desire to share the truth of the gospel, but they also grew significantly in their understanding of what they believe and how to articulate it.

The Nature and Purpose of the Church

Before the project began, the goal of growing the participants in their

understanding of the nature and purpose of the Church was going to be a major part of the study. I decided, though, to hold off on teaching ecclesiology in this round of classes. One of the reasons I made this decision is because we have another class to be offered in the same type of setting that deals specifically with ecclesiology. Time was also a factor as there was not enough of it in the fifteen-week process to address everything that would normally be taught.

This goal was not met because this goal was intentionally set aside. However, though ecclesiology was not specifically discussed, the church was strengthened as individuals sought to better understand and worship God in the context of community.

Teaching Theology

The fifth and final goal of the project was to see myself grow in effectively communicating theological truth. Over the past twelve years I have taught theological concepts from the pulpit and in the home, but until engaging with this project, I had never taught in a purely theological setting. Through the gathering of information, the formulation of the class curriculum, and teaching the class itself, I believe I grew in my confidence and ability to teach theological truth. The data from the post-class survey seems to support this idea, as well, as there was positive change in almost all of the areas surveyed. There is definitely room to grow, but I believe the goal was met through the implementation of this project.

The Strengths of the Project

Upon evaluation, four strengths of the project come to the forefront. First, Summit Church is a church that is committed to discipleship in the life of its people. In

order to accomplish the mission of glorifying God by making disciples who represent the gospel to every man, woman, and child, the need to be strategic with disciple making is vitally important. This has always been more organic at Summit, but there is an increased intentionality that showed itself in the implementation of the class.

Second, the discipleship outcomes continue to be a grid for gospel ministry and they served as an effective filter for this class. Everything that was taught or spoken of was pressed through an understanding of how that truth impacted an individual's discipleship. Again, it was not knowledge for the sake of intellect alone, but knowledge for the sake of transformation. The outcomes provide a discipleship framework, and because they are so connected to knowing, understanding, and loving God rightly, this theology class provided a rich environment to explore ideas of faith and practice.

Third, the class took place at the right time in the history of Summit Church. Though theological education would have been helpful earlier on, this class would not have been successful at an earlier time. The advent of "Monday School" in early 2014 provided the necessary environment to host this class in early 2015. Also, not only was the time right, but the people that volunteered were the right participants for the class. They were hungry to know God in deeper ways, and were willing to explore thoughts and ideas they had never encountered before. The people who participated reminded me of how thankful I am to be a pastor at Summit Church.

Fourth, the content for the class proved to be a strength. Drawing from the insights of faithful men and women of the past and present, the curriculum was an effective tool to disseminate a biblically faithful understanding of the core doctrines of evangelicalism.

The Weaknesses of the Project

Upon further evaluation of the project, four weaknesses come to the forefront. First, though the participants were a strength, it was disappointing to see the number of committed class members go from 90 at the beginning to under 60 by the end of the class. This decrease was to be expected, however, as whenever there is a study at Summit, participation often starts off strong but then slowly dissipates the longer the study goes. The decrease was also to be expected as “Monday School” has been set up, in part, for individuals who cannot be committed to a consistent small group because of erratic schedules, but still want to be involved in some form of gospel community. The next time this class is taught, there will be more description up front as to what the class entails, and the sessions will be recorded for participants that miss the class but still desire to be involved.

Second, there was a lack of pre- and post-class work to build upon the foundation of ideas talked about during the class. The hope was to not overwhelm individuals with too much work so they would stay engaged over the twelve weeks. Upon reflection, however, I believe the individuals that stayed connected through the entire class would have been willing, and probably even desired, more opportunities to think through and wrestle with the truths they were learning about. Thinking about the ideas before the class would have given them a runway of understanding so they were not having to consume too much during the class time. As well, working through the ideas after each class would have served to answer certain questions and further solidify thoughts and beliefs. The next time this class is taught, serious consideration will be given to pre- and post-class work.

Third, twelve weeks was not enough to thoroughly teach through the content of the class. It has already been stated that the discussion on ecclesiology was left out, in part, due to time constrictions. I also wanted to work through the doctrine of the future, but chose not to because of time. When this class is taught in the future, heavy consideration will be given to increasing it from twelve to fifteen weeks, giving ample time to work through the necessary doctrines of the faith.

Finally, though I have a good amount of years in pastoral ministry, I lack expertise with teaching in a classroom. Though I saw growth in my ability to communicate doctrine in a setting like “Monday School,” a more seasoned teacher might have better served the class. God was gracious, however, and I believe transformation and formation did take place in many of the participants, myself included.

Conclusion

Integrating theological education into the spiritual formation process of the church is of utmost significance. The biblical witness mandates it, church history shows its importance, and faithful implementation confirms the need for it in the life of God’s people. In writing about the lack of theological teaching on the part of pastors who think their people will not receive it, Chuck Lawless writes,

Not only does this thinking ultimately question the power of the Word, but it also denies reality. It is precisely because people *do* care about beliefs that they turn to places and people other than the church for their belief system. Where the church fails, somebody else fills the void.³

³Chuck Lawless, “7 Steps to Teach Theology in the Local Church,” accessed July 30, 2015, <http://thomrainer.com/2013/05/7-steps-to-teach-theology-in-the-local-church/>.

In an age of decadence and a culture of consumption, faithfulness to Christ demands that ministers of the gospel and the churches they serve hold firm to and pass along the trustworthy Word of God, our ultimate source for learning and knowing true things about God and the world we live in.

The desire for this project was to be faithful in shepherding the people God has entrusted to Summit Church, a community of faith that requires constant formation. It is made up of disciples, just like the faithful men and women of old, seeking to image God in the world, and desperate to know what that looks like. The Bible clearly communicates why theology must be taught and why it is necessary for the formation of all of God's people. From Old Testament appeals to remain steadfast in the midst of perversity to New Testament exhortations to anchor oneself in the depths of the gospel, the Bible speaks to humanity's universal need and opportunity to know God.

This need is met, in part, through theological study, a pursuit the church has given itself to since the days of the Apostles. Over the years, from faithful gospel preaching to catechetical efforts to teaching in small group environments, the church has attempted to take its responsibility seriously. And this effort must continue today. By God's grace, this class, and many like it, will serve to deepen people in their intimacy with God and further the mission of God in and beyond the context of Summit Church. May God be glorified by those who participate in it, and those that choose to learn from it.

APPENDIX 1

THEOLOGY SESSION 1

Systematic Theology: What is it? Why do we need it? And how should we go about it?

Everyone has warned me not to tell you what I am going to tell you in this last book. They all say “The ordinary reader does not want Theology; give him plain practical religion”. I have rejected their advice. I do not think the ordinary reader is such a fool. Theology means “the science of God”, and I think that any man who wants to think about God at all would like to have the clearest and most accurate ideas about Him, which are available.¹

C.S. Lewis

The responsibility to think theologically in all areas of life begins with the pastor. In the book of *Hosea*, God gives a haunting declaration in regard to the caregivers of his people. He says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge . . .” (Hosea 4:6). In this indictment, God specifically lays the blame for the destruction of his people on the shoulders of the priests who neglected their responsibility to impart knowledge to the people under their care. In writing about the pastor’s responsibility in the pursuit of theological understanding, R. Albert Mohler writes:

Every pastor is called to be a theologian. This may come as a surprise to some pastors who see theology as an academic discipline taken during seminary rather than as an ongoing and central part of the pastoral calling. Nevertheless, the health of the church depends on its pastors functioning as faithful theologians—teaching, preaching, defending, and applying the great doctrines of the faith . . . The pastoral calling is inherently theological. Given the fact that the pastor is to be the teacher of the Word of God and the teacher of the gospel, it cannot be otherwise.²

For each pastor, there remains the responsibility, just as it was in the days of the Hebrew priests, to reflect the glory of God by stewarding the people of God in a faithful way. Of this responsibility, Mohler notes, “The pastor’s stewardship of the theological task

¹C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Collier Books, 1952), 119.

²R. Albert Mohler Jr., *The Pastor As Theologian*, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.sbts.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2010/09/the-pastor-as-theologian.pdf>.

requires a clear sense of pastoral priority, a keen pastoral ear, and careful attention to the theological dimensions of church life and Christian discipleship.”³

Group Exercise: Isaiah 6:1-8; Job 1:8-12; Proverbs 19:2; Romans 11:33-12:2; Hebrews 5:11-6:2; 2 Peter 3:14-18; Ephesians 4:11-16

What is Systematic Theology?

*Systematic theology is any study that answers the question, “What does the whole Bible teach us today?” about any given topic.*⁴ (John Frame)

*. . . Systematic theology involves collecting and understanding all the relevant passages in the Bible on various topics and then summarizing their teachings clearly so that we know what to believe about each topic.*⁵ (Wayne Grudem)

Relationship to Other Disciplines:⁶

Systematic Theology is not:

- **Historical Theology:** historical study of how Christians in different time periods have understood various theological topics
- **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
- **Apologetics:** providing a defense of the truthfulness of the Christian faith for the purpose of convincing unbelievers
- **Christian Ethics:** study that emphasizes what God wants us to *do* and what *attitudes* he wants us to have
- **Old Testament Theology:** studying the Old Testament text and determining a workable theology apart from the larger biblical context
- **New Testament Theology:** studying the New Testament text and determining a workable theology apart from the larger biblical context
- **Biblical Theology:** the discipline of reading and interpreting the Bible as a whole and maintaining its unity around one central theme. The task of biblical theology is to recognize and embrace the “progressive, redemptive revelation” of God through both the Old and New Testaments.

³Mohler, *The Pastor As Theologian*

⁴Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 21.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., 21-23.

What Does Systematic Theology Accomplish?⁷

1. Systematic theology treats biblical topics in a *carefully organized* way to guarantee that all important topics will receive thorough consideration.
2. Systematic theology treats topics in *much more detail* than most Christians do.
3. Systematic theology makes it possible to formulate summaries of biblical teachings with *much more accuracy* than Christians would normally arrive at without such a study

Why Should Christians Study Systematic Theology?

In his book, *Dug Down Deep*, author Joshua Harris writes, “I’ve come to learn that theology matters. And it matters . . . because what we know about God shapes the way we think and live. What you believe about God’s nature—what he is like, what he wants from you, and whether or not you will answer to him—affects every part of your life.”⁸ Because all of life is theological, every decision that is made must be run through the lens of theology. This reality is especially true in the local church, God’s chosen instrument to bring his gospel to every man, woman, and child. The practices of the church reflect what the church believes about God and about itself in light of God’s redemptive mission.

Obedience to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission:

Matthew 22:35-40: *And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”*

Matthew 28:19-20: *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

The Benefits to Our Lives:⁹

- Studying systematic theology helps us *overcome our wrong ideas*
- Studying systematic theology helps us to be *able to make better decisions later* on new questions of doctrine that may arise
- Studying systematic theology helps us *form our worldview*, giving us a lens through which we can view our world and circumstances

⁷Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 24.

⁸Joshua Harris, *Dug Down Deep: Unearthing What I Believe and Why It Matters* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 2011), 10.

⁹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 28-30.

- Studying systematic theology *produces true and vigorous affections for God.*
- Studying systematic theology helps us *grow as Christians*

1 Timothy 6:3-4: *If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ **and the teaching that accords with godliness**, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing...*

Titus 1:1: *Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect **and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness...***

How Should Christians Study Systematic Theology?

Christians should study systematic theology with...¹⁰

- Prayer
- Humility
 - *It is the goal of good theology to humble us before the triune God of majesty and grace . . . the older theologians of the Reformation and Post-Reformation eras were so convinced that their interpretations fell far short of the majesty of God that they called their summaries and systems “our humble theology” and “a theology for pilgrims on the way.”¹¹*
- Reason
 - *. . . we are free to use our reasoning abilities to draw deductions from any passage of Scripture so long as these deductions do not contradict the clear teaching of some other passage of Scripture.¹²*
- Help from others
- Rejoicing and praise
 - *The study of theology is not merely a mental exercise. It is a study of the living God and of the wonders of all his works in creation and redemption. We cannot study this subject as if our hearts and lives are uninvolved! We must love all that God is, all that he says, and all that he does.¹³*

Far from being an impediment to the faith, when rightly understood Christian doctrine enables us to see the wonder of God more clearly, and it protects the saints from wandering off into the dangerous places of heresy and sinful ignorance. And when it is properly understood, doctrine is not an impediment to living faith or a hindrance to our mission but a vital help in destroying the ignoble thoughts of God that dilute our faith and motivation. Indeed, sound doctrine points us along on our journey into true joy.¹⁴

Mark Liederbach & Alvin L. Reid

¹⁰Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 33-37.

¹¹Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 13.

¹²Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 34.

¹³Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 27.

¹⁴Mark Liederbach and Alvin L. Reid, *The Convergent Church: Missional Worshipers in an Emerging Culture* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2009), 182.

The Doctrine of Scripture

*Precious Bible! What a treasure
Does the Word of God afford!
All I want for life or pleasure,
Food and med'cine, shield and sword:
Let the world account me poor,
Having this I need no more.*

John Newton

Group Work: What are the theological implications of these verses in regard to the doctrine of Scripture? (2 Tim 3:16-17; Heb 4:12-13; Jer 15:16; Ps 19:7-11; Ps 119:33-40; Luke 24:13-35; Prov 30:5-6; 2 Tim 2:14-15)

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE

The canon of Scripture is the collection of books that the church has recognized as having divine authority in matters of faith and doctrine. The term comes from the Greek word 'kanon' and the Hebrew word 'qaneh,' both of which mean 'a rule', or 'measuring rod.'

What is the canon of Scripture?

- The list of all the books that belong in the Bible

If we are to trust and obey God absolutely we must have a collection of words that we are certain are God's own words to us. If there are any sections of Scripture about which we have doubts whether they are God's words or not, we will not consider them to have absolute divine authority and we will not trust them as much as we would trust God himself.¹⁵ (Wayne Grudem)

OT Canon: Began with the 10 Commandments and was completed in 435 BC with Malachi.

NT Canon: For a book to belong in the canon, it is absolutely necessary that the book have divine authorship. If the words of the book are God's words (through human authors), and if the early church, under the direction of the apostles, preserved the book as part of Scripture, then the book belongs in the canon.

¹⁵Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 54.

Apostolic Authorship: *Matthew; John; Romans to Philemon* (Pauline Epistles); *James; 1 and 2 Peter; 1, 2, and 3 John; and Revelation*

Apostolic Ties: *Mark* (Peter); *Luke and Acts* (Paul); *Jude* (James and Jesus); *Hebrews* (early belief was that the book was Pauline but most today believe that is not)

The Thirty-ninth Paschal Letter of Athanasius (A.D. 367) and the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) agreed on our present-day canon.

A Note About Biblical Theology:

*We must recognize that central to Scripture is the unifying history of God's redeeming words and acts, of which the advent and work of Jesus Christ are the ultimate focus. Jesus Christ is the center to which everything in Scripture is united and bound together—the beginning and the end, creation and redemption, humanity, the world, the fall, history, and the future.*¹⁶ (David S. Dockery and David P. Nelson)

THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

All Scripture is breathed out by God... 2 Timothy 3:16

*All the words in the Bible are God's words. Therefore, to disbelieve or disobey them is to disbelieve or disobey God himself.*¹⁷

The Inspiration of Scripture¹⁸

Inspiration: a divine act that creates an identity between a divine word and a human word.

- **Verbal Inspiration:** the words of Scripture, not only the ideas of the biblical writers, are God's Word
- **Plenary Inspiration:** everything in Scripture is God's Word

... inspiration means that God used all the distinct personal qualities of each writer. God used the difference of heredity, environment, upbringing, education, gifts, talents, styles, interests, and idiosyncrasies to reveal his word. These differences were not a barrier that God had to overcome. Rather, they were God's chosen means of communicating with us. God's Word is complex and nuanced, multiperspectival. God used the organic complexity of human persons and the diversities among persons to

¹⁶David S. Dockery and David P. Nelson, "Special Revelation," in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2007), 131.

¹⁷Wayne Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know*, ed. Elliot Grudem (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 13.

¹⁸John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Pub, 2010), 142-43.

*communicate the complexity of his own personal word. He used human persons to communicate with us in a fully personal way.*¹⁹ (John Frame)

The Inerrancy of Scripture

Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact.²⁰

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978)

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.

*Nothing is to be imposed as an article of Christian belief which is not taught by the plain and consentient testimony of Scripture; nothing is to be required as necessary to Christian conduct which is not so expressed or implied by that same plain and consentient testimony.*²¹ (F.F. Bruce)

How can a right understanding of the authority of Scripture strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the authority of Scripture strengthen our missional activity?

¹⁹Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 142.

²⁰Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 91.

²¹F. F. Bruce, "The Lausanne Covenant - 2: The Authority and Power of the Bible," *The Harvester* 55 (November 1976): 320-33.

THE CLARITY OF SCRIPTURE

For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. (1 Corinthians 2:11-12)

What is meant by the clarity of Scripture?

*The Bible is written in such a way that its teachings are able to be understood by all who will read it seeking God's help and being willing to follow it.*²²

The doctrine of the clarity of Scripture says that Scripture is *able to be understood*, not that all understand it equally well.²³

There are two possible causes of why there would be doctrinal or ethical disagreement:²⁴

1. We are seeking to make affirmations where Scripture itself is silent
2. We have made mistakes in our interpretation of Scripture

Scripture affirms that it is able to be...²⁵

1. understood but not all at once. (Psalm 1:2)
2. understood but not without effort. (Ezra 7:10)
3. understood but not without ordinary means. (1 Cor 14:10–11, 16)
4. understood but not without the reader's willingness to obey it. (Jas 1:22-25)
5. understood but not without the help of the Holy Spirit. (Psalm 119:34)
6. understood but not without human misunderstanding. (John 20:8-9)
7. understood but never completely. (Psalm 139:6)

How can a right understanding of the clarity of Scripture strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the clarity of Scripture strengthen our missional activity?

²²Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 108.

²³Ibid., *Bible Doctrine*, 53.

²⁴Ibid., *Systematic Theology*, 109-10.

²⁵Wayne Grudem, "The Perspicuity of Scripture," *Themelios* 34, no. 3 (November 2009): 294-301.

THE NECESSITY OF SCRIPTURE

What is meant by the necessity of Scripture?

*The Bible is necessary for knowledge of the gospel, for maintaining spiritual life, and certain knowledge of God's will, but is not necessary for knowing that God exists or for knowing something about God's character and moral laws.*²⁶

1. Knowledge of the gospel

*So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)
One must either read the gospel message in the Bible for oneself or hear it from another person. Even those believers who came to salvation in the old covenant did so by trusting in the words of God that promised a Savior to come.*²⁷ (Wayne Grudem)

2. Maintaining spiritual life

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation... (1Peter 2:2)

*... you must keep hearing the Bible's message to grow as a Christian. This means hearing it read and preached, reading it, studying it, memorizing it, meditating on it, and applying it. A Christian needs the Bible like a human needs food and water. The need never goes away.*²⁸ (Andy Naselli)

3. Knowledge of God's will

How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. (Psalm 119:9-11)

General Revelation vs. Special Revelation²⁹

General Revelation: The knowledge of God's existence, character, and moral law, which comes through creation to all humanity

²⁶Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 116.

²⁷Ibid., 118.

²⁸Andy Naselli, "Scripture: How the Bible is a Book Like No Other," in *Don't Call It a Comeback: The Old Faith for a New Day*, ed. Kevin DeYoung (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 67.

²⁹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 122-23.

Special Revelation: God's words addressed to specific people, such as the words of the Bible, the words of the OT prophets and the NT apostles, and the words of God spoken in personal address, such as at Mt Sinai and at Jesus' baptism

How can a right understanding of the necessity of Scripture strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the necessity of Scripture strengthen our missional activity?

THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

What is meant by the sufficiency of Scripture?

Scripture contained all the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains everything we need God to tell us for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly.³⁰

Practical Application:³¹

1. Search the Bible for answers
2. Do not add to Scripture (no other writings are equal to Scripture)
3. Do not count any other guidance/revelation as equal to Scripture
4. Do not add more sins or requirements to the ones named in Scripture
5. Be content with Scripture

How can a right understanding of the sufficiency of Scripture strengthen our intimacy with God?

³⁰Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 127.

³¹Ibid., 131-35.

How can a right understanding of the sufficiency of Scripture strengthen our missional activity?

Because the Bible stands over us, it requires reverence, submission, and obedience. Because it is completely truthful, it requires trust. Because its nature contrasts sharply with our finiteness and sinfulness, it requires humble reading that is always open to correction. And because it reveals God and his ways, it requires careful, prayerful reading that situates passages within its grand story of God's creation, our fall, Christ's redemption, and the universe's consummation.³²

Andy Naselli

³²Naselli, "Scripture," 68.

APPENDIX 2

THEOLOGY SESSION 2

The Doctrine of God: The Existence, Knowability, and Attributes of God

There is a right way and a wrong way to approach the doctrine of God. We can study God with a microscope or a telescope. A microscope makes something very small look very big. But this isn't the way we are to magnify God . . . Instead we should study God's attributes the way an astronomer studies a heavenly body—through a telescope. Its lenses enable us to see just how much bigger and more awesome something is than we first imagined.¹

Joshua Harris

Group Work: What are the theological implications of these verses in regard to the doctrine of God? (Rom 1:18-20; Rom 1:24-25; Psalm 102:25-27; Acts 17:22-28; Isaiah 55:8-9; 1 Chronicles 16:23-29; Jude 24-25; Psalm 50:9-12; Romans 8:31-39)

The 2nd London Confession of Faith (1689)

There is but one, and only one, living and true God. He is self-existent and infinite in His being and His perfections. None but He can comprehend or understand His essence. He is pure spirit, invisible, and without body, parts, or the changeable feelings of men. He alone possesses immortality, and dwells amid the light insufferably bright to mortal men. He never changes. He is great beyond all our conceptions, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty and infinite. He is most holy, wise, free and absolute. All that He does is the out-working of His changeless, righteous will, and for His own glory. He is most loving, gracious, merciful and compassionate. He abounds in goodness and truth. He forgives iniquity, transgression and sin. He rewards those who seek Him diligently. But He hates sin. He will not overlook guilt or spare the guilty, and He is perfectly just in executing judgment.

God is all-sufficient, and all life, glory, goodness and blessedness are found in Him and in Him alone. He does not stand in need of any of the creatures that He has made, nor does He derive any part of His glory from them. On the contrary, He manifests His own glory in and by them. He is the fountain-head of all being, and the origin, channel and end of all things. Over all His creatures He is sovereign. He uses them as He pleases, and does for them or to them all that He wills. His sight penetrates to the heart of all things. His knowledge is infinite and infallible. No single thing is to Him at risk or uncertain, for He is not dependent upon created things. In all His decisions, doings and demands He is most holy. Angels and men owe to Him as their creator all worship, service and obedience, and whatever else He may require at their hands.

¹Joshua Harris, *Dug Down Deep: Unearthing What I Believe and Why It Matters* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 2011), 51.

The God Who Exists

Humanity's inner sense of God

*All persons everywhere have a deep, inner sense that God exists, that they are his creatures, and he is their Creator.*²

The evidence in Scripture and nature³

- Scripture begins with the assumption that God exists (Gen 1 – *In the beginning God . . .*)
- Scripture never attempts to prove the existence of God (in fact, it makes note of those who do not believe—Ps 14:1 – *The fools says in his heart, “There is no God.”*)
- The attributes of God are clearly perceived in nature (Rom 1:20 - *For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.*)

*. . . when we believe that God exists, we are basing our beliefs not on some blind hope apart from any evidence, but on an overwhelming amount of reliable evidence from God's words and God's works.*⁴

The God Who is Knowable

And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. (John 17:3)

We can never fully understand God⁵

Because God is infinite and we are finite or limited, we can never fully understand God.

- **Psalm 145:3** *Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.*
- **Psalm 139:6** *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.*
- **Romans 11:33** *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!*

Yet we can know God truly⁶

Even though we cannot know God exhaustively, we can know true things about God.

²Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 141.

³Ibid., 142-43.

⁴Ibid., 143.

⁵Ibid., 149.

⁶Ibid., 151-52.

- **1 Cor 2:10-13** *For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.*
- **Jeremiah 9:23-24** *Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."*

Evidence of Knowing God (J. I. Packer)⁷

Those who know God...

- Have great energy for God
- Have great thoughts of God
- Show great boldness for God
- Have great contentment in God

How can a right understanding of the *existence and knowability of God* strengthen our intimacy with him?

How can a right understanding of the *existence and knowability of God* strengthen our missional activity?

The Attributes of God

→ **The Incommunicable Attributes of God** (attributes that God does not share)

IDEPENDENCE (self-existent & self-sufficient)⁸

God does not need us or the rest of creation for anything, yet we and the rest of creation glorify him and bring him joy.

- **Acts 17:24-25** *The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.*
-

⁷J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 27-32.

⁸Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 71-73.

How does God differ from humanity in his independence?

IMMUTABILITY (unchangeableness)⁹

God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and he acts and feels differently in response to different situations.

- **Malachi 3:6** *For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.*

Why is the attribute of God's immutability important?

ETERNITY (infinite)¹⁰

God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in his own being, and he sees all time equally vividly, yet God sees events in time and acts in time.

1. God is timeless in his own being
 - **Psalm 90:2** *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*
2. God sees all time equally vividly
 - **Psalm 90:4** *For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.*
3. God sees events in time and acts in time
 - **Galatians 4:4-5** *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.*

What comfort is found in God's eternal attribute?

OMNIPRESENCE¹¹

God does not have size or spatial dimensions, and is present at every point of space with his whole being, yet God acts differently in different places.

1. God is present everywhere
 - **Psalm 139:7-10** *Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in*
-

⁹Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 73-76.

¹⁰Ibid., 76-78.

¹¹Ibid., 78-81.

Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

2. God does not have special dimensions
 - **1 Kings 8:27** *But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!*
3. God can be present to punish, sustain, or to bless
 - to punish **Amos 9:1-4**
 - to sustain **Colossians 1:17** *And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*
 - to bless **Psalms 16:11** *You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

What types of emotion does the omnipresence of God conjure up inside of you?

UNITY¹²

God is not divided into parts, yet we see different attributes of God emphasized at different times

How can a right understanding of the *incommunicable attributes of God* strengthen our intimacy with him?

How can a right understanding of the *incommunicable attributes of God* strengthen our missional activity?

→ **The Communicable Attributes of God** (attributes that God does share)

HOLINESS¹³

God is separated from sin and devoted to seeking his own honor

- **Isaiah 6:1-7** *In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another*

¹²Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 81-82.

¹³Ibid., 92-93

and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

- **Psalm 99:9** Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy mountain; for the LORD our God is holy!

What are the implications of God's holiness for your life?

OMNIPOTENCE (all-powerful)¹⁴

God is able to do all his holy will

- **Genesis 18:13-14** *The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the LORD?"*
- **Matthew 19:23-26** *And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*

We must remember that divine power is optional in its exercise. Whereas God is infinitely powerful in his eternal being, it is not necessary or an essential part of this attribute that he always and in every way exercise his power. (Sam Storms)¹⁵

What are the implications of God's omnipotence for your life?

WILL (all-sovereign)

God has absolute rule over creation as King and total control and determination over all that happens

- **Daniel 4:34-35** *... for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"*

¹⁴Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 98-99.

¹⁵Sam Storms, "The Omnipotence of God," May 21, 2006, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.samstorms.com/all-articles/post/the-omnipotence-of-god>.

- **1 Timothy 6:14-16** . . . *keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.*

The sovereignty of God affirms that God plans and carries out His perfect will completely as He alone knows is best, over all that is in heaven and earth and He does so without failure or defeat.

What are the implications of God's sovereignty for your life?

OMNISCIENCE¹⁶

God fully knows himself and all things actual and possible—past, present, and future—in one simple and eternal act

- **1 John 3:20** *for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.*
- **Job 37:16** [Elihu] *Do you know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge . . .*
- **Hebrews 4:13** *And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

*God foreknows everything that will come to pass in the future because he has foreordained everything that comes to pass. Humans are free moral agents insofar as they act voluntarily according to their desires. But all such desires and subsequent volitional activity fall within the sovereign and pre-temporal (or eternal) purpose of God.*¹⁷ (Sam Storms)

What are the implications of God's omniscience for your life?

WISDOM¹⁸

God always knows and chooses the best goals and the best means to those goals

¹⁶Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 88.

¹⁷Sam Storms, "The Omniscience of God," May 13, 2006, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.samstorms.com/all-articles/post/the-omniscience-of-god>.

¹⁸Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 88-89.

- **Psalm 104:24** *O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.*
- **Romans 8:28** *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

The wisdom of God is the application of God's infinite knowledge in a manner that accomplishes his morally perfect ends by the best means possible.

What are the implications of God's wisdom for your life?

LOVE¹⁹

God freely and eternally gives of himself to others

- **1 John 4:8-10** *Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*
- **Romans 5:8** *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

What are the different ways the Bible speaks of God's love?

What are the implications of God's love?

RIGHTEOUSNESS²⁰

God always acts in accordance with what is right and is himself the final standard of what is right

- **Deuteronomy 32:4** *The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.*
- **Isaiah 45:19** *I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right.*
- **Jeremiah 23:6** *In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'*
- **Romans 3:25-26** *This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness*

¹⁹Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 91-92.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 93.

at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

What are the implications of God's righteousness?

WRATH²¹

God intensely hates and responds with anger to all sin and rebellion.

- **Exodus 32:9-10** *And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them . . ."*
- **Romans 1:18** *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*
- **Revelation 6:15-16** *Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb . . ."*

4 Truths About God's Final Wrath²² (John Piper)

1. It will be eternal—having no end
2. It will be terrible—indescribable pain
3. It will be deserved—totally just and right
4. It will have been escapable—through the curse-bearing death of Christ

How can a right understanding of the *communicable attributes of God* strengthen our intimacy with him?

How can a right understanding of the *communicable attributes of God* strengthen our missional activity?

²¹Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 94-95.

²²John Piper, "God's Wrath: 'Vengeance Is Mine, I Will Repay,' Says the Lord," February 27, 2005, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/gods-wrath-vengeance-is-mine-i-will-repay-says-the-lord>.

*It's essential . . . to get the doctrine of God right . . . Either God will be the center of one's doctrinal solar system or something else will. What we believe about God determines what we believe about everything.*²³

Jonathan Leeman

²³Jonathan Leeman, "God: Not Like You," in *Don't Call It a Comeback: The Old Faith for a New Day*, ed. Kevin DeYoung (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 57.

APPENDIX 3

THEOLOGY SESSION 3

The Doctrine of God: The Trinity

*To believe and love the Trinity is to possess the key of theology.*¹

Charles Spurgeon

*Nothing we do as evangelicals makes sense if it is divorced from a strong experiential and doctrinal grasp of the coordinated love of Jesus and the Spirit, worked out against the horizon of the Father's love. Personal evangelism, conversational prayer, devotional Bible study, authoritative preaching, world missions, and assurance of salvation all presuppose that life in the gospel is life in communion with the Trinity. Forget the Trinity and you forget why we do what we do; you forget who we are as gospel Christians; you forget how we got to be like we are.*²

Fred Sanders

Group Work: What are the theological implications of these verses in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity? (Mark 12:28-30; Mark 1:9-11; John 16:7-15; John 17:1-5; John 17:6-10; John 17:11-19; John 17:20-26; Ephesians 1:3-14; Hebrews 1:1-12)

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY?

The word *trinity* means “triunity” or “three-in-oneness”

*God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God.*³ (Wayne Grudem)

¹Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 17 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1872), 389.

²Fred Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How The Trinity Changes Everything* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 9.

³Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 226.

*There are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and each is God, and at the same time all are one God; and each of them is a full substance, and at the same time all are one substance. The Father is neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit; the Son is neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. But the Father is the Father uniquely; the Son is the Son uniquely; and the Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit uniquely. All three have the same eternity, the same immutability, the same majesty, and the same power.*⁴ (Augustine)

*The doctrine of the Trinity means that there is one God who eternally exists as three distinct persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Stated differently, God is one in essence and three in person.*⁵ (Matt Perman)

*The one, eternal, and living God of the Bible, the only real God there is, is the God who has forever known himself, and who in the history of salvation has revealed himself to us, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. To deny this truth is to lapse into heresy.*⁶ (Timothy George)

FOUNDATIONS OF TRINITARIAN THOUGHT

The Old Testament

- **Genesis 1:1-2** *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void...and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*
- **Genesis 1:26** Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.
- **Psalms 110:1** *The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."*
- **Isaiah 48:16** *Draw near to me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there." And now the Lord GOD [the Father] has sent me [the Son], and his Spirit [the Spirit].*
- **Isaiah 63:9-10** *In all their affliction he [the Father] was afflicted, and the angel of his presence [the Son] saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit [the Spirit]; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them.*

⁴Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1958), 10.

⁵Matt Perman, "What Is the Doctrine of the Trinity?" January 23, 2006, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-is-the-doctrine-of-the-trinity>.

⁶Timothy George, "The Nature of God: Being, Attributes, and Acts," in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2007), 182.

The New Testament

- **Luke 1:35** *And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."*
- **Matthew 3:16-17** *And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."*
- **Matthew 28:19** *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*
- **2 Corinthians 13:14** *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*
- **1 Peter 1:2** according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood
- **Jude 20-21** *But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.*

In sum, while the word 'trinitas' is not found anywhere in the Bible, the Scriptures from first to last are thoroughly Trinitarian. What was foreshadowed in the Old Testament became explicit in the New with the historical reality of God 'manifested in the flesh' (1 Tim 3:16).⁷ (Timothy George)

HERESIES REGARDING THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

Monarchianism

Monarchianism (also known as Sabellianism after one of their leaders, Sabellius [early 3rd century] was a heresy that was developed by Christian individuals who were trying to formulate an understanding of the doctrine of God. Monarchians, in nature, were those who desired to stress the absolute Oneness of God as the supreme ruler over all creation. As Harold O. J. Brown explains, "The name 'monarchian' is applied to groups that sought to stress a fundamental biblical and Christian truth, namely, the conviction that God is one, the sole monarch of the universe."⁸ These individuals, in an attempt to be faithful to God would make a severe mistake in their understanding of God and his existence as three distinct persons who are equally God.

Monarchianism refers to two different schools of thought within the umbrella of the heresy, *adoptionism* and *modalism*. Though these two strains of modalism are in sharp contrast in their view of the Trinity, and more particularly the person of Jesus, they are unified in an attempt to falsely explain a mystery of the Christian faith that even the most

⁷George, "The Nature of God," 187.

⁸Harold O. J. Brown, *Heresies: Heresy and Orthodoxy in the History of the Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 95.

devout followers are prone to fall into. Again, Harold O. J. Brown explains, “Thus two dramatically different convictions are embraced by . . . ‘monarchianism.’ What they have in common is their conviction that the fundamental unity and oneness of God does not permit a second Person to share the titles of deity.”⁹

→ **Adoptionism (dynamic monarchianism)**

- Believed that Jesus was a man who was endowed with a special power from God
- Used the accounts in Matthew, Mark, and Luke where Jesus is baptized and the Spirit of God descends upon him as foundational in their assertion that Jesus was not God
- Viewed the event of Jesus’ baptism as the moment when God adopted Jesus as his son

*Adoptionism is the view that Jesus lived as an ordinary man until his baptism, but then God ‘adopted’ Jesus as his ‘Son’ and conferred on him supernatural powers Even after Jesus’ ‘adoption’ as the ‘Son’ of God, they would not think of him as divine in nature, but only as an exalted man whom God called his ‘Son’ in a unique sense.*¹⁰

→ **Modalism (modalistic monarchianism)**

*The word ‘modalism’ is unfamiliar to most Christians, yet it is the most common theological error among people who think themselves orthodox. It is the simplest way to explain the Trinity while preserving the oneness of God; unfortunately, it is incorrect.*¹¹

- The three facets of the trinity – God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit – exist as three different modes of God
- God reveals himself under different aspects or modes in different ages—as the Father in Creation and in the giving of the Law, as the Son in Jesus Christ,, and as the Holy Spirit after Christ’s ascension
- Whereas adoptionism denies the deity of Jesus, modalism upholds the deity of Jesus but sacrifices his distinctness and his humanity
- Modalists use the Gospel of John as the foundation of belief as Jesus repeatedly refers to the oneness between he and the Father

Arianism

- Attributed to Arius, a 4th century Alexandrian Bishop
- God the Father was eternal and too pure and infinite to appear on the earth. Therefore, God produced Christ the Son out of nothing as the first and greatest creation.
- God the Father alone is self-existent
- The Son, who is not self-existent, cannot be God

⁹Brown, *Heresies*, 96.

¹⁰Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 245.

¹¹Brown, *Heresies*, 99.

- Used John 14:28 as proof text: *You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.*
- Arianism was deemed heretical at the First Council of Nicea in 325 as was its chief proponent, Arius

Modern Heresies

- **Universalism:** a liberal perspective that denies the deity of Jesus and the Spirit
- **Oneness Pentecostalism:** a conservative perspective that argues for the deity of Jesus. Indeed, Jesus “only” is God. There is only one person in the Godhead and his name is Jesus. The “Father” and “Spirit” are only different names for different manifestations of the one God, Jesus.
- **Tritheism (polytheism):** The only link between the three is that they share a common purpose or will. Stress is placed on the personhood of each, the essence of which is autonomy and independence.

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

The Nicene Creed 325

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

1. God is Three Persons

*The personhood of each member of the Trinity means that each person has a distinct center of consciousness. Thus, they relate to each other personally—the Father regards the Son and Holy Spirit as “You.” Likewise the Son regards Himself as “I,” but the Father and the Holy Spirit as “You.”*¹² (Matt Perman)

¹²Perman, “What Is the Doctrine of the Trinity?”

- **John 1:1-2** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.*
- **John 17:24** *Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.*
- **1 John 2:1** . . . *But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*
- **Hebrews 7:25** *Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.*
- **John 14:26** *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*
- **Romans 8:27** *And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*
- **Matthew 28:19** *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*
- **2 Corinthians 13:14** *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

How can a right understanding of the 3 Persons of the Trinity strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the 3 Persons of the Trinity strengthen our missional activity?

2. Each Person is Fully God (The Deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit)

→ The Deity of the Father

- **Matthew 28:19** *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*
- **Matthew 6:9** *Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."*
- **Luke 23:34** *And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."*
- **John 6:27** *Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal."*
- **John 10:29** *My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*

- **John 17:1-3** *When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come . . . this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*
- **Ephesians 1:3** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .*
- **1 John 3:1** *See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.*

→ The Deity of the Son

The belief in the deity of Christ is derived directly from statements concerning Him in the Bible. The references are so many and their meaning so plain, that Christians of every shade of opinion have always regarded its affirmation as an absolute and indispensable requisite of their faith.¹³ (F. F. Bruce)

- **Matthew 28:19** *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*
- **John 1:1** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
- **John 20:27-28** *Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"*
- **Philippians 2:5-7** *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.*
- **Colossians 2:9-10** *For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.*
- **Hebrews 1:2-3** *...but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.*
- **Hebrews 1:8** *But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom."*

→ The Deity of the Spirit

He is not a lesser or different kind of Being than God the Father or God the Son. The Spirit is God . . . This is vital to remember. When we forget about the Spirit, we really are forgetting God.¹⁴ (Francis Chan)

¹³F. F. Bruce and W. J. Martin, *The Deity of Christ* (Manchester: North of England Trust, 1964), 24.

¹⁴Francis Chan and Danae Yankoski, *Forgotten God: Reversing Our Tragic Neglect of the Holy Spirit* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2009)

- **Matthew 28:19** *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*
- **Genesis 1:1-2** *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void . . . and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*
- **Acts 5:3-4** *But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? ... You have not lied to men but to God."*
- **1 Corinthians 2:10-11** . . . *For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.*
- **1 Corinthians 3:16** *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?*

How can a right understanding of the full deity of each Person of the Trinity strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the full deity of each Person of the Trinity strengthen our missional activity?

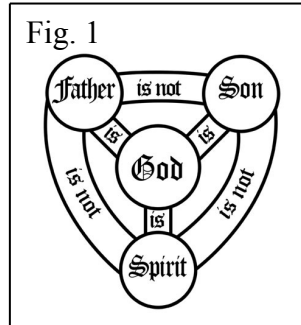
3. There is One God (Monotheism)

*Scripture is abundantly clear that there is one and only one God. The three different persons of the Trinity are one not only in person and in agreement on what they think, but they are one in essence, one in their essential nature. In other words, God is only one being. There are not three Gods. There is only one God.*¹⁵ (Wayne Grudem)

- **Deuteronomy 6:4** *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.*
- **Isaiah 45:5-6** *I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other.*
- **Zechariah 14:9** *And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.*
- **John 17:3** *And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*
- **1 Corinthians 8:4** *Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "an idol has no real existence," and that "there is no God but one."*

¹⁵Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 238.

- **1 Timothy 2:5** *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*
- **James 2:19** *You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!*



How can a right understanding of the oneness of God strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the oneness of God strengthen our missional activity?

What are the gospel implications of the Doctrine of the Trinity?

1. God the Father wills salvation
2. God the Son accomplishes the will of the Father
3. God the Holy Spirit applies the finished work of the Son

*God is triune; there are within the Godhead three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and the work of salvation is one in which all three act together; the Father purposing redemption, the Son securing it and the Spirit applying it.*¹⁶ (J. I. Packer)

When God designed the great and glorious work of recovering fallen man, and the saving of sinners, to the praise of the glory of his grace, he appointed, in his infinite wisdom, two great means thereof: The one was the giving his Son for them, and the other was the giving his Spirit to them. And hereby was way made for the manifestation of the glory of the whole blessed Trinity; which is the utmost end of all the works of God.¹⁷

John Owen

¹⁶J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 20.

¹⁷John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: The Leighton Publications, 1862), 23.

APPENDIX 4
THEOLOGY SESSION 4

The Doctrine of God: Creation and Providence

GOD'S ORIGINATING WORK: CREATION

*Knowing that God created the world around us,
and ourselves as part of it, is basic to true religion.*¹

J. I. Packer

*The inspired Word of God begins with the doctrine of creation;
that is the foundation of the whole book of redemption.*²

Douglas F. Kelly

Group Work: What are the theological implications of these verses in regard to the doctrines of creation? (Psalm 104:1-4; Psalm 104:5-13; Psalm 104:14-15; Psalm 104:16-18; Psalm 104:19-23; Psalm 104:24-30; Psalm 104:31-35)

WHAT IS THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION?

*The doctrine of creation is introduced in the first verse of the Bible, 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth' (Gen. 1:1). This statement offers a simple, conclusive answer to questions universally asked by humans: Why does something exist rather than nothing? How does what exists exist? Where do we come from?*³ (David P. Nelson)

The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good (Westminster Shorter Catechism Q.11).

¹J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1995), 22.

²Douglas F. Kelly, "Creation: Foundational Doctrine of Scripture," accessed July 3, 2015, http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/creation_kelly.html.

³David P. Nelson, "The Work of God: Creation and Providence," in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2007), 242.

*God created the entire universe out of nothing; it was originally very good; and he created it to glorify himself.*⁴ (Wayne Grudem)

1. GOD CREATED THE WORLD OUT OF NOTHING (*ex nihilo*)

- **Genesis 1:1** *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*
- **Genesis 2:7** *then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*
- **Psalms 33:6, 9** *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their hosts . . . For he spoke, and it came to be . . .*
- **John 1:3** *All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made*
- **1 Corinthians 8:6** *yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.*
- **Colossians 1:16** *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.*
- **Hebrews 11:3** *By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.*

*The majesty of God is magnified when we see him through the lens of creation—‘*ex nihilo*’ (out of nothing). He commands nothingness and it obeys and becomes something.*⁵ (John Piper)

*To say that He created ‘out of nothing’ is to confess the mystery, not explain it.*⁶ (J. I. Packer)

2. THE UNIVERSE GOD CREATED WAS CALLED “VERY GOOD”

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. (Genesis 1:31)

For everything created by God is good . . . (1 Timothy 4:4)

*The Bible teaches that God is distinct from his creation. He is not part of it, for he has made it and rules over it.*⁷ (Wayne Grudem)

*. . . the biblical doctrine of ‘*ex nihilo*’ creation maintains that God created finite, temporal, and material-spiritual creatures and pronounced this intrinsic difference*

⁴Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 262.

⁵John Piper, “When the Potter Is for Us: Boom!” October 6, 1981, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/when-the-potter-is-for-us-boom>.

⁶Packer, *Concise Theology*, 21.

⁷Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 267.

'good' . . . *Neither divine nor demonic, nature was created good but different from God.*⁸
(Michael Horton)

*God by his word created a world, and it is a world that is identified as good by God himself. It is a good world in that is ordered and purposeful.*⁹ (David P. Nelson)

3. GOD CREATED THE WORLD TO SHOW HIS GLORY

- **Psalm 8:1** *O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.*
- **Psalm 19:1** *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*
- **Psalm 57:5** *Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!*
- **Isaiah 43:7** *everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.*
- **Habakkuk 2:14** *For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*
- **Revelation 4:11** *'Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.'*

*The Bible teaches us that God made everything, in the first place, and one day he will bring everything to completion when Christ returns. That past and future makes sense of the present. We live in God's world, and our purpose is to live his way for his glory in relationship to him, the one who made us in his image.*¹⁰ (Vaughan Roberts)

→ **Points to Note** (J. I. Packer)¹¹

1. The act of creation is a mystery to us; there is more in it than we can understand.
2. Space and time are dimensions of the created order; God is not "in" either; nor is he bound by either as we are.
3. As the world order is not self-created, so it is not self-sustaining, as God is.
4. The possibility of creative intrusions (e.g., miracles of creative power; creating new persons through human procreative activity; reorienting human hearts and redirecting human desires and energies in regeneration) is as old as the cosmos itself.

⁸Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 328.

⁹Nelson, "The Work of God," 244.

¹⁰Vaughan Roberts, *God's Big Design: Life as He Intends It to Be* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 26.

¹¹Packer, *Concise Theology*, 21-22.

How can a right understanding of God as the One who creates strengthen our intimacy with him?

How can a right understanding of God as the One who creates strengthen our missional activity?

GOD'S CONTINUING WORK: PROVIDENCE

There is probably no point at which the Christian doctrine of God comes more into conflict with contemporary worldviews than in the matter of God's providence.¹²

James Montgomery Boice

The God of Providence rules all things well. How we ought to trust him! Ever remember, our heavenly Father is God all wise, good, and omnipotent. He is too wise to err, too good to do wrong, and too strong to fail.¹³

Don Fortner

Group Work: What are the theological implications of these verses in regard to the doctrines of providence? (Genesis 45:5-7; 1 Samuel 2:7-8; 1 Samuel 6:7-10; 2 Samuel 17:14-15; Job 37:9-13; Psalm 139:1-5; Ezekiel 28:2-10; Acts 3:17-18)

WHAT IS THE DOCTRINE OF PROVIDENCE?

God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions (Westminster Shorter Catechism Q.11).

If Creation was a unique exercise of divine energy causing the world to be, providence is a continued exercise of that same energy whereby the Creator, according to his own will, (a) keeps all creatures in being, (b) involves himself in all events, and (c) directs all things to their appointed end.¹⁴ (J. I. Packer)

¹²James Montgomery Boice, "God's Providence," accessed July 3, 2015, http://www.the-highway.com/providence_Boice.html.

¹³Don Fortner, "The Providence of God," accessed July 3, 2015, http://www.gracegems.org/13/providence_of_god.html.

¹⁴Packer, *Concise Theology*, 54.

God is continually involved with all created things in such a way that he (1) keeps them existing and maintaining the properties with which he created them; (2) cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do; and (3) directs them to fulfill his purposes.¹⁵ (Wayne Grudem)

• **PRESERVATION¹⁶**

God keeps all created things existing and he maintains the properties with which he created them

- **Hebrews 1:3** *He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds (active, purposeful control over that which is being carried) the universe by the word of his power.*
- **Colossians 1:17** *And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*
- **Acts 17:28** *In him we live and move and have our being*
- **Nehemiah 9:6** *You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.*

God, in preserving all things he has made, also causes them to maintain the properties with which he has created them. God preserves water in such a way that it continues to act like water. He causes grass to continue to act like grass, with all its distinctive characteristics. He causes the paper on which this sentence is written to continue to act like paper—so that it does not spontaneously dissolve into water and float away or change into a living thing and begin to grow! Until it is acted upon by some other part of creation and thereby its properties are changed (for instance, until it is burned with fire and it becomes ash), this paper will continue to act like paper so long as God preserves the earth and the creation that he has made.¹⁷ (Wayne Grudem)

How can a right understanding of the preserving aspect of God's providence strengthen our intimacy with him?

How can a right understanding of the preserving aspect of God's providence strengthen our missional activity?

¹⁵Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 315.

¹⁶Ibid., 316.

¹⁷Ibid., 316-17.

• **CONCURRENCE**¹⁸

God cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do.

*By concurrence we mean that both God and his creatures work together to accomplish God's sovereign purposes in his world.*¹⁹ (David P. Nelson)

Ephesians 1:11 *In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.*

1. Inanimate Creation

- **Psalm 104:14** *You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate*
- **Psalm 148:7-8** *Praise the LORD from the earth . . . fire and hail, snow and mist, stormy wind fulfilling his word!*
- **Matthew 5:45** *For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

2. Animals

- **Psalm 104:27-29** *These all look to you, to give them their food in due season. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.*
- **Matthew 6:26** *Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.*
- **Matthew 10:29** *Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.*

3. Seemingly “Random” or “Chance” events

- **Proverbs 16:33** *The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.*

4. The Affairs of Nations

- **Job 12:23** *He makes nations great, and he destroys them; he enlarges nations, and leads them away.*
- **Psalm 22:28** *For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations.*
- **Acts 17:26** *And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place.*

¹⁸Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 317-19.

¹⁹Nelson, “The Work of God,” 281.

- **1 Peter 2:13-14** *Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.*
- 5. All Aspects of Our Lives**
 - **Matthew 6:11** *Give us this day our daily bread*
 - **Philippians 4:19** *And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*
 - **Psalms 139:16** *Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.*
 - **Job 14:5** *Since his days are determined, and the number of his months is with you, and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass*
 - **Jeremiah 1:5** *Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.*
 - **Acts 17:28** *In him we live and move and have our being*
 - **Jeremiah 10:23** *I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps.*
 - **Proverbs 20:24** *A man's steps are from the LORD; how then can man understand his way?*
 - **Proverbs 16:9** *The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.*
 - **Psalms 75:6-7** *For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up, but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another.*
 - **1 Corinthians 4:7** *...What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?*
 - **Philippians 2:13** *for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

The Presence (Problem) of Evil²⁰

→ *God uses all things to fulfill his purposes and even uses evil for his glory and for our good.*

- **Genesis 50:20** *As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.*
- **Romans 8:28** *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*
- **Proverbs 16:4** *The LORD has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.*
- **Psalms 76:10** *Surely the wrath of man shall praise you*

²⁰Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 327-29.

- **Job 1:21** *And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."*
- **Exodus 4:21** *And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go."*
- **Romans 9:17-18** *For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.*

→ *Nevertheless, God never does evil and is never to be blamed for evil.*

- **Matthew 18:7** *Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!*
- **Luke 22:22** *For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!*
- **Acts 2:23** *this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.*
- **James 1:13-14** *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.*

→ *God rightfully blames and judges moral creatures for the evil they do.*

- **Isaiah 66:3-4** *These have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations; I also will choose harsh treatment for them and bring their fears upon them, because when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, they did not listen; but they did what was evil in my eyes and chose that in which I did not delight.*
- **Ecclesiastes 7:29** *See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes.*

Of the evils that infect God's world (moral and spiritual perversity, waste of good, and the physical disorders and disruptions of a spoiled cosmos), it can summarily be said: God permits evil (Acts 14:16); he punishes evil with evil (Ps. 81:11-12; Rom. 1:26-32); he brings good out of evil (Gen. 50:20; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; 13:27; 1 Cor. 2:7-8); he uses evil to test and discipline those he loves (Matt. 4:1-11; Heb. 12:4-14); and one day he will redeem his people from the power and presence of evil altogether (Rev. 21:27; 22:14-15).²¹ (J. I. Packer)

²¹Packer, *Concise Theology*, 56.

*The painful things that come into our lives are not described by God as accidental or as out of his control. This would be no comfort. That God cannot stop a germ or a car or a bullet or a demon is not good news; it is not the news of the Bible. God can. And ten thousand times he does. But when he doesn't, he has his reasons. And in Christ Jesus they are all loving. We are taught this sovereignty so that we will drink it in till it saturates our bones.*²² (John Piper)

PRAYER

*One of the ways God allows his creation to stay involved with him is through prayer. Prayer, which is personal communication from us to God, not only helps us know 'about' God but also helps us truly 'know' God.*²³ (Wayne Grudem)

Why Does God Want Us To Pray?²⁴ (Wayne Grudem)

1. Prayer expresses our trust (faith) in God and is a means whereby our trust in him can increase.
2. Prayer brings us into deeper fellowship with God, and he loves us and delights in our fellowship with him.
3. In prayer God allows us as creatures to be involved in activities that are eternally important.
4. In praying with humble dependence we give glory to God.
5. Prayer often affects or changes the way God acts

Do We Have Free Will?

*Reformed theology indeed insists that a real measure of freedom has been assigned to man by the Creator. But that freedom is not absolute and man is not autonomous. Our freedom is always and everywhere limited by God's sovereignty.*²⁵ (R. C. Sproul)

An absolute "freedom", totally free of God's control is simply not possible in a world providentially sustained and directed by God himself. If that is what someone means by "free will," it is inconsistent with Scripture to say that we have free will. On the other hand, we are free in the greatest sense that any creature could be free—we make willing choices, choices that have real effects. We are aware of no restraints on our will from God when we make decisions, and we act in accord with our own desires. In this sense, it is certainly consistent with Scripture to say that we have "free will." Clearly we must

²²John Piper, *A Sweet and Bitter Providence: Sex, Race, and the Sovereignty of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 136-37.

²³Wayne Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know*, ed. Elliot Grudem (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 48.

²⁴Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 158-59.

²⁵R. C. Sproul, *What is Reformed Theology? Understanding the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 27.

*insist that we have the power of willing choice and that our choices have real results in the universe . . .*²⁶ (Wayne Grudem)

How can a right understanding of the cooperating aspect of God's providence strengthen our intimacy with him?

How can a right understanding of the cooperating aspect of God's providence strengthen our missional activity?

• **GOVERNMENT**²⁷

God has a purpose in all he does in the world and he providentially governs or directs all things in order that they accomplish his purposes.

- **Psalm 103:9** *The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all*
- **Daniel 4:35** *and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"*
- **Romans 11:36** *For from him and through him and to him are all things.*

*The model is of purposive personal management with total "hands-on" control: God is completely in charge of his world. His hand may be hidden, but his rule is absolute.*²⁸
(J. I. Packer)

How can a right understanding of the governing aspect of God's providence strengthen our intimacy with him?

How can a right understanding of the governing aspect of God's providence strengthen our missional activity?

The doctrine of providence teaches Christians that they are never in the grip of blind forces (fortune, chance, luck, fate); all that happens to them is divinely planned, and each

²⁶Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 151.

²⁷Ibid., *Systematic Theology*, 331.

²⁸Packer, *Concise Theology*, 54.

*event comes as a new summons to trust, obey, and rejoice, knowing that all is for one's spiritual and eternal good.*²⁹

J. I. Packer

²⁹Packer, *Concise Theology*, 56.

APPENDIX 5
THEOLOGY SESSION 5

The Doctrines of Humanity & Sin

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

Psalm 8:3-5

Group Work: What are the theological implications of these verses in regard to the doctrine of humanity? (Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 51:5; John 8:34; 1 Corinthians 2:14; 1 Corinthians 10:31; James 3:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:6-9)

WHAT IS THE DOCTRINE OF HUMANITY?

THE CREATION OF HUMANITY¹

God did not need to create man, yet he created us for his own glory

- **Isaiah 43:7** *everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.*

God created man to find joy in knowing the Creator

- **Psalm 16:11** *You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*
- **Psalm 73:25-26** *Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

God created man that he, the Creator, might rejoice over his creation

¹Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 440-42.

- **Isaiah 62:5** *and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.*
- **Zephaniah 3:17** *The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.*

CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD²

The fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God and represents God.
(Wayne Grudem)

The Creation of Humanity – God creates man in his own image

- **Genesis 1:26** *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*
 - o Both the Hebrew word for “image” (*tselem*) and the Hebrew word for “likeness” (*demut*) refer to something that is similar but not identical to the thing it represents or is an “image” of.

The Fall of Humanity – God’s image is distorted, but not lost

- **Genesis 9:6** *Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.*
- **Ecclesiastes 7:29** *See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes.*
- **James 3:8-9** *but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.*

The Redemption of Humanity in Christ – a progressive recovering of more of God’s image

- **Colossians 3:9-10** *Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*
- **2 Corinthians 3:18** *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.*
- **Romans 8:29** *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son*

The Restoration of Humanity – at Christ’s return, complete restoration of God’s image

²Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 442-45.

- **1 Corinthians 15:49** *Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.*
- **1 John 3:2** *Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.*

Specific Aspects of Our Likeness to God³

1. **Moral Aspects:** We are creatures who are morally accountable before God for our actions
2. **Spiritual Aspects:** We have not only physical bodies but also immaterial souls/spirits, and we can therefore act in ways that are significant in the immaterial, spiritual realm of existence.
3. **Mental Aspects:** We have an ability to reason and think logically and learn
4. **Relational Aspects:** In addition to our unique ability to relate to God, there are other relational aspects of being in God's image.

5 Biblical Considerations:⁴ (John S. Hammet)

1. Creation in the image of God is affirmed in all persons
2. Creation in the image of God involves being like God in some unspecified way
3. Creation in the image of God is the basis for human uniqueness and dignity
4. Even after the fall, humans are spoken of as being in the image of God, so the image is not completely lost in the fall
5. Since Christ is the perfect image of God and the result of the process of restoration is being fully like Christ, we may speak of the image of God as being not only our created design but also our eschatological destiny!

CREATED MALE AND FEMALE⁵

*The creation of man as male and female shows God's image in (1) harmonious interpersonal relationships, (2) equality in personhood and importance, and (3) difference in role and authority.*⁶ (Wayne Grudem)

→ Harmonious Interpersonal Relationships

- **Genesis 2:24** *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

³Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 445-48.

⁴John S. Hammet, "Human Nature," in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2007), 352.

⁵Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 454-67.

⁶*Ibid.*, 454.

- **Matthew 19:6** *So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."*
- **1 Corinthians 7:3-5** *The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

Just as there was fellowship and communication and sharing of glory among the members of the Trinity before the world was made . . . so God made Adam and Eve in such a way that they would share love and communication and mutual giving of honor to one another in their interpersonal relationship.⁷ (Wayne Grudem)

→ Equality in Personhood and Importance

- **Genesis 1:27** *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*
- **Joel 2:28-29** *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.*
- **1 Corinthians 11:11-12** *Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.*
- **Galatians 3:27-28** *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Our equality as persons before God, reflecting the equality of persons in the Trinity, should lead naturally to men and women giving honor to one another.⁸ (Wayne Grudem)

→ Difference in Roles and Authority

Each member of the Trinity has distinct roles or functions. Differences in roles and authority between the members of the Trinity are thus completely consistent with equal importance, personhood, and deity. If human beings are to reflect the character of God, then we would expect some differences in roles among human beings, even with respect to the most basic of all differences among human beings, the difference between male and female.⁹ (Wayne Grudem)

⁷Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 455.

⁸Ibid., 457.

⁹Ibid., 459.

- **Genesis 2:18** *Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."*
- **Genesis 3:16** *Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.*
- **Romans 5:15** *For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.*
- **1 Corinthians 11:3** *But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.*
- **Ephesians 5:22-24** *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of humanity strengthen our intimacy with him?

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of humanity strengthen our missional activity?

WHAT IS THE DOCTRINE OF SIN?

*Sin is a want of conformity to the will of God; sin is disobedience to God's command; sin is a forgetfulness of the obligations of the relation which exist between the creature and the Creator.*¹⁰ (Charles H. Spurgeon)

*Sin is a universal deformity of human nature, found at every point in every person.*¹¹ (J. I. Packer)

*Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature.*¹² (Wayne Grudem)

Sin in the Bible:

- ***Porneia* (NT) – depravity/corruption** active intent to harm
- ***Kakos* (NT) – moral badness** the lack of good
- ***Parakoe* (NT) – disobedience/inattention** failing to hear or incorrect hearing

¹⁰Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 14 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1868), 289.

¹¹J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1995), 82.

¹²Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 490.

- **Shogag (OT)** – *error* tendency to go astray or to make mistakes
- **‘Asham (OT)** – *guilt* to do a wrong, to commit an offense, to inflict injury
- **Asebeia (NT)** – *godlessness* the contrary of worship or reverence of God
- **Agnoema (NT)** – *ignorance* darkened in understanding
- **‘Owel (OT)** – *iniquity/lack of integrity* a departure from what is right and true
- **Anomia (NT)** – *lawless* lawbreaker
- **Epithymia (NT)** – *lust* a corrupt desire that strives after what is inappropriate or illicit
- **‘Awa (OT)** – *perversion* to bend or twist
- **Pesha’ (OT)** – *rebellion* to rebel or disobey
- **Apeitheia (NT)** – *rebellion* to rebel or disobey
- **‘Abar (OT)** – *transgression* to cross over or pass by
- **Parabasis (NT)** - *transgression* to cross over or pass by
- **Ma’al (OT)** – *treachery* infidelity or breach of trust
- **Paraptoma (NT)** – *treachery* infidelity or breach of trust
- **Ra’ (OT)** – *wickedness* breaking up or ruin
- **Adikeo (NT)** – *unrighteousness* behavior contrary to the standard of righteousness
- **Chata’ (OT approx 600 times)** – *miss the mark* deviating from the norm
- **Hamartia (NT approx 300 times)** – *miss the mark* to err

*Man, as made in the image of God, has implanted within him an innate sense to live as God directs. Every departure from this sense is a coming short of the purpose for which man was made, a missing of the mark.*¹³ (R. Stanton Norman)

The Fall

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3:6)

*Even though we must never say that God himself sinned or he is to be blamed for sin . . . we must also affirm that the God who “accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will” (Eph. 1:11), did ordain that sin would come into the world, even though he does not delight in it and even though he ordained that it would come about through the voluntary choices of moral creatures.*¹⁴ (Wayne Grudem)

The Sin of Adam and Eve¹⁵

1. Their sin struck at the basis for knowledge, for it gave a different answer to the question, “What is true?”
2. Their sin struck at the basis for moral standards, for it gave a different answer to the question, “What is right?”

¹³R. Stanton Norman, “Human Sinfulness,” in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2007), 418.

¹⁴Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 492.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 493.

3. Their sin gave a different answer to the question, “Who am I?”

The Results of the Fall¹⁶

1. The anti-God, self-aggrandizing mindset expressed in Adam’s sin became part of him and the moral nature he passed on to his descendants
2. Adam and Eve found themselves gripped by a sense of pollution and guilt that made them ashamed and fearful before God—with good reason
3. They were cursed with expectations of pain and death, and they were expelled from Eden
4. At the same time, God began showing them mercy

Original Sin (Inherited Sin)

Romans 5:12 *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned*

The term “original sin” is not a biblical term but was coined by Augustine to speak of sin derived from our Adamic origin.

1. Sinfulness marks everyone from birth, and is there in the form of a motivationally twisted heart, prior to any actual sins.
2. This inner sinfulness is the root and source of all actual sins
3. It derives to us in a real though mysterious way from Adam, our first representative from God.¹⁷

*The assertion of original sin makes the point that we are not sinners because we sin, but rather we sin because we are sinners, born with a nature enslaved to sin.*¹⁸ (J. I. Packer)

Total Depravity

The implication of original sin is total depravity

*Total depravity is the idea that all of human nature is corrupted by sin. Humankind was originally created to know, love, and serve God perfectly. Depravity is the contamination of these capacities. Our essential nature is corrupted; our relationships with God and others are disrupted. No capacity of our unregenerate nature is free from the pollution of sinful corruption.*¹⁹ (R. Stanton Norman)

*Sin affects every aspect of our being: the body, the soul, the mind, and so forth. The total or whole person is corrupted by sin.*²⁰ (R. C. Sproul)

¹⁶Packer, *Concise Theology*, 80.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹Norman, “Human Sinfulness,” 454.

²⁰R. C. Sproul, *What Is Reformed Theology? Understanding the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 118.

- **Genesis 6:5** *The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*
- **Job 14:4** *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? There is not one.*
- **Psalms 51:5** *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*
- **Romans 3:10-11** *as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God.*
- **Romans 8:7-8** *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

→ **The Gospel Implications of Total Depravity**

- **1 Corinthians 2:14** *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.*
- **Ephesians 2:1-3** *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*
- **Colossians 2:13** *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses*

Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not—indeed he cannot—choose good over evil.²¹ (David Steele & Curtis Thomas)

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of sin strengthen our intimacy with him?

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of sin strengthen our missional activity?

²¹David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented* (Phillipsburg, NJ: The Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, 1963), 16.

*Lord God, for years we have wandered in the state of spiritual amnesia not knowing who we are, where we came from or what our purpose in life is. We knew not that we were made in Thy image for the single purpose of worshiping and adoring Thee. Our plight has been empty and futile. Then Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, awakened us to our true purpose in life. Now our days are filled with praise. And we praise Thee with our whole being, honoring Thee, adoring Thee in the beauty of Thy holiness. Amen.*²²

A. W. Tozer

²²A. W. Tozer, *The Purpose of Man* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2009), 17.

APPENDIX 6

THEOLOGY SESSION 6

The Doctrine of Christ: The Person of Christ

*Beloved friends, let us continue to look to Him, and let us measure and estimate our spiritual life, not by feelings and experiences, but by our knowledge of Him and our love for Him. He is the center of everything.*¹

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Group Work: What are the theological implications of these verses in regard to the doctrine of the Person of Christ? (Hebrews 1:1-4; 1 John 1:1-3; 1 John 4:1-3; Galatians 4:4-5; Isaiah 9:6-7; John 1:1-5; John 1:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:3-6)

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE PERSON OF CHRIST?

*Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man in one person, and will be so forever.*² (Wayne Grudem)

THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

→ The Virgin Birth

Luke 1:30-35 *And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."*

¹Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 288.

²Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 529.

Matthew 1:18-25 *Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.*

Doctrinal Implications of the Virgin Birth³

*Christians must face the fact that a denial of the virgin birth is a denial of Jesus as the Christ. The Savior who died for our sins was none other than the baby who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin. The virgin birth does not stand alone as a biblical doctrine, it is an irreducible part of the biblical revelation about the person and work of Jesus Christ. With it, the Gospel stands or falls.*⁴ (Albert Mohler)

1. Salvation ultimately comes from the Lord

*The principal reason for the virgin birth was so that the entry of God into human flesh might be by **divine initiative**. It is not by any human act or at any human initiative that salvation comes to us. It is divinely initiated. Man does nothing. Mary did nothing (other than to submit to what God would do). Joseph did nothing. God did it all. The virgin birth . . . "graphically shows that salvation comes 'from above' and that the source of our hope and confidence lies in the living God who entered into human history in the historical figure of Jesus Christ. The virgin birth marks off the origin of Christ from the human race just as his end is marked off by the resurrection."*⁵ (Sam Storms)

2. In Christ, there is a uniting of full deity and full humanity in one person

God, in his wisdom, ordained a combination of human and divine influence in the birth of Christ, so that his full humanity would be evident to us from the fact of his ordinary human birth from a human mother, and his full deity would be evident from the fact of his conception in Mary's womb by the powerful work of the Holy Spirit. (Wayne Grudem)

³Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 530.

⁴R. Albert Mohler, "Can a Christian Deny the Virgin Birth?" December 5, 2007, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.albertmohler.com/2007/12/05/can-a-christian-deny-the-virgin-birth-3/>.

⁵Sam Storms, "Virgin Birth," April 15, 2006, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.samstorms.com/all-articles/post/virgin-birth/>.

3. The virgin birth makes possible Christ's true humanity without inherited sin

7 Points to Consider⁶ (Sam Storms)

1. The virgin birth was not a demonstrable event. (No empirical evidence – must be believed by faith)
2. The virgin birth was not the beginning of the Son of God. (He is eternally self-existent)
3. The virgin birth does not entail a reduction or denial of the deity of Christ. (God the Son did not cease to be God when he became a man)
4. The virgin birth does not entail a reduction or denial of the humanity of Christ.
5. The virgin birth does not require us to believe in the immaculate conception of Mary. (as proclaimed by Pope Pius IX on Dec. 8, 1854 - The doctrine of the "immaculate conception" is the idea that Mary herself was conceived without sin.)
6. The virgin birth does not require us to believe in the perpetual virginity of Mary. (as proclaimed by the Council of Trent in 1545-63; but also embraced by a number of Protestant Reformers, including Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli.)
7. The virgin birth does not elevate Mary to a place of worship and veneration.

→ Human Weakness and Limitations

- Jesus had a human body

Luke 2:52 *And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.*

John 4:6 . . . so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well . . .

John 19:28 *After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst."*

Matthew 4:1-2 *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.*

Luke 23:46 *Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.*

- Jesus had a human mind

Luke 2:52 *And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.*

Mark 13:32 *But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*

- Jesus had a human soul and emotions

John 11:35 *Jesus wept.*

⁶Storms, "Virgin Birth."

John 12:27 *"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.*

John 13:21 *After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit...*

Matthew 26:38 *Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me."*

→ Sinlessness

Hebrews 4:14-16 *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Heidelberg Catechism:

Q: *Why must he be truly human and truly righteous?*

A: *God's justice demands that human nature, which has sinned, must pay for its sin; but a sinner could never pay for others.*

Jesus was human and yet did not sin. The fact that he became man reveals the nature of true humanity. His humanity gives a glimpse of what our humanity would be, were it not tainted with sin. He shows that the problem with humanity is not that we are humans, but rather that we are fallen. Jesus' human nature shows the potential of humanity as God intended. This display of sinless humanity reaffirms God's declaration that creation in all its original dimensions (material and spiritual), including humanity, is by divine definition very good. (ESV Study Bible)

Why was Jesus' full humanity necessary?⁷

1. Representative Obedience
 - **Romans 5:18-19** *Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*
2. Substitute Sacrifice
 - **Hebrews 2:17** *Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*
3. Effective Mediator Between God and Man
 - **1 Timothy 2:5** *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*
4. Sympathetic High Priest

⁷Ibid., 2518

- **Hebrews 4:15-16** *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*
5. True Example and Pattern For Our Lives
- **1 Peter 2:21** *For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.*

How can a right understanding of the humanity of Christ strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the humanity of Christ strengthen our missional activity?

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

→ Direct Scriptural Claims⁸

The word “God” (*theos*) used of Christ

- **John 1:1** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
- **John 1:18** *No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.*
- **John 20:28** *Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"*
- **Romans 9:5** *To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.*
- **Titus 2:13** *waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ*
- **Hebrews 1:8** *But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.*
- **2 Peter 1:1** . . . *To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ*

The word “Lord” (*kyrios*) used of Christ (used in the Septuagint & NT)

- **Luke 2:11** *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*

⁸Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 543-47.

- **Matthew 3:3** *For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'"* (John quoting Isaiah 40)
- **Matthew 22:44** *'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet'?* (Jesus quoting Psalm 110)
- **1 Corinthians 8:6** *yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.*
- **1 Corinthians 12:3** *Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.*

Other important claims to deity

- **John 8:58-59** *Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.*
- **Revelation 22:13** *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."*
- **Matthew 16:13** *Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"*
- **Matthew 26:64** *Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."*
- **1 Corinthians 15:28** *When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.*
- **Hebrews 1:1-3** *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power...*
- **John 1:14** *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*
- **John 3:16** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*
- **John 5:23** *that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.*

→ Evidence that Jesus possessed attributes of deity⁹

1. Omnipotence

- **Matthew 8:26-27** And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"
- **Matthew 14:9** *Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.*
- **John 2:1-11** *Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. And he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it. When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now." This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.*

2. Eternity

- **John 8:58-59** *Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.*
- **Revelation 22:13** *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."*

3. Omniscience

- **John 6:64** *But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.)*
- **John 16:30** *Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God."*

4. Omnipresence

- **Matthew 18:20** *For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.*
- **Matthew 28:20** *And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

⁹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 547-49.

5. Sovereignty

- **Mark 2:5-7** *And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"*
- **Matthew 5:21-22** *"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire."*

6. Worthy of Worship

- **Philippians 2:9-11** *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
- **Hebrews 1:6** *And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."*

How can a right understanding of the deity of Christ strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the deity of Christ strengthen our missional activity?

THE INCARNATION (DEITY AND HUMANITY IN THE ONE PERSON OF CHRIST)

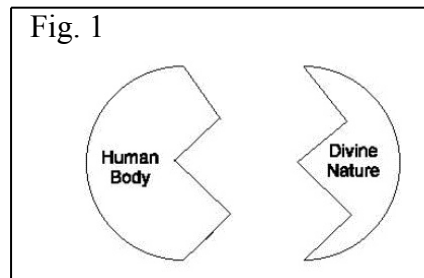
The incarnation of Christ is a most extraordinary and amazing affair; it is wonderful indeed, that the eternal Son of God should become man; that he should be born of a pure virgin, without any concern of man in it; that this should be brought about by the power of the Holy Ghost, in a way unseen, imperceptible and unknown, signified by his overshadowing; and all this in order to effect the most wonderful work that ever was done in the world, the redemption and salvation of men: it is a most mysterious thing, incomprehensible by men, and not to be accounted for upon the principles of natural reason; and is only to be believed and embraced upon the credit of divine revelation, to which it solely belongs.¹⁰ (John Gill)

¹⁰John Gill, *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity: Or A System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures*, new ed., 2 vols. (Tegg & Company, 1839), 536.

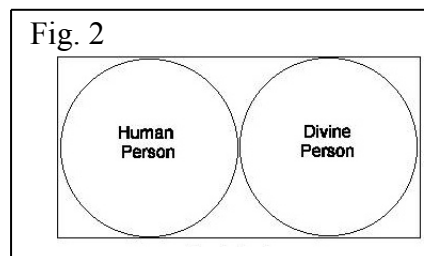
The incarnation means that the eternal Son of God became “flesh”, that is, He assumed an additional nature, namely, a human nature.

Three inadequate views of the person of Christ¹¹

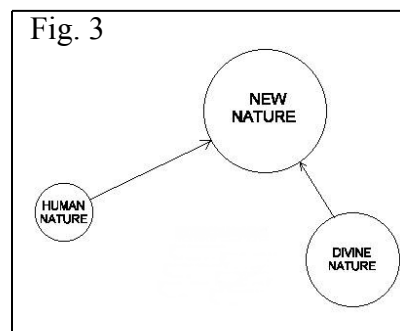
1. Apollinarianism (Apollinaris, bishop of Laodicea in A.D. 361) – the one person of Christ had a human body but not a human mind or spirit, and the mind and spirit of Christ were from the divine nature of the Son of God



2. Nestorianism (Nestorius, a popular preacher at Antioch, and from A.D. 428, a bishop of Constantinople) – Christ had two persons in one body, rather than one person



3. Eutychianism (Eutyches A.D. 378-454 – was the leader of a monastery in Constantinople) - Christ had one nature only. Denied that the human nature and divine nature in Christ remained fully human and fully divine.

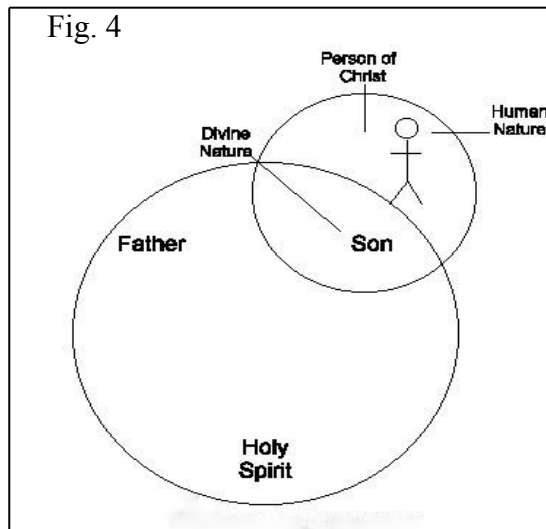


¹¹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 554-56.

The Chalcedonian Creed of 451

*We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; **truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [co-essential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood;** in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same*

*Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, **to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.***



⇒ **Against Apollinarianism:** *truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood*

⇒ **Against Nestorianism:** *indivisibly, inseparably...concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons*

⇒ **Against Eutychianism:** *to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably...the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved*

Understanding the Incarnation¹²

1. The doctrine of the Incarnation means that two distinct natures (divine and human) are united in one person: Jesus. Jesus is not two people (God and man). He is one person: the God-man. Jesus is not schizophrenic.

¹²Sam Storms, "Incarnation and Humanity," October 21, 2013, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.samstorms.com/all-articles/post/incarnation-and-humanity/>.

2. When the Word became flesh he did not cease to be the Word. The Word veiled, hid, and voluntarily restricted the use of certain divine powers and prerogatives. But God cannot cease to be God.
3. When the Word *once* became flesh he became flesh *forever*. After his earthly life, death, and resurrection, Jesus did not divest himself of the flesh or cease to be a man. He is a man even now at the right hand of God the Father. He is also God. He will always be the God-man.

*All the qualities and powers that are in us, as well as all the qualities and powers that are in God, were, are, and ever will be really and distinguishably present in the one person of the man from Galilee.*¹³ (J. I. Packer)

*The fact that the infinite, omnipotent, eternal Son of God could become man and join himself to a human nature forever, so that infinite God became one person with finite man, will remain for eternity the most profound miracle and the most profound mystery in all the universe.*¹⁴ (Wayne Grudem)

How can a right understanding of the incarnation strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of incarnation strengthen our missional activity?

*I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. ... Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God.*¹⁵

C.S. Lewis

¹³J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1995), 105.

¹⁴Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 563.

¹⁵C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Collier Books, 1952), 40-41.

APPENDIX 7

THEOLOGY SESSION 7

The Doctrine of Christ: The Work of Christ

*O how we should meditate on the work of Christ. Because here we meet the work of God.
If you want to know the love of God, know the work of Christ.*¹

John Piper

Group Work: What are the theological implications of these verses in regard to the doctrine of the Work of Christ? (Isaiah 53:4-7; Romans 3:21-26; Hebrews 2:10-18; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28; Acts 1:6-11; Hebrews 2:5-9)

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE WORK OF CHRIST?

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, functioning as Prophet, Priest, and King, has secured redemption for God's people through the atoning work of the cross and his resurrection, and he is now enthroned in heaven where he rules the world and mediates on behalf of his ransomed ones.

THE OFFICES OF CHRIST

*Therefore, in order that faith may find a firm basis for salvation in Christ, and thus rest in him, this principle must be laid down: the office enjoined upon Christ by the Father consists of three parts. For he was given to be prophet, priest, and king.*² (John Calvin)

PROPHET

*A prophet is one who speaks God's word to man. Thus, Christ functions as a prophet by revealing God to us and speaking forth His word.*³ (Matt Perman)

¹John Piper, "Much More Shall We Be Saved By His Life," Dec. 12, 1999, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/much-more-shall-we-be-saved-by-his-life>.

²John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 494.

³Matt Perman, "Christ as Our Perfect Prophet, Priest, and King," accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.oocities.org/mattperman/office.html>.

- **Deuteronomy 18:15-18** *The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.' And the LORD said to me, 'They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.*
- **John 1:1,14** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*
- **John 8:26-28** *I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him." They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.*
- **Hebrews 1:1-2** *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.*

Jesus was not merely a messenger of revelation from God (like all the other prophets), but was himself the source of revelation from God. Rather than saying, as all the Old Testament prophets did, 'Thus says the Lord,' Jesus could begin divinely authoritative teaching with the amazing statement, 'But I say unto you ' (Matthew 5:22, et al.).⁴
(Wayne Grudem)

In his humiliation: Christ exercised this office by revealing God to us in His teaching and miracles

In his exaltation: Christ exercises this office by illuminating the Bible to believers, through the Holy Spirit, so that we understand it and by working through the preaching of the word to make it effective in creating faith in unbelievers and building up faith in believers⁵

⁴Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 626.

⁵Perman, "Christ as Our Perfect Prophet, Priest, and King."

PRIEST

In the Old Testament, the priests were appointed by God to offer sacrifices. They also offered prayers and praise to God on behalf of the people. In so doing they 'sanctified' the people or made them acceptable to come into God's presence, albeit in a limited way during the Old Testament period. In the New Testament Jesus becomes our high priest.⁶ (Wayne Grudem)

- **Psalm 110:4** *The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."*
- **Hebrews 3:1-2** *Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, ²who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.*
- **Hebrews 4:14-16** *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

In his humiliation Christ offered sacrifice for sin to which all other Old Testament sacrifices pointed

In his exaltation: Christ, having offered Himself for our sins on earth, continues His priestly work by interceding for us in heaven.⁷

KING

In the Old Testament the king had authority to rule over God's people. In the New Testament, Jesus was born as the King of God's people.

- **Matthew 2:2** *"Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."*
- **John 6:15** *Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.*
- **John 18:36** *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."*
- **Ephesians 1:20-22** *that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church*

⁶Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 626.

⁷Perman, "Christ as Our Perfect Prophet, Priest, and King."

- **Revelation 19:16** *On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.*

In his humiliation: While He was on earth, He called people to acknowledge His Lordship and proclaimed the coming of the kingdom of God which one enters through faith in Him, and which will fully be manifest when He comes again, judges the world, and brings about the New Heavens and New Earth where only righteousness will dwell.

In his exaltation: Upon His ascension to heaven and seating at the right hand of the Father, Jesus' Lordship entered upon a new dimension. He is now officially enthroned as ruler and king of the universe. From His throne He now governs the church and rules the world.⁸

*It is wonderful that our priest who offered Himself for us and intercedes for us is also King—King of the Universe, and in a more intimate way, King of the Church. And as our King and Priest, Christ is also our Prophet who reveals God to us through His teaching and miracles on earth, and now through illuminating His Scriptures to us through the Holy Spirit.*⁹ (Matt Perman)

How can a right understanding of the offices of Christ strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the offices of Christ strengthen our missional activity?

THE ATONEMENT

Q: What is your only comfort in life and in death? (Heidelberg Catechism)

That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil

*Man seems to know, in his inmost nature, that he must bring a sacrifice if he would appear before God; and this is, by no means, an error on his part. However erroneous may be the form it takes, in its essence there is truth in it.*¹⁰ (Charles Spurgeon)

⁸Perman, "Christ as Our Perfect Prophet, Priest, and King."

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 46 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1900), 446.

*The atonement is the work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation.*¹¹
(Wayne Grudem)

*Historically understood, Christ's atonement gives hope to Christians in their sin and in their suffering. If we have any assurance of salvation, it is because of Christ's Atonement; if any joy, it flows from Christ's work on the Cross. The Atonement protects us from our native tendency to replace religion with morality and God's grace with legalism. Apart from Christ's atoning work, we would be forever guilty, ashamed, and condemned before God.*¹² (Mark Dever)

The Cause of the Atonement¹³

→ **The Love of God**

- **John 3:16** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*
- **John 15:13** *Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*
- **Romans 5:8** *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
- **1 John 4:9-10** *In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

→ **The Justice of God**

- **Exodus 34:6-7** *The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."*
- **Romans 3:19-20** *Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.*
- **Romans 3:25-26** *whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness*

¹¹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 568.

¹²J.I. Packer and Mark Dever, *In My Place Condemned He Stood: Celebrating the Glory of the Atonement* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 102.

¹³Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 568.

at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Both the love and the justice of God were the ultimate cause of the atonement. It is not helpful for us to ask which is more important, however, because without the love of God, he never would have taken any steps to redeem us, yet without the justice of God, the specific requirement that Christ should earn our salvation by dying for our sins would not have been met. Both the love and justice of God were equally important.¹⁴ (Wayne Grudem)

The Necessity of the Atonement¹⁵

There are two great reasons why men do not see the necessity of the atonement; these are inadequate views of sin and inadequate views of God.¹⁶ (John Broadus)

The atonement was not absolutely necessary, but, as a “consequence” of God’s decision to save some human beings, the atonement was absolutely necessary. This is sometimes called the “consequent absolute necessity” view of the atonement.¹⁷ (Wayne Grudem)

- **Matthew 26:39** *And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, **if it be possible**, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."*
- **Luke 24:25-26** *And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"*
- **Romans 3:26** *It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*
- **Galatians 2:21** *I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.*
- **Hebrews 2:17** *Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*
- **Hebrews 10:4** *For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*
- **Hebrews 9:24-26** *For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not*

¹⁴Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 568.

¹⁵Ibid., 569.

¹⁶John Broadus, “Necessity of the Atonement,” accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.reformedreader.org/rbs/broadus/broadus10.htm>.

¹⁷Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 569.

his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

The Nature of the Atonement¹⁸

Q: What did Christ undertake in the covenant of grace?

A: To keep the whole law for his people, and to suffer the punishment due to their sins.

*Jesus obeyed the Father in our place and perfectly met the demands of the law. And he suffered in our place, receiving in himself the penalty that God the Father would have visited upon us.*¹⁹ (Wayne Grudem)

→ **Active Obedience** (Christ's obedience for us)

*Christ had to live a life of perfect obedience to God in order earn righteousness for us.*²⁰ (Wayne Grudem)

*Christ's full obedience to all the prescriptions of the divine law...[making] available a perfect righteousness before the law that is imputed or reckoned to those who put their trust in him.*²¹ (Robert L. Reymond)

- **Philippians 3:9** *and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith*
- **1 Corinthians 1:30** *And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption*
- **Romans 5:19** *For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

The Lord Christ fulfilled the whole law for us; He did not only undergo the penalty of it due unto our sins, but also yielded that perfect obedience which it did require

*Christ's fulfilling of the law, in obedience unto its commands, is no less imputed unto us for our justification than His undergoing the penalty of it is.*²² (John Owen)

¹⁸Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 570.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Robert Reymond, "Imputation of Christ's Righteousness," accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.monergism.com/taxonomy/term/32410/all>.

²²John Owen, "Imputation of Christ's Righteousness," accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.monergism.com/taxonomy/term/32410/all>.

→ **Passive Obedience** (Christ's sufferings for us)

*Christ took on himself the sufferings necessary to pay the penalty of our sins.*²³ (Wayne Grudem)

*Christ's willing obedience in bearing all the sanctions imposed by that law against his people because of their transgression...[being] the ground of God's justification of sinners (Rom. 5:9), by which divine act they are pardoned...*²⁴ (Robert L. Reymond)

- **Isaiah 53:3-6** *He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*
- **Matthew 26:38** *Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death"*
- **Mark 15:24** *And they crucified him...*
- **Hebrews 5:8** *Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.*

What type of sufferings did Christ experience on the cross?²⁵

1. Physical pain and death
2. The pain of bearing sin
3. Abandonment
4. Bearing the wrath of God

Penal Substitutionary Atonement

*As Jesus bore the guilt of the sins of our sins alone, God the Father, the mighty Creator, the Lord of the universe, poured out on Jesus the fury of his wrath: Jesus became the object of the intense hatred of sin and vengeance against sin that God had patiently stored up since the beginning of the world.*²⁶ (Wayne Grudem)

*The heart of the Gospel is redemption, and the essence of redemption is the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ.*²⁷ (Charles Spurgeon)

²³Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 571.

²⁴Reymond, "Imputation of Christ's Righteousness."

²⁵Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 572-76.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 574-75.

²⁷Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 32 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1886), 385.

→ **Substitution**

- *Substitution is a broad idea that applies whenever one person acts to supply another's need, or to discharge his obligation, so that the other no longer has to carry the load himself.*²⁸ (J. I. Packer)
 - **Romans 5:8** *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
 - **Galatians 3:13** *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"*
 - **1 Peter 3:18** *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit*

→ **Penal**

- *To add this 'qualifier' . . . is to anchor the model of substitution . . . within the world of moral law, guilty conscience, and retributive justice. Thus is forged a conceptual instrument for conveying the thought that God remits our sins and accepts our persons into favor not because of any amends we have attempted, but because the penalty which was our due was diverted on to Christ.*²⁹ (J.I. Packer)
 - **Isaiah 53:10-11** *Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring...out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.*
 - **Romans 3:23-25** *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.*
 - **Hebrews 2:17** *Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*

*The notion which the phrase 'penal substitution' expresses is that Jesus Christ our Lord, moved by a love that was determined to do everything necessary to save us, endured and exhausted the destructive divine judgment for which we were otherwise inescapably destined, and so won us forgiveness, adoption and glory. To affirm penal substitution is to say that believers are in debt to Christ specifically for this, and that this is the mainspring of all their joy, peace and praise both now and for eternity.*³⁰ (J. I. Packer)

²⁸J. I. Packer and Mark Dever, *In My Place Condemned He Stood*, 69.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 77.

³⁰*Ibid.*

Other views of the Atonement in contrast with Penal Substitution³¹

1. **The ransom to Satan theory:** the ransom that Christ paid to redeem us was paid to Satan
2. **The moral influence theory:** God did not require the payment of a penalty for sin, but Christ's death was a way for God to show how much he loved humanity by identifying with its suffering
3. **The example theory:** God did not require the payment of a penalty for sin, but Christ's death provides an example for us on how we ought to trust and obey the perfect will of God, even when it leads to death
4. **The governmental theory:** the purpose of Christ's death was God's demonstration of the fact that his Laws had been broken. He is the moral lawgiver, and the governor of the universe and there must be a penalty paid. Christ did not die in the place of sinners but merely to show that when God's laws are broken there must be punishment of some sort

Understanding the Atonement³²

1. We deserve to die as the *penalty* for sin.
 - To pay the penalty for our sins, Christ died as the perfect *sacrifice*.
2. We deserve to bear God's *wrath* against sin.
 - To remove us from the wrath of God we deserved, Christ died as a *propitiation* for our sins.
3. We are *separated* from God by our sins.
 - To overcome our separation from God, Christ provided *reconciliation* for us with God.
4. We are in *bondage* to sin and to the kingdom of Satan.
 - To release us from our bondage, Christ *redeemed* us from the ruling power of sin and Satan.

How can a right understanding of the atonement strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the atonement strengthen our missional activity?

³¹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 581-82.

³²*Ibid.*, 579-80.

THE RESURRECTION

*Christianity stands or falls with the bodily resurrection of Jesus. The whole of New Testament faith and teaching orbits about the confession and conviction that the crucified Jesus is the Son of God established and vindicated as such “by the resurrection from the dead according to the Spirit of holiness.”*³³ (Paige Patterson)

Theological Significance of the Resurrection³⁴

1. Christ’s resurrection insures our regeneration

- **1 Peter 1:3** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*
- **Ephesians 2:5-6** *even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*

*When Jesus rose from the dead he had a new quality of life, a “resurrection life” in a human body and human spirit that were perfectly suited for fellowship and obedience to God forever. In his resurrection, Jesus earned for us a new life just like his.*³⁵ (Wayne Grudem)

2. Christ’s resurrection insures our justification

- **Romans 4:25** *who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*

*When the Father in essence said to Christ, “All the penalty for sins has been paid and I find you not guilty but righteous in my sight,” he was thereby making the declaration that would also apply to us once we trusted in Christ for salvation. In this way, Christ’s resurrection also gave final proof that he had earned our justification.*³⁶ (Wayne Grudem)

3. Christ’s resurrection insures that we will receive perfect resurrection bodies as well.

- **1 Corinthians 6:14** *And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.*
- **2 Corinthians 4:14** *knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.*

³³ Paige Patterson, “The Work of Christ,” in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2007), 590.

³⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 263-65.

³⁵ Ibid., 263-64.

³⁶ Ibid., 265.

- **1 Corinthians 15:12-28** . . . But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep . . .

How can a right understanding of the resurrection strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the resurrection strengthen our missional activity?

THE ASCENSION³⁷

→ Christ ascended into Heaven

- **Luke 24:50-51** *Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.*
- **Acts 1:9-11** *And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."*

→ Christ received glory and honor that had not been his before as the God-man

- **John 17:5** *And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.*
- **Acts 2:33** *Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.*
- **Philippians 2:9** *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name*
- **Revelation 5:12** *"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"*

→ Christ was seated at God's right hand (Christ's session)

- **Psalms 110:1** *The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."*
- **Hebrews 1:3** *After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*
- **Ephesians 1:20-21** *that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all*

³⁷Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 617-19.

rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church

- **1 Peter 3:22** *who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.*

*The purpose of this session at the right hand of the Father specifically relates to intercession in behalf of those who have inherited salvation.*³⁸

- **1 John 2:1** *My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*
- **Hebrews 7:25** *Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.*

*Christ presents Himself before God as our representative. His perfect manhood, His official character, and His finished work, plead for us before the throne of God. All that the Son of God as incarnate is, and all that He did on earth, He is, and did for us; so that God can regard us with all the favor which is due Him. His presence, therefore, is a perpetual and prevailing intercession with God in behalf of His people, and secures for them all the benefits of His redemption.*³⁹ (Charles Hodge)

Theological Significance of the Ascension⁴⁰

1. Since we are united with Christ in every aspect of his work of redemption, Christ's going up into heaven foreshadows our future ascension into heaven with him.
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:17** *Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.*
2. Jesus' ascension gives us assurance that our final home will be in heaven with him.
 - **John 14:2-3** *In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.*

³⁸Patterson, "The Work of Christ," 590.

³⁹Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner and Co., 1872), 592.

⁴⁰Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 619-20.

3. Because of our union with Christ in his ascension, we are able to share now (in part) in Christ's authority over the universe, and we will later share in it more fully.
- **Ephesians 2:4-6** *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*

How can a right understanding of the resurrection strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the resurrection strengthen our missional activity?

Our Lord Jesus is His people's representative. When He died for them, they had rest; when he rose again for them, they had liberty; when He sat down at His Father's right hand, they had favor, and honor, and dignity.

Charles H. Spurgeon⁴¹

⁴¹Charles H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings*, new ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), under sec., "Evening April 21," Logos Bible Software.

APPENDIX 8

THEOLOGY SESSION 8

The Doctrine of Salvation: Common Grace, Election, and Calling

What a great word that word “salvation” is! It includes the cleansing of our conscience from all past guilt, the delivery of our soul from all those propensities to evil which now so strongly predominate in us; it takes in, in fact, the undoing of all that Adam did.

Salvation is the total restoration of man from his fallen estate; and yet it is something more than that, for God’s salvation fixes our standing more secure than it was before we fell. It finds us broken in pieces by the sin of our first parent, defiled, stained, accursed: it first heals our wounds, it removes our diseases, it takes away our curse, it puts our feet upon the rock Christ Jesus, and having thus done, at last it lifts our heads far above all principalities and powers, to be crowned for ever with Jesus Christ, the king of heaven.¹

Charles Spurgeon

Group Work: What does salvation mean to you, personally?

WHAT IS MEANT BY SALVATION?

The master theme of the Christian gospel is salvation. Salvation is a picture-word of wide application that expresses the idea of rescue from jeopardy and misery into a state of safety. The gospel proclaims that the God who saved Israel from Egypt, Jonah from the fish’s belly, the psalmist from death, and the soldiers from drowning, saves all who trust Christ from sin and sin’s consequences.² (J. I. Packer)

Salvation is the work of God that delivers us from sin and its penalty, restores us to a right relationship with him, and imparts to us eternal life.³ (Kenneth Keathley)

¹Charles H. Spurgeon. *The New Park Street Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 4 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1858), 353.

²J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1995), 146.

³Kenneth Keathley, “The Work of God: Salvation,” in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2007), 686.

Salvation and the Trinity

1. God the Father

*Scripture depicts the Father as the ultimate source, planner and initiator of salvation.*⁴

- **Ephesians 1:3-6** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*
- **2 Timothy 1:9** *who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began*
- **James 1:17-18** *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*
- **1 John 4:14** *And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.*

2. God the Son

*Scripture depicts the Son, Jesus, as completing redemption through his obedient life and atoning death.*⁵

- **Matthew 1:21** *She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*
- **Ephesians 1:7-8** *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight*
- **Hebrews 9:15** *Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.*

3. God the Holy Spirit

*Scripture depicts the Holy Spirit as the one who applies, makes effective, and preserves the redemption Christ bought for those who believe.*⁶

- **Ephesians 1:13-14** *In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the*

⁴Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 44.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

- **Titus 3:5** *he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit*
- **Romans 8:16** *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*

Titus 3:4-6 *But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.*

The Order of Salvation (“ordo salutis”)

Romans 8:29-30 *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*

The “ordo salutis” is a very important concept because the doctrine of salvation is so rich and nuanced, and involves so many different realities, that we will not understand it the way that we should if we do not define all of its elements very carefully. We grow in sanctification and holiness as we grow in our understanding of the gospel, and realize all the spiritual blessings that we have in Christ; and so, if we are unclear on the many precious things that God's Word has to say about the order of events which his salvation brings about in our lives, we will remain immature in our faith and conduct.⁷

1. **Election** (God's choice of people to be saved)
2. **The gospel call** (proclamation of the gospel)
3. **Regeneration** (being born again)
4. **Conversion** (faith and repentance)
5. **Justification** (right legal standing)
6. **Adoption** (membership in God's family)
7. **Sanctification** (right conduct of life)
8. **Perseverance** (remaining a Christian)
9. **Death** (going to be with the Lord)
10. **Glorification** (receiving a resurrection body)⁸

COMMON GRACE

*Common grace is the grace of God by which he gives people immeasurable blessings that are not part of salvation.*⁹ (Wayne Grudem)

⁷www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/qna/ordosalutis.html

⁸Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 670.

*Common grace is different from saving grace in its **results** (it does not bring about salvation), in its **recipients** (it is given to believers and unbelievers alike), and its **source** (it does not directly flow from Christ's atoning work).¹⁰ (Wayne Grudem)*

Examples of Common Grace¹¹

- The physical realm
- The intellectual realm
- The moral realm
- The creative realm
- The societal realm
- The religious realm

You are not a believer in Christ and yet you are still out of hell. That is the grace of God. You are not in hell, but you are on earth in good health and prosperity. That is the common grace of God. The vast majority of those who read these words are living in comfortable homes or apartments. That is common grace. You are not fleeing as refugees along the highways of a country desolated by war. That is common grace. You come home from your job and your child runs to meet you in good health and spirits. That is common grace. You are able to put your hand in your pocket and give the child a quarter or a half dollar for an allowance. It is common grace that you have such abundance. You go into your house and sit down to a good meal. That is common grace. On the day that you read these words there are more than a billion and a half members of the human race who will go to sleep without enough to satisfy their hunger, the fact that you have enough is common grace. You do not deserve it. And if you think that you do deserve anything at all from God beyond the wrath which you have so richly earned, you merely show your ignorance of spiritual principles.¹² (Donald Gray Barnhouse)

Reasons for Common Grace¹³

- To redeem those who will be saved
 - o **2 Peter 3:9** *The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*
- To demonstrate God's goodness and mercy
 - o **Psalm 145:9** *The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.*
- To demonstrate God's justice

⁹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 657.

¹⁰Ibid., 658.

¹¹Ibid., 658-62.

¹²Donald Grey Barnhouse: *God's Wrath: The Book of Romans*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 25.

¹³Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 664-65.

- **Romans 2:5** *But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.*
- To demonstrate God's glory

Reflections on Common Grace¹⁴

- Common grace does not mean that those who receive it will be saved
- We must be careful not to reject the good things that unbelievers do as totally evil
- The doctrine of common grace should stir our hearts to much greater thankfulness to God

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of common grace strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of common grace strengthen our missional activity?

ELECTION AND REPROBATION (PREDESTINATION)

*The biblical doctrine of election is that before Creation God selected out of the human race, foreseen as fallen, those whom he would redeem, bring to faith, justify, and glorify in and through Jesus Christ. This divine choice is an expression of free and sovereign grace, for it is unconstrained and unconditional, not merited by anything in those who are its subjects. God owes sinners no mercy of any kind, only condemnation; so it is a wonder, and matter for endless praise, that he should choose to save any of us; and doubly so when his choice involved the giving of his own Son to suffer as sin-bearer for the elect.*¹⁵ (J. I. Packer)

*[Election] signifies to single out, to select, to choose, to take one and leave another. Election means that God has singled out certain ones to be the objects of His saving grace, while others are left to suffer the just punishment of their sins. It means that before the foundation of the world, God chose out of the mass of our fallen humanity a certain number and predestinated them to be conformed to the image of His Son.*¹⁶ (A. W. Pink)

¹⁴Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 665.

¹⁵J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1995), 149.

¹⁶A. W. Pink, *The Doctrine of Election* (Pensacola, FL: Chapel Library, 2001), 2.

We shall never be clearly persuaded, as we ought to be, that our salvation flows from the wellspring of God's free mercy until we come to know his eternal election, which illumines God's grace by this contrast: that he does not indiscriminately adopt all into the hope of salvation but gives to some what he denies to others.¹⁷ (John Calvin)
Election is an act of God before creation in which he chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of his sovereign good pleasure.¹⁸ (Wayne Grudem)

What does the Bible teach about election/predestination?

Acts 15:14 *Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name*

Ephesians 1:4 *even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him*

Ephesians 1:5-6 *In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved*

Ephesians 1:11 *In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will*

John 15:16 *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you*

John 15:19 *If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you*

Acts 22:14 *And he said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth*

Romans 8:29 *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers*

Romans 8:30 *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified*

2 Timothy 1:9 *who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began*

¹⁷John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 920.

¹⁸Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 670.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 *But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth*

1 Peter 1:1-2 *To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood*

1 Peter 2:9 *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light*

Isaiah 41:9 *you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, "You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off"*

John 6:37 *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out*

John 6:44 *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day*

Acts 13:48 *And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed*

Romans 11:5 *So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace*

Romans 9:11-13 *though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."*

Romans 9:15 *For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."*

Ephesians 2:8-10 *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them*

Unconditional Election

God's choosing of his people is unconditional in that it is not based upon anything that God sees in them that makes them worthy of his choosing. Furthermore, election and predestination are not contingent upon man's response to God's grace because man, in his fallen state, is both unable and unwilling to respond favorably to Christ's offer of salvation.

God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based

*on any foreseen response or obedience on their part such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause, of God's choice . . . God's choice of the sinner, not the sinner's choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation.*¹⁹ (David Steele & Curtis Thomas)

Misunderstandings of the Doctrine of Election²⁰

1. Election is fatalistic or mechanistic
The Bible presents the picture that the entire outworking of our salvation is something that is brought about by a personal God in relationship with personal creatures who make willing choices that have personal and universal impact.
2. Election is based on God's foreknowledge of our faith
 - foreknowledge of persons, not facts (. . . *those whom he foreknew*)
 - our faith is never given as a reason for God's choosing of us
 - election based on something good in us (our faith) would be the beginning of salvation by merit
 - predestination based on foreknowledge still does not give people free choice

Common Objections to the Doctrine of Election²¹

1. Election means that we do not have a choice in whether we accept Christ or not
2. The doctrine of election means that unbelievers never had a chance to believe
3. Election is unfair
4. The Bible says that God desires to save everyone

*To me, it is one of the sweetest and most blessed truths in the whole of Revelation; and those who are afraid of it are so because they do not understand it. If they could but know that the Lord had chosen them, it would make their hearts to dance for joy.*²² (Charles Spurgeon)

The Doctrine of Reprobation

*Reprobation is the sovereign decision of God before creation to pass over some persons, in sorrow deciding not to save them, and to punish them for their sins, and thereby manifest his justice.*²³

¹⁹David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented* (Phillipsburg, NJ: The Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, 1963), 16-17.

²⁰Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 674-79.

²¹*Ibid.*, 680-83.

²²Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 39 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1893), 374.

²³Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 684.

- **Jude 4** *For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*
- **Romans 9:17-18** *For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.*
- **Romans 9:19-23** *You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory*
- **Romans 11:7-8** *What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day."*
- **1 Peter 2:8** . . . *They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.*

How Should Christians Respond to the Biblical Teaching of Election and Reprobation (Predestination)?

1. Christians should find comfort in the doctrine of election
 - **Romans 8:28-30** *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified*
2. Christians should respond to the doctrine of election with praise to God
 - **Ephesians 1:5-6** *he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved*
 - **2 Thessalonians 2:13** *But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth*
3. Christians should respond to the doctrine of election by displaying evangelistic fervor

- **2 Timothy 2:10** Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

*There is no more humbling doctrine in Scripture than that of election, none more promoting of gratitude, and, consequently, none more sanctifying. Believers should not be afraid of it, but adoringly rejoice in it.*²⁴ (Charles Spurgeon)

*The preeminent reason why God did not leave all humanity in the just reward of their sin was so that the glory of his grace might be praised. Election was undertaken to establish a platform on which the glory of God's saving mercy might be seen and magnified and adored and praised (cf. Eph 2:7). Here we see again a consistent theme in Scripture: all that God does, he ultimately does to glorify himself!*²⁵ (Sam Storms)

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of election strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of election strengthen our missional activity?

EFFECTUAL or EFFECTIVE CALLING

Romans 8:30 . . . *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified . . .*

2 Thessalonians 2:14 *To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*

*Effective calling is an act of God the Father, speaking through the human proclamation of the gospel, in which he summons people to himself in such a way that they respond in saving faith.*²⁶ (Wayne Grudem)

Westminster Confession of Faith (chapter X)

All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature to grace and salvation, by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their

²⁴Charles H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*, under sec., “Evening November 25.”

²⁵Sam Storms, *Chosen for Life: The Case for Divine Election* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 41.

²⁶Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 693.

heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and, by His almighty power, determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace.

1689 2nd London Baptist Confession

At a time appointed by and acceptable to God, those whom God has predestinated to life are effectually called by His Word and Spirit out of the state of death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. Their minds are given spiritual enlightenment and, as those who are being saved, they begin to understand the things of God Men who are not elected, even though they may be called upon to embrace salvation by the preachers of the gospel, and may be the subjects of some common operations of the Spirit, cannot be saved, because they are not effectually drawn to Christ by the Father, for which reason they neither can, nor will, truly come to Him.

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of effectual calling strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of effectual calling strengthen our missional activity?

*Stagger not at electing love; it is one of the highest notes of heavenly music.*²⁷

Charles Spurgeon

²⁷Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*. vol. 53 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1907), 511.

APPENDIX 9

THEOLOGY SESSION 9

The Doctrine of Salvation: Regeneration, Conversion

Those who are saved by God the Holy Spirit are created anew according to Scripture; but who ever dreamed of creation creating itself? God spake the world out of nothing, but nothing did not aid in the creation of the universe. Divine energy can do everything, but what can nothing do? Now if we have a new creation, there must have been a creator, and it is clear that being then spiritually created, we could not have assisted in our own new creation, unless, indeed, death can assist life, and non-existence aid in creation.¹

Charles Spurgeon

Group Work: As a group, read John 3:1-21 and discuss the elements of salvation that are present in the passage.

THE DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION?

Regeneration is a New Testament concept that grew, it seems, out of a parabolic picture-phrase that Jesus used to show Nicodemus the inwardness and depth of the change that even religious Jews must undergo if they were ever to see and enter the kingdom of God, and so have eternal life (John 3:3-15). Jesus pictured the change as being “born again.”² (J. I. Packer)

Westminster Confession of Faith (chapter X)

All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature to grace and salvation, by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and, by His

¹Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 12 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1866), 424.

²J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1995), 157.

almighty power, determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace.

1689 2nd London Baptist Confession

At a time appointed by and acceptable to God, those whom God has predestinated to life are effectually called by His Word and Spirit out of the state of death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. Their minds are given spiritual enlightenment and, as those who are being saved, they begin to understand the things of God. . . . Men who are not elected, even though they may be called upon to embrace salvation by the preachers of the gospel, and may be the subjects of some common operations of the Spirit, cannot be saved, because they are not effectually drawn to Christ by the Father, for which reason they neither can, nor will, truly come to Him.

Baptist Shorter Catechism

Q: *Can anyone with this sinful nature go to heaven?*

A: *No. Our hearts must be changed before we can be fit for heaven.*

Q: *What is this change of heart called?*

A: *Regeneration.*

Q: *Who can change a sinner's heart?*

A: *The Holy Spirit alone.*

What is meant by regeneration?

Regeneration is a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us.³ (Wayne Grudem)

God effects a change which is radical and all-pervasive, a change which cannot be explained in terms of any combination, permutation or accumulation of human resources, a change which is nothing less than a new creation by Him who calls the things that be not as though they were, who spoke and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast. This, in a word, is regeneration.⁴ (John Murray)

The concept is of God renovating the heart, the core of a person's being, by implanting a new principle of desire, purpose, and action, a dispositional dynamic that finds expression in positive response to the gospel and its Christ.⁵ (J. I. Packer)

Regeneration is a work of God by which a spiritually dead man or woman is brought to life in Christ, having been given a new nature in which what was once a heart of stone now becomes a heart of flesh, and the individual is brought out of darkness into God's

³Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 699.

⁴John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2015), 100.

⁵Packer, *Concise Theology*, 157.

wonderful light. It involves a change of one's character so that he or she becomes a 'new creation' in Christ.⁶ (James Montgomery Boice & Philip Graham Ryken)

*** Regeneration: A Work of God Alone**

In some of the elements of the application of redemption that we will discuss, we play an active part (conversion, sanctification, perseverance, etc.). But in the work of regeneration we play no active role at all. It is instead totally a work of God.

- **Ezekiel 36:26-27** *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*
- **John 1:13** *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*
- **John 3:3** *Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*
- **James 1:18** *Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*
- **1 Peter 1:3** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*

*When God works in us, the will is changed under the sweet influence of the Spirit of God.*⁷ (Martin Luther)

→ **Monergism vs. Synergism**

*A monergistic work is a work produced singly, by one person. The prefix mono means one. The word erg refers to a unit of work. Words like energy are built upon this root. A synergistic work is one that involves cooperation between two or more persons or things. The prefix syn - means "together with." . . . The debate between Rome and Luther hung on this single point. At issue was this: Is regeneration a monergistic work of God or a synergistic work that requires cooperation between man and God? After a person is regenerated, that person cooperates by exercising faith and trust. But the first step is the work of God and of God alone. The reason we do not cooperate with regenerating grace before it acts upon us and in us is because we cannot. We cannot because we are spiritually dead. We can no more assist the Holy Spirit in the quickening of our souls to spiritual life than Lazarus could help Jesus raise him from the dead.*⁸ (R. C. Sproul)

⁶James Montgomery Boice and Philip Graham Ryken, *The Doctrines of Grace: Rediscovering the Evangelical Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002), 147-48.

⁷Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, trans. and ed. J.I. Packer and O.R. Johnston (Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1957), 103.

⁸R. C. Sproul, *The Mystery of the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1990), 103-4.

*Monergism simply means that it is God who gives ears to hear and eyes to see. It is God alone who gives illumination and understanding of His word that we might believe; It is God who raises us from the dead, who circumcises the heart; unplugs our ears; It is God alone who can give us a new sense that we may, at last, have the moral capacity to behold His beauty and unsurpassed excellency.*⁹ (John Hendryx)

*Can we possibly, without utter absurdity, maintain that there first existed in anyone the good virtue of a good will, to entitle him to the removal of his heart of stone? How can we say this, when all the time this heart of stone itself signifies precisely a will of the hardest kind, a will that is absolutely inflexible against God? For if a good will comes first, there is obviously no longer a heart of stone.*¹⁰ (St. Augustine)

*** Regeneration: A Mystery To Us**

*Because regeneration is the work of God, it is a mysterious thing. All God's works are shrouded in impenetrable mystery. Life, natural life, in its origin, in its nature, its processes, baffles the most careful investigator. Much more is this the case with spiritual life. The Existence and Being of God transcends the finite grasp; how then can we expect to understand the process by which we become His children?*¹¹ (A. W. Pink)

*Exactly what happens in regeneration is mysterious to us. We know that somehow we who were spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1) have been made alive to God and in a very real sense we have been "born again" (John 3:3, 7; Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13). But we don't understand how this happens or what exactly God does to us to give us this new spiritual life. Jesus says, "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8).*¹² (Wayne Grudem)

→ Regeneration . . .¹³

- Affects the whole person
 - o **Ephesians 2:1** *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins*
 - o **2 Corinthians 5:17** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*
- Is an instantaneous event

⁹John Hendryx, "A Simple Explanation of Monergism," accessed July 3, 2015, http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/monergism_simple.html.

¹⁰"Augustine on Free Grace," <http://www.monergism.com/blog/augustine-free-grace>

¹¹A. W. Pink, *A. W. Pink's Studies in the Scriptures 1930-1931*, vol. 5 (Lafayette, IN: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 2001), 91.

¹²Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 301.

¹³*Ibid.*, *Systematic Theology*, 701-2.

- **1 Peter 1:3** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*
- **1 Peter 1:23** *since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God*

Despite the fact that regeneration is required for spiritual life, it must be admitted that the experience of the new birth can be difficult to put into words. There is a great deal of mystery concerning the working of the Spirit in our lives. We know that He works, but we cannot always explain how He works. In fact, the actual process of regeneration takes place within and is not visible to our physical eyes.¹⁴ (Ligonier.org)

*** Regeneration: Preceding Faith**

. . . when we say that it comes “before” saving faith, it is important to remember that they usually come so close together that it will ordinarily seem to us that they are happening at the same time. As God addresses the effective call of the gospel to us, he regenerates us and we respond in faith and repentance to this call. So from our perspective it is hard to tell any difference in time, especially because regeneration is a spiritual work that we cannot perceive with our eyes or even understand with our minds.¹⁵ (Wayne Grudem)

- **John 3:5** *Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*
- **John 6:44** *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.*
- **John 6:65** *And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."*
- **Acts 16:44** *One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.*
- **1 Corinthians 2:14** *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.*

What is the significance of regeneration preceding faith?

*** Regeneration: Shows Itself In The Fruit It Yields**

- **1 John 5:1** *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.*
-

¹⁴“Regeneration is a Mystery,” accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/regeneration-mystery/>.

¹⁵Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 702.

- **1 John 2:29** *If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.*
- **1 John 3:9** *No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.*
- **1 John 4:7** *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.*
- **1 John 5:3-4** *For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.*

We should realize that John emphasizes these as necessary results in the lives of those who are born again. If there is genuine regeneration in a person's life, he or she will believe that Jesus is the Christ, and will refrain from a life pattern of continual sin, and will love his brother, and will overcome the temptations of the world, and will be kept safe from ultimate harm by the evil one. These passages show that it is impossible for a person to be regenerated and not become truly converted.¹⁶ (Wayne Grudem)

- **Galatians 5:22-23** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*
- **Matthew 7:16-20** *You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.*

What if a life does not seem to show the fruit of the Spirit?

Irresistible Grace

The term irresistible grace is subject to misunderstanding, however, since it seems to imply that people do not make a voluntary, willing choice in responding to the gospel—a wrong idea, and a wrong understanding of the term irresistible grace. The term does preserve something valuable, however, because it indicates that God's work reaches into our hearts to bring about a response that is absolutely certain—even though we respond voluntarily.¹⁷ (Wayne Grudem)

- God has elected a particular people to be the recipients of Christ's atoning work. These people are drawn to Christ by a grace that is irresistible. When God calls, man responds.

¹⁶Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 705.

¹⁷Ibid., 700.

*In addition to the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is rejected; whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be refused; it always results in conversion. . . . The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God's grace...never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.*¹⁸ (David Steele & Curtis Thomas)

- This teaching does not mean that God saves men against their will. Rather, God changes the heart of the rebellious unbeliever (regeneration) so that he/she now desires to repent and believe.

*A good way of expressing this is to say that the Holy Spirit regenerates us, giving us a new nature, as a result of which we do what the new nature does: that is, we believe the gospel, repent of our sin, and trust Christ unto salvation.*¹⁹ (James Montgomery Boice & Philip Graham Ryken)

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of regeneration strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of regeneration strengthen our missional activity?

THE DOCTRINE OF CONVERSION

*The immediate effect of the divine regeneration of the soul is that the sinner now abhors the sin that he once cherished, and trusts in Christ for his salvation. This involves two actions: 1) turning from sin, which is repentance; and 2) turning to Christ, which is faith. These are both things that we do. That is, God does not repent for us, nor does he believe for us. We must repent. We must believe. Nevertheless, both repentance and faith occur in us because of God's prior work of regeneration.*²⁰ (James Montgomery Boice & Philip Graham Ryken)

¹⁸David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented* (Phillipsburg, NJ: The Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, 1963), 18.

¹⁹James Montgomery Boice and Philip Graham Ryken, *The Doctrines of Grace: Rediscovering the Evangelical Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002), 135.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 149-50.

*Conversion is our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation.*²¹ (Wayne Grudem)

→ Repentance

*Repentance is a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.*²² (Wayne Grudem)

*The New Testament word for repentance means changing one's mind so that one's views, values, goals, and ways are changed and one's whole life is lived differently. The change is radical, both inwardly and outwardly; mind and judgment, will and affections, behavior and life-style, motives and purposes, are all involved. Repenting means starting to live a new life.*²³ (J. I. Packer)

By it, a sinner, out of the sight and sense not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, as contrary to the holy nature, and righteous law of God; and upon the apprehension of His mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, so grieves for, and hates his sins, as to turn from them all unto God, purposing and endeavoring to walk with Him in all the ways of His commandments. (Westminster Confession)

- **Matthew 3:2** Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
- **Luke 13:5** No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.
- **Acts 2:38** And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- **2 Corinthians 7:10** For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.
- **2 Timothy 2:25** God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth

→ Faith

*Saving faith is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God.*²⁴ (Wayne Grudem)

The principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace. (Westminster Confession)

- **John 1:12** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God
- **John 3:16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

²¹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 709.

²²Ibid., 713.

²³Packer, *Concise Theology*, 162.

²⁴Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 710.

- **John 6:37** *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*
- **John 7:37** *If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink*
- **Matthew 11:28** *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

Repentance + Faith = Conversion

*Scripture puts repentance and faith together as different aspects of the one act of coming to Christ for salvation.*²⁵ (Wayne Grudem)

Isaiah 55:6-7 *Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

*Repentance is a fruit of faith, which is itself a fruit of regeneration. But in actual life, repentance is inseparable from faith, being the negative aspect (faith is the positive aspect) of turning to Christ as Lord and Savior. The idea that there can be saving faith without repentance, and that one can be justified by embracing Christ as Savior while refusing him as Lord, is a destructive delusion. True faith acknowledges Christ as what he truly is, our God-appointed king as well as our God-given priest, and true trust in him as Savior will express itself in submission to him as Lord also. To refuse this is to seek justification through an impenitent faith, which is no faith.*²⁶ (J. I. Packer)

*When we realize that genuine saving faith must be accompanied by genuine repentance for sin, it helps us to understand why some preaching of the gospel has such inadequate results today. If there is no mention of the need for repentance, sometimes the gospel message becomes only, “Believe in Jesus Christ and be saved” without any mention of repentance at all. But this watered-down version of the gospel does not ask for a wholehearted commitment to Christ—commitment to Christ, if genuine, must include a commitment to turn from sin. Preaching the need for faith without repentance is preaching only half the gospel. It will result in many people being deceived, thinking that they have heard the Christian gospel and tried it, but nothing has happened They never really did receive Christ as their Savior, for he comes to us in his majesty and invites us to receive him as he is—the one who deserves to be, and demands to be, absolute Lord of our lives as well.*²⁷ (Wayne Grudem)

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of conversion strengthen our intimacy with God?

²⁵Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 713.

²⁶Packer, *Concise Theology*, 163.

²⁷Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 717.

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of conversion strengthen our missional activity?

APPENDIX 10
THEOLOGY SESSION 10

The Doctrine of Salvation: Justification

A chief reason for the weakness of the Christian church in the west, for the poverty of our witness and any lack of vitality in our worship lies here: we sing about "amazing grace" and speak of "amazing grace," but far too often it has ceased to amaze us . . . We have lost the joy and energy that are experienced when grace seems truly amazing.¹

Sinclair Ferguson

Group Work: What do you find most amazing about grace and how does that inform the way you view the world and your place in it?

JUSTIFICATION

This doctrine [justification by faith] is the head and the cornerstone. It alone begets, nourishes, builds, preserves, and defends the church of God; and without it the church of God cannot exist for one hour . . . For no one who does not hold this article – or, to use Paul's expression, this 'sound doctrine' (Titus 2:1) – is able to teach aright in the church or successfully to resist any adversary...this is the heel of the Seed that opposes the old serpent and crushes its head. That is why Satan, in turn, cannot but persecute it.² (Martin Luther)

Whoever departs from the article of justification does not know God and is an idolater For when this article has been taken away, nothing remains but error, hypocrisy, godlessness, and idolatry, although it may seem to be the height of truth, worship of God, holiness, etc.³ (Martin Luther)

¹Sinclair B. Ferguson, *By Grace Alone: How the Grace of God Amazes Me* (Orlando: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2010), xiv.

²Martin Luther and Ewald M. Plass, *What Luther Says, An Anthology*, vol. 2 (Saint Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1959), 704.

³Ibid.

*The Reformation doctrine of justification by faith is, and has always been, the number one target of the enemy's attack. It provides the foundation of the bridge that reconciles God and man—without that key doctrine, Christianity falls.*⁴ (John MacArthur)

*The confession of divine justification touches man's life at its heart, at the point of its relationship to God. It defines the preaching of the Church, the existence and progress of the life of faith, the root of human security, and man's perspective for the future.*⁵ (G. C. Berkouwer)

The Need for Justification

*The basic fact is that the God who made us intends to take account of us, measuring us by his own standards, and from his imminent inquisition nothing can shield us.*⁶ (J. I. Packer)

*** Heidelberg Catechism (Lord's Day Questions 9-11)**

Q. But doesn't God do us an injustice by requiring in his law what we are unable to do?

A. No, God created human beings with the ability to keep the law. They, however, provoked by the devil, in willful disobedience, robbed themselves and all their descendants of these gifts.

Q. Does God permit such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished?

A. Certainly not. God is terribly angry with the sin we are born with as well as the sins we personally commit. As a just judge, God will punish them both now and in eternity, having declared: "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law." (Deut. 27:26)

Q. But isn't God also merciful?

A. God is certainly merciful, but also just. God's justice demands that sin, committed against his supreme majesty, be punished with the supreme penalty—eternal punishment of body and soul.

→ Human Sin

- **Genesis 1:27** *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*
- **Ephesians 4:24** *and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

⁴John MacArthur, "Justification by Faith," accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.gty.org/resources/print/articles/A194>.

⁵G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Justification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 17.

⁶J. I. Packer, "Sola Fide: The Reformed Doctrine of Justification," accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/sola-fide-the-reformed-doctrine-of-justification/>.

- **Genesis 3:6** *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.*
- **Genesis 3:13** *Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*
- **Romans 5:12** *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned*
- **Psalms 51:5** *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*
- **John 8:44** *You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.*
- **Romans 3:23** *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

→ Divine Judgment

- **Exodus 34:6-7** *The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."*
- **Psalms 5:4-6** *For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you. The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers. You destroy those who speak lies; the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.*
- **Nahum 1:2** *The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies.*
- **Romans 1:18** *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*
- **Ephesians 5:6** *Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.*
- **Galatians 3:10** *For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."*
- **Deuteronomy 7:9-10** *Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, and repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face.*
- **Hebrews 10:30-31** *For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*
- **Ephesians 2:1-3** *And you were . . . were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

The Meaning of Justification

Romans 5:18-19 *Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

Justification is a judicial act of God pardoning sinners (wicked and ungodly persons, Rom. 4:5; 3:9-24), accepting them as just, and so putting permanently right their previously estranged relationship with himself. This justifying sentence is God's gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:15-17), his bestowal of a status of acceptance for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. 5:21).⁷ (J. I. Packer)

Justification refers to that act of God by which he forensically declares believers to be just in Christ.⁸ (R. C. Sproul)

Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which he (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ's righteousness as belonging to us, and (2) declares us to be righteous in his sight.⁹ (Wayne Grudem)

→ Legal Declaration

- **Romans 3:20** *For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.*
- **Romans 3:26** *It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*
- **Galatians 2:16** *yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.*

The Bible repeatedly emphasizes the legal aspects of justification. God does not make us righteous in that moment; God declares us righteous in that moment, just like a judge passes sentence on the defendant in his courtroom The declarative act of justification is gracious soil out of which grace-filled lives will grow.¹⁰ (Jay Harvey)

⁷J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1995), 164.

⁸R. C. Sproul, *Justified By Faith Alone* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 33.

⁹Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 316.

¹⁰Jay Harvey, "Justification: Why the Lord Our Righteousness Is Better News Than The Lord Our Example," in *Don't Call It a Comeback: The Old Faith for a New Day*, ed. Kevin DeYoung (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 97.

→ Just in the Sight of God

* Forgiven

*The first aspect of justification is forgiveness of sins. This means that God stops holding our sins against us and that they will never again be grounds for condemnation.*¹¹ (Matt Perman)

- **Romans 8:1** *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*
- **Ephesians 1:7** *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace*
- **Colossians 1:13-14** *He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

* Righteous

*If we are to be accepted by God, however, it is not enough just to have our sins forgiven. This would only make us neutral in the sight of God, whereas God requires that we actually have a positive righteousness in order to be accepted by Him. This is where the second aspect of justification comes in: God imputes to us the righteousness of Christ.*¹² (Matt Perman)

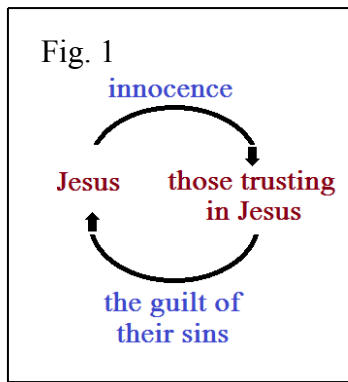
- **Isaiah 61:10** *...for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness . . .*
- **Romans 3:21-22** *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.*
- **Romans 4:3** *For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."*
- **Romans 5:19** *For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

→ Imputation

*... to have something imputed to you means being given credit for something that you did not do. So having Christ's righteousness imputed to you means that God gives you credit for the righteousness of Christ—the perfect obedience that He accomplished in your place while He was on earth. "For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17). Another way to define imputed righteousness is that God thinks of Christ's righteousness as belonging to you. God is then able to declare us righteous (or, just) in His sight because He has given to us the perfect righteousness of Christ.*¹³ (Matt Perman)

¹¹Matt Perman, "Understanding the Gospel: Justification," accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.geocities.ws/mattperman/just.html>.

¹²Ibid.



*** God reckoning our sin to Christ**

- **Isaiah 53:6, 12** *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all...yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors*
- **2 Corinthians 5:21** *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
- **Galatians 3:13** *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"*
- **Hebrews 9:28** *so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many...*
- **1 Peter 2:24** *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.*

*** God reckoning Christ's righteousness to us**

→ Alien Righteousness

Alien righteousness is what Luther called 'extra nos', that is, a righteousness that is apart from or outside of us. That is precisely because it is Christ's own righteousness achieved in his own life in his perfect active obedience to the Law of God and to the will of his Father...In the double imputation by which we are justified, Christ took our curse upon himself and won the blessing of the covenant for his people. By faith the justified person receives all the blessings of God due to Jesus for his perfect obedience. In this regard Christ is our righteousness.¹⁴
(R. C. Sproul)

- **Romans 5:18-19** *Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*
- **1 Corinthians 1:30** *And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption*
- **Philippians 3:9** *and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith*

¹³Perman, "Understanding the Gospel."

¹⁴Sproul, *Justified By Faith Alone*, 40.

→ **Imputed Righteousness vs. Infused Righteousness**¹⁵

- **Infused Righteousness:** (Roman Catholicism) The righteousness of the saints and of Christ is gradually “infused” into the believer through the sacraments. For the Catholic, infused righteousness, or *analytical justification*, either gradually dissipates as the believer takes part in worldly sins or is enhanced by good works.
- **Imputed Righteousness:** (Protestantism) Imputed righteousness, or *synthetic justification*, means that upon repentance and belief in Christ, individuals are forensically declared righteous. This righteousness is not the believer’s own, rather it is Christ’s own righteousness ‘imputed’ to the believer.

*The crucial issue of infusion versus imputation remains the irreconcilable issue. We are either justified by a righteousness that is in us or by a righteousness that is apart from us. There is no third way.*¹⁶ (R. C. Sproul)

The means of justification

→ **By grace and not by individual merit**

- **Romans 3:20** *For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.*
- **Romans 3:23-24** *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*

*When we seek to justify ourselves by human effort of any kind, we undermine the sufficiency of Christ’s atoning work.*¹⁷ (Jay Harvey)

→ **Through faith in Christ alone**

- **Romans 3:24-25** *and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*
- **Romans 4:16** *That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all*
- **Romans 5:1** *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- **Galatians 2:16** *yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in*

¹⁵Sproul, *Justified By Faith Alone*, 41-43.

¹⁶Ibid., 54.

¹⁷Harvey, “Justification,” 100.

order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

- **Ephesians 2:8-9** *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

When we speak of justification by or through faith, we mean that faith is the instrumental cause of justification, not its ground. Justification is 'per fidem' (by or through faith) but never 'propter fidem' (on account of or on the ground of faith). Again we view justification as being 'propter Christum' (on account of Christ). 'Sola fide' (justification by faith alone) is theological shorthand for by Christ alone. We are justified by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone.¹⁸ (R. C. Sproul)

Westminster Confession of Faith

Those whom God effectually calleth he also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience, to them as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God.

Two Views of Justification:¹⁹

Roman Catholic

1. Baptism (with penance) is the instrumental cause of justification
2. Justification is by infusion
3. Justification is analytical
4. Justification is based on an inherent righteousness
5. Justification is by faith plus works
6. Justification is by grace and merit
7. Justification is on the basis of Christ's righteousness and my righteousness
8. Justification can be undone by mortal sin
9. Justification may be completed in purgatory
10. Justification may be obtained by drawing from the Treasury of Merit
11. Justification is sacerdotal

Protestant

1. Faith is the instrumental cause of justification
2. Justification is by imputation
3. Justification is synthetic
4. Justification is based on an alien (Christ's) righteousness
5. Justification is by faith alone
6. Justification is by grace alone

¹⁸Sproul, *Justified By Faith Alone*, 47.

¹⁹Ibid., 52-53.

7. Justification is on the basis of Christ's righteousness alone
8. There is no mortal sin for a person who is justified
9. There is no purgatory or need for it
10. The only merit is that of Christ alone
11. Justification is non-sacerdotal

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of justification strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of justification strengthen our missional activity?

How Deep the Father's Love For Us²⁰

How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son to make a wretch His treasure

How great the pain of searing loss, the Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the chosen One, bring many sons to glory

Behold the Man upon a cross, my sin upon His shoulders
Ashamed I hear my mocking voice, call out among the scoffers

It was my sin that left Him there until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life, I know that it is finished

I will not boast in anything, no gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection

Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart, His wounds have paid my ransom

Stuart Townend

²⁰Stuart Townend, "How Deep The Father's Love For Us," Copyright 1995 Kingsway's Thank You Music/PRS/ALL rights in the Western hemisphere administered by EMI Christian Music Publishing.

APPENDIX 11

THEOLOGY SESSION 11

The Doctrine of Salvation: Sanctification and Perseverance

*Sanctification is one of the most glorious gifts which, by the Covenant of Grace, the Mediator bestows upon the saint. It covers his entire mental, spiritual, and physical nature. We should, therefore, thoroughly understand it, and learn how to obtain it, and every believer, whatever the measure of his faith, should be fully aware of his attitude toward it; for erroneous views concerning this will surely lead us astray from the living Christ.*¹

Abraham Kuyper

THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION

[Sanctification is] the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. (Westminster Catechism)

*It is a continuing change worked by God in us, freeing us from sinful habits and forming in us Christlike affections, dispositions, and virtues. It does not mean that sin is instantly eradicated, but it is also more than a counteraction, in which sin is merely restrained or repressed without being progressively destroyed. Sanctification is a real transformation, not just the appearance of one.*² (R. C. Sproul)

*Sanctification is God's claiming and subsequent purifying of the believer as his possession.*³ (Kenneth Keathley)

*Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.*⁴ (Wayne Grudem)

¹Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1900), 431.

²Luder Whitlock, Jr., "Sanctification: The Spirit and the Flesh," accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.fivesolas.com/sanctngs.htm>.

³Kenneth Keathley, "The Work of God: Salvation," in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2007), 754.

⁴Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 746.

What are the Differences Between Justification and Sanctification?⁵

Fig. 1

<u>Justification</u>	<u>Sanctification</u>
Legal standing	Internal condition
Once for all time	Continuous throughout life
Entirely God's work	We cooperate
Perfect in this life	Not perfect in this life
The same in all Christians	Greater in some than in others

THREE STAGES OF SANCTIFICATION⁶

1. Sanctification has a definite beginning at regeneration

*Regeneration is birth; sanctification is growth. In regeneration, God implants desires that were not there before: desire for God, for holiness, and for the hallowing and glorifying of God's name in the world; desire to pray, worship, love, serve, honor, and please God; desire to show love and bring benefit to others. In sanctification, the Holy Spirit "works in you to will and to act" according to God's purpose; what he does is prompt you to "work out your salvation" (i.e., express it in action) by fulfilling these new desires.*⁷ (J. I. Packer)

*The fruit of sanctification is both a necessary and an inevitable consequence of justification.... Where faith is true, the fruit of that faith begins to appear immediately. It is impossible for a converted person to remain unchanged. The very presence of the new nature—the presence and power of the indwelling Holy Spirit—indicates that we are indeed changed and changing people.*⁸ (R. C. Sproul)

- **Titus 3:4-6** *But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and **renewal of***

⁵Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 747.

⁶Ibid., 747-50.

⁷J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1995), 170.

⁸R. C. Sproul, *Everyone's A Theologian: An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Orlando: Reformation Trust, 2014), 247-48.

the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior

- **1 Corinthians 6:11** *But you were washed, **you were sanctified**, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*
- **Acts 20:32** *And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among **all those who are sanctified**.*

Take a moment and look at your life. Can you identify the fruit of sanctification? Where?

2. Sanctification increases throughout life

*Christians become increasingly Christlike as the moral profile of Jesus (the “fruit of the Spirit”) is progressively formed in them.*⁹ (J. I. Packer)

- **2 Corinthians 3:17-18** *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*
- **Romans 6:19** *For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.*

→ Divine and Human Cooperation

God’s role in sanctification

- **1 Thessalonians 5:23** *Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely*
- **Philippians 2:13** *for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

What comfort do you find in knowing that God is an active participant in your sanctification?

My role in sanctification

*The role that we play in sanctification is both a passive one in which we depend on God to sanctify us, and an active one in which we strive to obey God and take steps that will increase our sanctification.*¹⁰ (Wayne Grudem)

⁹Packer, *Concise Theology*, 170.

¹⁰Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 331.

→ **Mortification (dying)**

Colossians 3:5-6 *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming.*

*Christ's death alone is atoning, and cannot be repeated.
He died for our sins. But we die to our sins.*¹¹ (Michael Horton)

→ **Vivification (rising)**

Romans 6:11-14 *So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*

*It means, rather, the desire to live in a holy and devoted manner, a desire arising from rebirth; as if it were said that man dies to himself that he may begin to live to God.*¹² (John Calvin)

*Do you mortify? Do you make it your daily work? Be always at it whilst you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you.*¹³ (John Owen)

Why is it important to remember the gospel when mortifying your sin and how does understanding and remembering the gospel help you mortify your sin?

→ **Progressive vs. Perfection**¹⁴ (Kenneth Keathley)

Perfectionist View: a Christian can achieve a state of complete spiritual perfection either through sinless perfection (Wesleyan and Nazarene traditions) or a state of absolute surrender (Keswick tradition, many Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions)

¹¹Michael Horton, *Pilgrim Theology: Core Doctrines for Christian Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 320.

¹²John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 595.

¹³John Owen, Kelly M. Kapic, and Justin Taylor, *Overcoming Sin & Temptation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 50.

¹⁴Keathley, "The Work of God," 686.

3 Traits of the Perfectionist View:

1. The spiritual ideal can be attained in this lifetime
2. Sanctification is experienced instantaneously (generally labeled as the baptism of the Holy Spirit)
3. Sanctification takes place at a discernable moment (generally by speaking in tongues)

Progressive View: Sanctification is an objective, positional reality and a subjective, ongoing experience. At conversion God positionally sets the believer apart as holy, and the Christian experiences the liberating power of his sanctification when by faith he lives by this truth. We can experience the relative perfection of a progressing maturity while striving for the ideal perfection modeled for us by our Lord.

5 Important Truths About Progressive Sanctification:

1. Sanctification has two aspects: positional and experiential
2. Sanctification is the inseparable twin of justification
3. Sanctification is the manifestation of regeneration
4. The objective and experiential aspects of sanctification are compatible with full assurance of salvation
5. Sanctification is the focal point in the life of the believer of the now—not yet reality of salvation

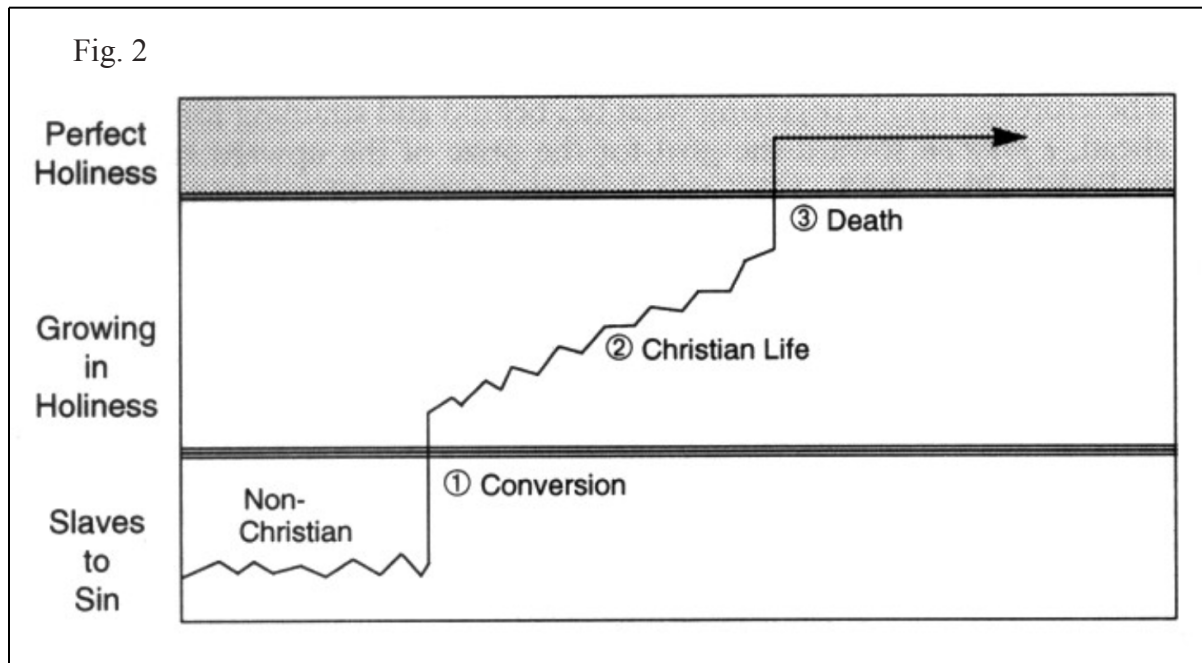
Why does a distinction between the perfection and progressive view matter?

What do you find most frustrating about the progressive nature of your sanctification?

3. Sanctification is completed at death (for our souls) and when the Lord returns (for our bodies)

- **Romans 8:30** *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*
- **Revelation 21:27** *But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.*
- **1 Corinthians 15:47-49** *The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.*

The Process of Sanctification¹⁵ (Wayne Grudem)



How can a right understanding of the doctrine of sanctification strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of sanctification strengthen our missional activity?

¹⁵Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 750.

THE DOCTRINE OF PERSEVERANCE

*Perseverance is the badge of true saints.*¹⁶

Charles Spurgeon

Group Work – Around your table, discuss the question below and its implications:

Can truly converted people lose their salvation? Why or why not?

WHAT IS MEANT BY PERSEVERANCE?

*The doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints addresses the question of the nature, the extent, and the duration of the care and protection promised to Christian believers by their heavenly Father.*¹⁷ (Mark DeVine)

It should be noted that this question is one on which evangelical Christians have long had significant disagreement. Many within the Wesleyan/Arminian tradition have held that it is possible for someone who is truly born again to lose his or her salvation, while Reformed Christians have held that that is not possible for someone who is truly born again. Most Baptists have followed the Reformed tradition at this point; however, they have frequently used the term “eternal security” or the “eternal security of the believer” rather than the term “perseverance of the saints.”¹⁸ (Wayne Grudem)

Those who have been converted could not remain standing in this grace if left to their own resources. But God is faithful, mercifully strengthening them in the grace once conferred on them and powerfully preserving them in it to the end. . . . As it has pleased God, by the preaching of the gospel, to begin this work of grace in us, so he preserves, continues, and perfects it by the hearing and reading of his Word, by meditation on it, and by the exhortations, threats, and promises contained in it, as well as by the use of the sacraments. (Canons of Dort 5: 3, 14)

God proved his love for you once and for all through the cross of Jesus and the empty tomb—and nothing can change his determination to save you by his grace. That’s the promise of forever grace. Forever grace means that God preserves us in his grace and that we persevere by this same grace. Both of these realities are rooted in God’s gracious

¹⁶Charles H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*, under sec., “Evening May 26.”

¹⁷Mark DeVine, “The Original Promise Keeper: The Doctrine of the Final Perseverance of the Saints,” *Reformation and Revival* 6, no. 4 (Fall 1997): 157.

¹⁸Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 788.

*work. Neither one is a work that originates in us, and both truths are essential.*¹⁹ (Daniel Montgomery)

*The perseverance of the saints means that all those who are truly born again will be kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives, and that only those who persevere until the end have been truly born again.*²⁰ (Wayne Grudem)

1. All who are truly born again will persevere to the end²¹

- **John 6:38-40** *I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*
- **John 10:27-29** *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*
- **Ephesians 1:13-14** *In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*
- **Philippians 1:6** *I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

2. Only those who persevere to the end have been truly born again²²

- **John 8:31-32** *Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."*
- **Matthew 10:22** *He who endures to the end will be saved.*
- **Colossians 1:21-23** *And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.*
- **Hebrews 3:12-14** *Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may*

¹⁹Daniel Montgomery, *PROOF: Finding Freedom Through the Intoxicating Joy of Irresistible Grace* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 11.

²⁰Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 788.

²¹*Ibid.*, 789-92.

²²Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 792-94.

be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

- **1 John 2:19** *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out, that it might be plain that they all are not of us.*

3. Those who finally fall away may give many external signs of conversion²³

- **Matthew 7:21-23** *Not every one who says to me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?" And then will I declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers."*

Although these people prophesied and cast out demons and did "many mighty works" in Jesus' name, the ability to do such works did not guarantee that they were Christians. Jesus says, "I never knew you." He does not say, "I knew you at one time but I no longer know you," nor "I knew you at one time but you strayed away from me," but rather, "I never knew you." They never were genuine believers.²⁴ (Wayne Grudem)

- **Mark 4:5-6** *"Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it had not much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil; and when the sun rose it was scorched, and since it had no root it withered away"*
- **Mark 4:16-17** *And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.*
- **Hebrews 6:4-6** *For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they then commit apostasy, since they crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold him up to contempt.*

3 Questions to Ask Yourself Regarding Assurance of Salvation:²⁵

1. Do I have a present trust in Christ for salvation?
2. Is there evidence of a regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in my heart?
3. Do I see a long-term pattern of growth in my Christian life?

²³Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 794-802.

²⁴Ibid., *Bible Doctrine*, 340.

²⁵Ibid., *Systematic Theology*, 803-6.

- **2 Peter 1:10** *Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.*

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of perseverance strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of perseverance strengthen our missional activity?

*Though Christians be not kept altogether from falling,
yet they are kept from falling altogether.*²⁶

William Secker

²⁶William Secker, *The Nonsuch Professor in his Meridian Splendor: or, The singular actions of Sanctified Christians* (London: W. Nicholson, 1804), 114.

APPENDIX 12

THEOLOGY SESSION 12

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: Pneumatology

One of the great promises of the gospel is that God dwells with you and in you. The Maker of all things, whose very nature is eternal, chooses to make his home in small, finite, broken people. In you. God the Holy Spirit dwells in his people in order that his presence with them can be as intimate as possible. He is closer than you can imagine. He is present to enlighten and empower you. He is called your Helper.¹

Joe Thorn

WHAT IS THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

It is an extraordinary thing that those who profess to care so much about Christ should know and care so little about the Holy Spirit. Christians are aware of the difference it would make if, after all, it transpired that there had never been an Incarnation or an atonement. They know that then they would be lost, for they would have no Savior. But many Christians have really no idea what difference it would make if there were no Holy Spirit in the world. Whether in that case they, or the church, would suffer in any way they just do not know. Surely something is amiss here.² (J. I. Packer)

One of the greatest failures in Christian thought and practice has to do with the Holy Spirit. Far too often Christians have assumed that the Spirit and his operation are easier to understand than, say, the person and work of Christ. In almost every age, too little attention has been paid to pneumatology (the doctrine of the Holy Spirit), and this has resulted in a distortion of Christian doctrine and an impoverishment of Christian life and work.³ (Geoffrey W. Bromiley)

¹Joe Thorn, *Experiencing the Trinity: the Grace of God for the People of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 112.

²J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 60.

³Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "The Holy Spirit," accessed July 3, 2015, <http://rediscoveringthebible.com/BromileyHolySpirit.pdf>.

Group Work: *Discuss these questions at your table/in your group:*

- In your experience, has the Church focused too much or too little on the Holy Spirit?
- What are the dangers of overemphasizing the place/role of the Holy Spirit?
- What are the dangers of underemphasizing the place/role of the Holy Spirit?

Before Christ's coming . . . the prominence of God the Father; during the days of Christ's earthly life . . . the prominence of God the Son; and since the ascension of the Son . . . the prominence of God the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we live in a unique, climactic period of redemptive history, the days of the Spirit. Just as Israel of old had a special responsibility to know and honor God as Father in the oneness of his nature, and just as the people of Palestine had a special responsibility to know and honor Jesus as the Son of God in the days of his flesh, so now we have a special responsibility to know and honor the Holy Spirit. (quoting John Owen) "The sin of despising His Person and rejecting His Work now is of the same nature with idolatry of old and with the Jews' rejection of the Person of the Son."⁴ (John Piper)

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The etymology of the word “spirit” (Sinclair Ferguson)

The Hebrew word “ruah” and the Greek word “pneuma,” which mean “spirit,” are onomatopoeic. Both words describe the wind, or even a gale. These words point to expressions of great effectiveness. In other words, they point to the driving energy or the characteristics of an individual as that individual expresses himself or herself to others in personal contact and personal communication.⁵

The Holy Spirit Is . . .⁶ (Francis Chan)

1. The Holy Spirit is a Person

2. The Holy Spirit is God

Acts 5:3-4 *But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.”*

3. The Holy Spirit is eternal and holy

Hebrews 9:13-14 *For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how*

⁴John Piper, “The Holy Spirit: He is God!” Feb. 5, 1984, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/the-holy-spirit-he-is-god>.

⁵Sinclair Ferguson, *Who is the Holy Spirit: Study Guide* (Sanford, FL: Ligonier Ministries, 2012), 4.

⁶Francis Chan and Danae Yankosk, *Forgotten God: Reversing Our Tragic Neglect of the Holy Spirit* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2009), 70-74.

much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

4. The Holy Spirit has his own mind, and he prays for us

Romans 8:27 *And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

5. The Holy Spirit has emotions

Isaiah 63:10 *But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them.*

Ephesians 4:30 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

6. The Holy Spirit has his own desires and will

1 Corinthians 12:11 *All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.*

7. The Holy Spirit is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient

Zechariah 4:6 *Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.*

Psalms 139:7-8 *Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!*

1 Corinthians 2:10 *these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.*

WHAT IS THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

What does the Spirit do? His works are ineffable in majesty, and innumerable in quantity. How can we even ponder what extends beyond the ages? What did He do before creation began? How great are the graces He showered on creation? What power will He wield in the age to come? He existed; He pre-existed; He co-existed with the Father and the Son before the ages. Even if you can imagine anything beyond the ages, you will discover that the Spirit is even further beyond. (St. Basil the Great)

Another Paraclete (Helper, Intercessor, Comforter)

John 14:16-18 *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.*

The work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church.⁷ (Wayne Grudem)

⁷Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 634.

1. The Holy Spirit Empowers⁸

- He gives life
 - o **John 6:63** *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.*
 - o **Psalms 104:30** *When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.*
- He gives power for his service
 - o **Numbers 27:18** *So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him"*
 - o **Judges 6:34** *But the Spirit of the LORD clothed Gideon, and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him.*
 - o **Isaiah 42:1** *Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.*
 - o **Acts 1:8** *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

What comfort is there in knowing that your power for life and service comes from God rather than yourself? What needs to happen for you to rest in that reality?

2. The Holy Spirit Purifies⁹

- The initial cleansing work
 - o **Titus 3:4-6** *But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior*
 - o **1 Corinthians 6:9-11** *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*
- The decisive break from sinful patterns

⁸Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 634-39.

⁹Ibid., 640.

- **1 Peter 1:14-16** *As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”*
- The ongoing growth in holiness
 - **Galatians 5:16-25** *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.*

Do you see the Holy Spirit’s acting in these ways in your life? Where specifically?

3. The Holy Spirit Reveals¹⁰

- Revelation to prophets and apostles
 - **2 Peter 1:21** *For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*
- He gives evidence of God’s presence
 - **Acts 2:2-4** *And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.*
- He guides and directs God’s people
 - **Romans 8:14** *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*
 - **Acts 15:28** *For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements:*
- He provides a Godlike atmosphere when he manifests his presence.

¹⁰Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 640-45.

- *Because the Holy Spirit is fully God, and shares all the attributes of God, his influence will be to bring a Godlike character or atmosphere to the situations in which he is active.*¹¹ (Wayne Grudem)
- **Romans 14:17** *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*
- **1 Thessalonians 1:6-7** *And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.*

When was the last time you sensed the presence of the Lord? What was different about that moment? Was it manufactured? Did you have anything to do with it?

- He gives us assurance
 - **Romans 8:16** *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*
 - **1 John 3:24** *Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.*
 - **1 John 4:13** *By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.*
- He teaches and illumines
 - **John 14:26** *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*
 - **John 16:13** *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.*

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRIST¹²

- The Spirit assists in carrying out the work of the Father
 - **Matthew 12:28** *But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*
 - **Luke 4:17-19** *And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the*

¹¹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 644.

¹²Bruce Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 105-22.

captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

- **Acts 10:37-38** *you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.*
- The Spirit works now to glorify the Son
 - **John 16:12-14** *"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you."*
 - **1 John 4:2-3** *By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.*
 - *Special revelation, inspired by the Spirit, focuses on Christ*
 - *Evangelism, empowered by the Spirit, proclaims the gospel of Christ*
 - *Regeneration, brought about by the Spirit, brings new life in Christ*
 - *Sanctification, progressively achieved by the Spirit, makes us more and more like Christ*

Christology is no less ineffectual than inconceivable without pneumatology, whether at the level of the "for us" or that of the "in us." Both are equally unthinkable, of course, without "Patrology," if we may so use the word. One cannot abstract Son from Spirit, or Spirit from Son, or both from Father. The work of revelation and reconciliation is the work of the triune Godhead therein reconciling and revealed.¹³ (Geoffrey W. Bromiley)

4. The Holy Spirit Unifies¹⁴

Acts 2:14-21 *But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,*

¹³Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "The Holy Spirit"

¹⁴Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 645-47.

and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

2 Corinthians 13:14 *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

15 Activities of the Holy Spirit¹⁵

1. The Holy Spirit Regenerates

Titus 3:4-6 *But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior*

2. The Holy Spirit Indwells

John 14:16-17 *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.*

3. The Holy Spirit Intercedes

Romans 8:27 *And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

4. The Holy Spirit Fills

Ephesians 5:18 *Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.*

5. The Holy Spirit Comforts

Acts 9:31 *Walk in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit.*

6. The Holy Spirit Teaches

John 14:26 *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*

7. The Holy Spirit Leads

Romans 8:14 *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

8. The Holy Spirit Convicts

John 16:8 *And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment*

9. The Holy Spirit Points to Jesus

¹⁵Thorn, *Experiencing the Trinity*, 109-40.

John 15:26 *But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.*

10. The Holy Spirit Revives

Psalms 85:6 *Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?*

11. The Holy Spirit Gives Wisdom

Ephesians 1:16-19 *I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might*

12. The Holy Spirit Sanctifies

1 Corinthians 6:11 *You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

13. The Holy Spirit Grieves

Ephesians 4:30 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

14. The Holy Spirit Gives Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

15. The Holy Spirit Resurrects

Romans 8:11 *If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit strengthen our intimacy with God?

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit strengthen our missional activity?

Our Proper Response to the Holy Spirit¹⁶ (J. I. Packer)

Do we honor the Holy Spirit by recognizing and relying on his work? Or do we slight him by ignoring it, and thereby dishonor not merely the Spirit but the Lord who sent him?

(J. I. Packer)

1. Honor the Holy Spirit in our faith

- *Do we acknowledge the authority of the Bible, the prophetic Old Testament and the apostolic New Testament which he inspired? Do we read and hear it with the reverence and receptiveness that are due to the Word of God? If not, we dishonor the Holy Spirit. (J. I. Packer)*

2. Honor the Holy Spirit in our life

- *Do we apply the authority of the Bible and live by the Bible, whatever anyone may say against it, recognizing that God's Word cannot but be true, and that what God has said he certainly means, and he will stand behind it? If not, we dishonor the Holy Spirit, who gave us the Bible. (J. I. Packer)*

3. Honor the Holy Spirit in our witness

- *Do we remember that the Holy Spirit alone, by his witness, can authenticate our witness, and look to him to do so, and trust him to do so, and show the reality of our trust, as Paul did, by eschewing the gimmicks of human cleverness? If not, we dishonor the Holy Spirit. Can we doubt that the present barrenness of the church's life is God's judgment on us for the way in which we have dishonored the Holy Spirit? And, in that case, what hope have we of its removal till we learn in our thinking and our praying and our practice to honor the Holy Spirit? (J. I. Packer)*

In looking at your life, do you feel as though you honor the Holy Spirit in your faith, life, and witness? If not, where would you like to see the Spirit grow you?

Everything that this sad life steals from us, whether through drugs or war or a drunk driver or genetic disorder or disease or just plain old age – God will restore it all through the Holy Spirit, who already lives within us. Therefore, if we have the Spirit, the real crisis is past. The real crisis is not out in the future at our moment of death. Death will be a release, because the real crisis was 2000 years ago on a cross near Jerusalem where Jesus won our righteousness for us. So now, 'because of [Christ's] righteousness,' God freely and gladly sends to us his Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, to live within us.

¹⁶Packer, *Knowing God*, 71-72.

And the Spirit is not going anywhere until he has completed his restoring miracle on that great and final Day. What you and I are right now is hardly the consummation of our existence. It is the merest beginning. Consider the goodness and power of God. How weak we think he is! How mean we think he is! How prudish we think he is! How uncertain we feel our happiness to be! Let's listen again to the gospel and drink in with thankful joy the promises of God. Nothing is more certain than this: God will keep his good word to you, for all that it is worth, for he has given you the pledge of his Holy Spirit.¹⁷

Ray Ortlund

¹⁷Raymond C. Ortlund Jr., *Supernatural Living for Natural People* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2013).

APPENDIX 13

PRE AND POST-CLASS SPIRITUAL FORMATION/THEOLOGY SURVEY

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to evaluate your understanding of your own spiritual formation. Jamin Stinziano is conducting this research for the purpose of fulfilling a requirement of doctoral/ministry research. In this research, you will choose the best answer, as you see it, to each question. You will complete this survey before your eleven-week theological training class and then again after your eleven-week theological training class. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this survey, and checking the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

☐ I agree to participate

☐ I do not agree to participate

Please circle your age range

15-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 66-75 76-85 86+

Please circle the number of years since you have become a Christian

Less than 1yr 1-5yrs 6-10yrs 11-15yrs 16-20yrs 20+yrs Non-Christian

Please circle the amount of time you have been attending Summit Church

0-6 months 7-12 months 1-2yrs 3-4yrs 5-6yrs 7-12yrs

Please circle which Summit Church campus you normally attend

University Naples Gateway

Please circle the number of times you usually attend a worship service in 1 month

1 2 3+

Please circle the amount of time you usually spend in a week reading your Bible and praying

Less than 2 hours 2-3 hours 4-5 hours 6-7 hours 8+ hours

Using the following scale, please write the number that best corresponds to your feelings in response to the following statements:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

- ___ 1. I consistently spend individual time with God reading His Word.
- ___ 2. I consistently pursue God through personal prayer.
- ___ 3. I meditate on God's Word often and recall it in given life situations.
- ___ 4. I experience personal worship throughout the week.
- ___ 5. I am seeing the fruit of the Spirit maturing in my life (Gal 5:22-23).
- ___ 6. I consistently confess and turn from my sin when convicted by the Holy Spirit.
- ___ 7. My attitudes and actions demonstrate God's love to those in my family.
- ___ 8. My attitudes and actions demonstrate God's love to those at work and outside the Christian faith.
- ___ 9. I consistently combine my gifts, strengths, and passions to reach out to others with the Gospel.
- ___ 10. I have a clear understanding of God's personal mission for my life.
- ___ 11. I regularly submit to what God calls me to be and do.
- ___ 12. I intentionally build relationships with non-believers.
- ___ 13. I consistently pray for the salvation of non-believers in my life.
- ___ 14. I look for opportunities to share my grace story with others.
- ___ 15. I am able to clearly communicate the Gospel with those who do not know Christ.
- ___ 16. I prioritize and give my life (time, money, activities and relationships) in a way that consistently honors God.
- ___ 17. I am actively engaged in God's purposes for my life.
- ___ 18. I have an understanding of the essential truths/doctrines of the Christian faith

APPENDIX 14

PRE AND POST-CLASS SURVEY DATA

Q1: By your completion of this survey, and checking the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Answer Choices	Responses
I agree to participate	100.00% 58
I do not agree to participate	0.00% 0
Total	58

Q3: Please choose your age range

Answer Choices	Responses
15 - 25	17.24% 10
26 - 35	25.86% 15
36 - 45	24.14% 14
46 - 55	22.41% 13
56 - 65	8.62% 5
66 - 75	1.72% 1
76 - 85	0.00% 0
86 +	0.00% 0
Total	58

Q4: Please choose the number of years since you have become a Christian

Answer Choices	Responses
Less than 1 yr	0.00% 0
1 - 5 yrs	10.34% 6
6 - 10 yrs	17.24% 10
11 - 15 yrs	10.34% 6
16 - 20 yrs	15.52% 9
20 + yrs	46.55% 27
Non-Christian	0.00% 0
Total	58

Q5: Please choose the amount of time you have been attending Summit Church

Answer Choices	Responses	
0 - 6 months	22.41%	13
7 - 12 months	6.90%	4
1 - 2 yrs	17.24%	10
3 - 4 yrs	18.97%	11
5 - 6 yrs	15.52%	9
7 - 12 yrs	18.97%	11
Total		58

Q6: Please choose which Summit Church campus you normally attend

Answer Choices	Responses	
University	75.86%	44
Naples	18.97%	11
Gateway	5.17%	3
Total		58

Q7: Please choose the number of times you usually attend a worship service in 1 month

Answer Choices	Responses	
1	3.45%	2
2	5.17%	3
3 +	91.38%	53
Total		58

Q8: Please choose the amount of time you usually spend in a week reading your Bible and praying

Pre-Class

Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than 2 hours	24.14%	14
2 - 3 hours	34.48%	20
4 - 5 hours	22.41%	13
6 - 7 hours	12.07%	7
8 + hours	6.90%	4
Total		58

Post-Class

Answer Choices	Responses
Less than 2 hours	18.87% 10
2 - 3 hours	24.53% 13
4 - 5 hours	33.96% 18
6 - 7 hours	15.09% 8
8 + hours	7.55% 4
Total	53

Q9: I consistently spend individual time with God reading His Word

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.72% 1	17.24% 10	10.34% 6	44.83% 26	25.86% 15	58	3.76

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	14.04% 8	10.53% 6	43.86% 25	31.58% 18	57	3.93

Q10: I consistently pursue God through personal prayer

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.72% 1	5.17% 3	1.72% 1	48.28% 28	43.10% 25	58	4.26

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	3.51% 2	1.75% 1	35.09% 20	59.65% 34	57	4.51

Q11: I meditate on God's Word often and recall it in given life situations

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.72% 1	6.90% 4	20.69% 12	56.90% 33	13.79% 8	58	3.74

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15.79% 9	45.61% 26	38.60% 22	57	4.23

Q12: I experience personal worship throughout the week

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.72% 1	5.17% 3	6.90% 4	55.17% 32	31.03% 18	58	4.09

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	1.75% 1	7.02% 4	42.11% 24	49.12% 28	57	4.39

Q13: I am seeing the fruit of the Spirit maturing in my life (Gal 5:22-23)

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.72% 1	0.00% 0	15.52% 9	56.90% 33	25.86% 15	58	4.05

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8.77% 5	50.88% 29	40.35% 23	57	4.32

Q14: I consistently confess and turn from my sin when convicted by the Holy Spirit

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.72% 1	5.17% 3	10.34% 6	55.17% 32	27.59% 16	58	4.02

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	5.26% 3	7.02% 4	52.63% 30	35.09% 20	57	4.18

Q15: My attitudes and actions demonstrate God's love to those in my family

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	5.17% 3	22.41% 13	62.07% 36	10.34% 6	58	3.78

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	1.75% 1	17.54% 10	63.16% 36	17.54% 10	57	3.96

Q16: My attitudes and actions demonstrate God's love to those at work and outside the Christian faith

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	6.90% 4	32.76% 19	51.72% 30	8.62% 5	58	3.62

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	3.51% 2	17.54% 10	68.42% 39	10.53% 6	57	3.86

Q17: I consistently combine my gifts, strengths, and passions to reach out to others with the Gospel

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	3.45% 2	10.34% 6	50.00% 29	27.59% 16	8.62% 5	58	3.28

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	17.54% 10	35.09% 20	42.11% 24	5.26% 3	57	3.35

Q18: I have a clear understanding of God's personal mission for my life

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	3.45% 2	20.69% 12	36.21% 21	34.48% 20	5.17% 3	58	3.17

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.75% 1	14.04% 8	40.35% 23	36.84% 21	7.02% 4	57	3.33

Q19: I regularly submit to what God calls me to be and do

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	10.34% 6	37.93% 22	48.28% 28	3.45% 2	58	3.45

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	1.75% 1	33.33% 19	45.61% 26	19.30% 11	57	3.82

Q20: I intentionally build relationships with non-believers

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.72% 1	31.03% 18	29.31% 17	27.59% 16	10.34% 6	58	3.14

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	3.51% 2	21.05% 12	22.81% 13	42.11% 24	10.53% 6	57	3.35

Q21: I consistently pray for the salvation of non-believers in my life

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	3.45% 2	22.41% 13	17.24% 10	36.21% 21	20.69% 12	58	3.48

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	22.81% 13	15.79% 9	24.56% 14	36.84% 21	57	3.75

Q22: I look for opportunities to share my grace story with others

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	3.45% 2	18.97% 11	34.48% 20	36.21% 21	6.90% 4	58	3.24

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	14.04% 8	15.79% 9	56.14% 32	14.04% 8	57	3.70

Q23: I am able to clearly communicate the Gospel with those who do not know Christ

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.72% 1	17.24% 10	39.66% 23	29.31% 17	12.07% 7	58	3.33

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	10.53% 6	24.56% 14	40.35% 23	24.56% 14	57	3.79

Q24: I prioritize and give my life (time, money, activities and relationships) in a way that consistently honors God

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	6.90% 4	25.86% 15	58.62% 34	8.62% 5	58	3.69

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	5.26% 3	22.81% 13	54.39% 31	17.54% 10	57	3.84

Q25: I am actively engaged in God's purposes for my life

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	8.62% 5	17.24% 10	65.52% 38	8.62% 5	58	3.74

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	1.75% 1	31.58% 18	49.12% 28	17.54% 10	57	3.82

Q26: I have an understanding of the essential truths/doctrines of the Christian faith

Pre-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	12.07% 7	10.34% 6	50.00% 29	27.59% 16	58	3.93

Post-Class

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.53% 6	38.60% 22	50.88% 29	57	4.40

APPENDIX 15

ANOVA ANALYSIS

Q: Please choose the amount of time you usually spend in a week reading your Bible and praying

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	2.4310	1.18636	.15578	2.1191	2.7430
2	53	2.6792	1.17299	.16112	2.3559	3.0026
Total	111	2.5495	1.18121	.11212	2.3274	2.7717

	Minimum	Maximum
1	1.00	5.00
2	1.00	5.00
Total	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.706	1	1.706	1.225	.271
Within Groups	151.771	109	1.392		
Total	153.477	110			

Q: I consistently spend individual time with God reading his Word

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	3.7586	1.08110	.14196	3.4744	4.0429
2	57	3.9298	.99749	.13212	3.6652	4.1945
Total	115	3.8435	1.03949	.09693	3.6515	4.0355

	Minimum	Maximum
1	1.00	5.00
2	2.00	5.00
Total	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.843	1	.843	.778	.380
Within Groups	122.340	113	1.083		
Total	123.183	114			

Q: I consistently pursue God through personal prayer

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	4.2586	.86977	.11421	4.0299	4.4873
2	57	4.5088	.71020	.09407	4.3203	4.6972
Total	115	4.3826	.80112	.07471	4.2346	4.5306

	Minimum	Maximum
1	1.00	5.00
2	2.00	5.00
Total	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.799	1	1.799	2.848	.094
Within Groups	71.366	113	.632		
Total	73.165	114			

Q: I meditate on God's word often and recall it in given life situations

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	3.7414	.84936	.11153	3.5181	3.9647
2	57	4.2281	.70755	.09372	4.0403	4.4158
Total	115	3.9826	.81631	.07612	3.8318	4.1334

	Minimum	Maximum
1	1.00	5.00
2	3.00	5.00
Total	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.809	1	6.809	11.127	.001
Within Groups	69.156	113	.612		
Total	75.965	114			

Q: I experience personal worship throughout the week

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	4.0862	.86419	.11347	3.8590	4.3134
2	57	4.3860	.70088	.09283	4.2000	4.5719
Total	115	4.2348	.79836	.07445	4.0873	4.3823

	Minimum	Maximum
1	1.00	5.00
2	2.00	5.00
Total	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.583	1	2.583	4.165	.044
Within Groups	70.078	113	.620		
Total	72.661	114			

Q: I am seeing the fruit of the Spirit maturing in my life

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	4.0517	.75909	.09967	3.8521	4.2513
2	57	4.3158	.63127	.08361	4.1483	4.4833
Total	115	4.1826	.70813	.06603	4.0518	4.3134

	Minimum	Maximum
1	1.00	5.00
2	3.00	5.00
Total	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.005	1	2.005	4.107	.045
Within Groups	55.161	113	.488		
Total	57.165	114			

Q: I consistently confess and turn from my sin when convicted by the Holy Spirit

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	4.0172	.86838	.11402	3.7889	4.2456
2	57	4.1754	.78200	.10358	3.9679	4.3829
Total	115	4.0957	.82689	.07711	3.9429	4.2484

	Minimum	Maximum
1	1.00	5.00
2	2.00	5.00
Total	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.719	1	.719	1.053	.307
Within Groups	77.228	113	.683		
Total	77.948	114			

Q: My attitudes and actions demonstrate God's love to those in my family

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	3.7759	.70195	.09217	3.5913	3.9604
2	57	3.9649	.65370	.08658	3.7915	4.1384
Total	115	3.8696	.68212	.06361	3.7436	3.9956

	Minimum	Maximum
1	2.00	5.00
2	2.00	5.00
Total	2.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.027	1	1.027	2.232	.138
Within Groups	52.016	113	.460		
Total	53.043	114			

Q: My attitudes and actions demonstrate God's love to those at work and outside the Christian faith

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	3.6207	.74522	.09785	3.4247	3.8166
2	57	3.8596	.63916	.08466	3.6901	4.0292
Total	115	3.7391	.70196	.06546	3.6095	3.8688

	Minimum	Maximum
1	2.00	5.00
2	2.00	5.00
Total	2.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.642	1	1.642	3.402	.068
Within Groups	54.532	113	.483		
Total	56.174	114			

Q: I consistently combine my gifts, strengths, and passions to reach out to others with the gospel

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	3.2759	.89429	.11743	3.0407	3.5110
2	57	3.3509	.83434	.11051	3.1295	3.5723
Total	115	3.3130	.86212	.08039	3.1538	3.4723

	Minimum	Maximum
1	1.00	5.00
2	2.00	5.00
Total	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.162	1	.162	.216	.643
Within Groups	84.569	113	.748		
Total	84.730	114			

Q: I have a clear understanding of God's personal mission for my life

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	3.1724	.93917	.12332	2.9255	3.4194
2	57	3.3333	.87287	.11561	3.1017	3.5649
Total	115	3.2522	.90654	.08454	3.0847	3.4196

	Minimum	Maximum
1	1.00	5.00
2	1.00	5.00
Total	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.744	1	.744	.905	.343
Within Groups	92.943	113	.823		
Total	93.687	114			

Q: I regularly submit to what God calls me to be and do

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	3.4483	.72963	.09581	3.2564	3.6401
2	57	3.8246	.75882	.10051	3.6232	4.0259
Total	115	3.6348	.76469	.07131	3.4935	3.7760

	Minimum	Maximum
1	2.00	5.00
2	2.00	5.00
Total	2.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.070	1	4.070	7.349	.008
Within Groups	62.590	113	.554		
Total	66.661	114			

Q: I intentionally build relationships with non-believers

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	3.1379	1.03362	.13572	2.8662	3.4097
2	57	3.3509	1.04354	.13822	3.0740	3.6278
Total	115	3.2435	1.03949	.09693	3.0515	3.4355

	Minimum	Maximum
1	1.00	5.00
2	1.00	5.00
Total	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.304	1	1.304	1.209	.274
Within Groups	121.879	113	1.079		
Total	123.183	114			

Q: I consistently pray for the salvation of non-believers in my life

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	3.4828	1.15836	.15210	3.1782	3.7873
2	57	3.7544	1.18443	.15688	3.4401	4.0687
Total	115	3.6174	1.17416	.10949	3.4005	3.8343

	Minimum	Maximum
1	1.00	5.00
2	2.00	5.00
Total	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.121	1	2.121	1.546	.216
Within Groups	155.044	113	1.372		
Total	157.165	114			

Q: I look for opportunities to share my grace story with others

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	3.2414	.96082	.12616	2.9887	3.4940
2	57	3.7018	.88570	.11731	3.4667	3.9368
Total	115	3.4696	.94888	.08848	3.2943	3.6449

	Minimum	Maximum
1	1.00	5.00
2	2.00	5.00
Total	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.093	1	6.093	7.131	.009
Within Groups	96.551	113	.854		
Total	102.643	114			

Q: I am able to clearly communicate the gospel with those who do not know Christ

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	3.3276	.96223	.12635	3.0746	3.5806
2	57	3.7895	.93992	.12450	3.5401	4.0389
Total	115	3.5565	.97505	.09092	3.3764	3.7366

	Minimum	Maximum
1	1.00	5.00
2	2.00	5.00
Total	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.133	1	6.133	6.778	.010
Within Groups	102.250	113	.905		
Total	108.383	114			

Q: I prioritize and give my life in a way that consistently honors God

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	3.6897	.73046	.09591	3.4976	3.8817
2	57	3.8421	.77435	.10257	3.6366	4.0476
Total	115	3.7652	.75313	.07023	3.6261	3.9043

	Minimum	Maximum
1	2.00	5.00
2	2.00	5.00
Total	2.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.668	1	.668	1.180	.280
Within Groups	63.993	113	.566		
Total	64.661	114			

Q: I am actively engaged in God's purposes for my life

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	3.7414	.73890	.09702	3.5471	3.9357
2	57	3.8246	.73492	.09734	3.6296	4.0196
Total	115	3.7826	.73488	.06853	3.6469	3.9184

	Minimum	Maximum
1	2.00	5.00
2	2.00	5.00
Total	2.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.199	1	.199	.366	.546
Within Groups	61.366	113	.543		
Total	61.565	114			

Q: I have an understanding of the essential truths/doctrines of the Christian faith

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	58	3.9310	.93400	.12264	3.6855	4.1766
2	57	4.4035	.67770	.08976	4.2237	4.5833
Total	115	4.1652	.84739	.07902	4.0087	4.3218

	Minimum	Maximum
1	2.00	5.00
2	3.00	5.00
Total	2.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.417	1	6.417	9.612	.002
Within Groups	75.443	113	.668		
Total	81.861	114			

APPENDIX 15

Curriculum Vita: Ryan Scott Kozey, PhD June 2015

Contact Information:

59 Manning Road
Buffalo, NY 14226

ryan.kozey@gmail.com
716-949-6445 cell

Education:

University at Buffalo (The State University of New York) *Buffalo, New York*

- 2008-2009- Post-Doctoral Appointment, Organizational Communication and Social Network Analysis
- Worked with Dr. Thomas Feeley as a Research Fellow

University at Buffalo (The State University of New York) *Buffalo, New York*

- May 2008- PhD, Communication Science
 - Major Cognate Area: Organizational Communication; Minor: Quantitative Statistics
- Dissertation: *The Effect of Communication Networks on Employee Turnover in a Faith-Based Nonprofit Organization*
Committee: Frank Tutzauer (Chair; PhD, Northwestern University), Thomas Feeley (PhD, University at Buffalo), Michael Stefanone (PhD, Cornell University)

Bowling Green State University *Bowling Green, Ohio*

- August 2004- MA, Communication Studies; Focus: Organizational Communication

Bowling Green State University *Bowling Green, Ohio*

- May 1999- BAC, Telecommunications Management; BA, Interpersonal Communication
- Magna Cum Laude (3.80 gpa; double major)

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary *Lynchburg, Virginia*

- 2011- Present- MA Candidate, Religion and Biblical Studies
- 12 of 15 courses completed (3.70 gpa)
- Focus on Interdenominational Partnership and Church Planting

Research/Business Interests:

Industry/Academe: Organizational communication, with a focus on decision-making/negotiation, and the overall health of the organization (turnover, organizational commitment, satisfaction, social/task network analysis). Further interest in faith-based non-profit with respect to talent gap and financial constraint.

Faith-Based Research: Assessment of spiritual formation and missional behavior with a focus on implementation and longitudinal assessment.

Popular Press Publications:

Kozey, R. S. (July, 2013). Aslan is on the Move. *Unite Magazine*.

Kozey, R. S. (June, 2012). The First Ward: A sociological and demographic review of a Buffalo neighborhood. *Unite Magazine*.

Kozey, R. S. (March, 2012). University Heights: A sociological and demographic review of a Buffalo neighborhood. *Thrive Magazine*.

Kozey, R. S. (October, 2011). Renovation network: Church planting, partnership, and saturation of a geography. *Thrive Magazine*.

Kozey, R. S. (February, 2011). Adoption: Spiritual and sociological implications, with repeated opportunity to see the Gospel. *Unite Magazine*.

Kozey, R. S. (August, 2010). College town: Can academia unlock Buffalo's future? *Thrive Magazine*.

Kozey, R. S. (August, 2010). Drumming to a different beat: RPM network. *Thrive Magazine*.

Kozey, R. S. (May, 2010). Refugees: The reality of circumstance and the potential for response in the Church. *Thrive Magazine*.

Academic Publications:

Svetieva, E., Frank, M. G., & **Kozey, R. S.** (preparing for review). Judges on deception in trials: Beliefs on nonverbal cues, demeanor as well as confidence and accuracy in deception detection.

Lackaff, D., **Kozey, R. S.**, & Tutzauer, F. (2011). An agent-based model of turnover in a nonprofit organization. *The Communication & Science Journal*.

Feeley, T. H., Moon, S. I., **Kozey, R. S.**, Slowe, A. (2010). The erosion model of employee turnover. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 38, 166-187.

Kozey, R. S., & Feeley, T. H. (2009). Comparing current and former student evaluations of course and instructor quality. *Communication Research Reports*, 26, 1-9.

Academic Conference Papers/Panels:

Kozey, R. S. (2009, November). *A mediation model of social support and organizational commitment on network centrality and job satisfaction.* Paper presented at the 95th Annual Convention of the National Communication Association, Chicago, Illinois.

Feeley, T. H., Moon, S.I., **Kozey, R. S.** & Slowe, A (2009, November). *The erosion model of employee turnover.* Paper presented at the 95th Annual Convention of the National Communication Association, Chicago, Illinois.

Kozey, R. S. (2008, April). *Ripped from the headlines: Freedom of speech in the news.* Symposium presented at the 74th Annual Convention of the Central States Communication Association, Madison, Wisconsin.

Kozey, R. S. (2008, April). *Thoughtless? An academic missionary navigating the intercultural exploration of hybrid identity.* Paper presented at the 74th Annual Convention of the Central States Communication Association, Madison, Wisconsin (*Top Three Paper Panel, Intercultural Communication Division*).

Kozey, R. S. (2008, April). *High stakes: Building rapport in interrogative, law enforcement-related settings.* Paper presented at the 74th Annual Convention of the Central States Communication Association, Madison, Wisconsin (*Competitive Student Paper Selection, Organizational Communication Division*).

Kozey, R. S., & Feeley, T. H. (2008, April). *Rater bias in the evaluation of instructors: A two-part study comparing current and former students.* Paper presented at the 74th Annual Convention of the Central States Communication Association, Madison, Wisconsin (*Top Three Paper Panel, Communication Education Division*).

Kozey, R. S., Lackaff, D., Hurley, C., Aragona, D. & Desrayaud, N. (2008, April). *Effects of coaching on ministry team development: A case study exploration of employee attrition using an agent based model.* Paper presented at the 74th Annual Convention of the Central States Communication Association, Madison, Wisconsin.

Kozey, R. S. (2007, November). *Job satisfaction, network influence, and open ended issues: A case-study of a Christian faith-based nonprofit.* Paper presented at the 93rd Annual Convention of the National Communication Association, Chicago, Illinois.

Kozey, R. S., & Feeley, T. H. (2007, November). *Identifying sources of rater bias in evaluation of communication instruction: Comparing current and former students*. Paper presented at the 93rd Annual Convention of the National Communication Association, Chicago, Illinois (*Top Three Paper Panel, Communication Education Division*).

Frank, M. G., Ekman, P., **Kozey, R. S.**, Sweet, D. M., Kang, S., Hurley, C., et al. (2007, May). *Deception and interviewing: Creating communication among scholars, law enforcement, and the public. Specific Presentation: Building rapport in interrogative situations: A high-stakes paradigm*. Symposium conducted at the 57th Annual Convention of the International Communication Association, San Francisco, California.

Frank, M. G., **Kozey, R. S.**, Hurley, C. M., Kang, S., Aragona, D. (2008, May). *Communicating for impact internationally: Understanding the deception judgments of real world practitioners. Specific Presentation: International comparison of accurate deception detection: Australian magistrates and circuit judges*. Symposium accepted for presentation at the 58th Annual Convention of the International Communication Association, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Research Experience:

Renovation Network/Christ Together *Buffalo, New York*
Currently preside over a survey design and data set that examines the trends between spiritual formation and the demonstration or lack of demonstration of missional behavior among evangelicals in the United States (2010-Present)

- Data Set is currently almost 30,000 respondents in size and has examined data in the following cities; Cleveland, OH; Buffalo, NY; New York City; Long Island, NY; Orange County, CA; Summerville, SC; Columbia, SC; Fort Myers, FL; Austin, TX; Houston, TX; Katy, TX; Boise, ID; Huntington, WV; et al.
- Full data review includes both descriptive level and inferential level statistics

University at Buffalo *Buffalo, New York*
Post Doctoral Research Fellow: Organizational Communication/Assessment with Dr. Tom Feeley
2008-2009

- Two studies conducted during appointment- Meta-analysis of organizational attrition; Message testing in the recruitment of employees to the nonprofit sector.
- Funded through public grant money allocated to Dr. Feeley.

University at Buffalo *Buffalo, New York*
Communication Science Center- Nonverbal Deception Analysis (Mark Frank, PhD, Cornell University)

2006- 2008

- Research Assistant- Facial Action Coding Certified (FACS); Experimenter; Transcription Manager; SPSS Analyst
- Federal Grant Project (HSARPA); National Science Foundation (NSF)
- Lab responsible for conducting experiments (in a high stakes paradigm) and running various statistical and FACS related analyses (face and body movement) on nonverbal behavior

Bowling Green State University- WBGU-PBS

Bowling Green, Ohio

August 2003- May 2004

- Station Research Assistant- Conducted research and focus groups with a number of Historical Societies in the Northwest Ohio area, seeking to develop community relations
- Research Assistant- Production of WBGU-PBS Documentary; *These Old Houses: Historical Homes of Northwest Ohio*. Project aired on WBGU-PBS Fall 2004.

Teaching Experience:

Renovation Institute

Buffalo, New York

- Fall 2012; Fall 2014 (Missional Behavior & Spiritual Formation); Examination and Practice of Missional Behavior in Correlation with Spiritual Formation
- 2014 Cohort accredited through Houghton College (Houghton, NY)

Canisius College

Buffalo, New York

- Summer 2010 (COM 602); Graduate Level Organizational Communication/Strategic Assessment- Predominately focused on teaching Communication Graduate students

University at Buffalo

Buffalo, New York

- August 2005- 2008; Small Group Communication (COM 236)- Course Instructor
- January 2005- 2008; Principles of Interviewing and Survey (COM 223)- Course Instructor
- May 2007- 2008; Public Speaking (COM 326)- Course Instructor
- Also possess the ability to teach in the areas of:
 - o Interpersonal Communication
 - o Organizational Communication
 - o Crisis Communication
 - o Nonverbal Communication
 - o Persuasion

Valencia Community College

Orlando, Florida

- January-August 2005; Introduction to Communication (COM 101)- Adjunct Instructor

Bowling Green State University

Bowling Green, Ohio

- August 2003- May 2004; Interpersonal Communication (IPC 102)- Teaching Assistant with Recitation

Professional Experience:

Christ Together & The Chapel at Crosspoint

Getzville, New York

2009- Present- Director of Strategic Initiatives/ Pastor of Missional Behavior

- Oversee strategic initiatives and partner development for expansion of the network (1,400 documented partnerships domestically)
- Responsible for doing demographic assessment for strategic partnership—a variety of socioeconomic variables are taken into consideration when doing strategic planting and partnering
- Weekly co-lead on Senior Team for leadership initiatives in local context of Western New York
- Partner development exists within both the non-profit and for-profit sector
- Serve as leader of National Delivery Team (think tank for the network, examining growth initiatives)
- Presided over merger of two reputable organizations of strength- 24 month merger involving allotments of assets and personnel (Renovation Network and Christ Together merged; took on the official name of Christ Together; www.christtogether.org)
- Extensive travel domestically; some internationally

Great Commission Ministries, Inc. (GCM)

Winter Park, Florida

2009- Present- Consultant

- Consulting in the areas of strategic planning and alternative revenue stream development
- Assist Executive Director with annual employee assessment survey, examining employee levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intentionality to stay/leave current position of employment
- Provide social and strategic coaching support of staff in Ministry Team Development (Financial Support Raising)
- Leadership development analysis, organizational flow, identifying key personnel for growth and development for higher positions of employment

Consult39

New York

2014-Present- Founding Partner

- Consulting in the areas of strategic planning, organizational assessment
- Employment placement
- Start-up organization, consulting with Executive Director of \$20 million non-profit, former professional athlete in leadership training, and personal background in strategic assessment
- Mixed-methodologies (qualitative and quantitative applied)
- Client-base is in startup
- www.consult39.com

Great Commission Ministries, Inc. (GCM)

Winter Park, Florida

2002- 2009- National Staff Program Manager; Senior Research Analyst

- Helped to oversee the employment of approximately 300 employees domestically, and in over 14 countries worldwide
- Reported directly to the Executive Director on a number of research initiatives involving employment oversight and generating new revenue streams
- Trained over 200 field staff and interns in Ministry Team Development (MTD)
- Conducted organizational research for Executive Director and Board of Directors, specifically examining social and task networks, job satisfaction, and predicting employee retention/turnover
- www.gcmweb.org

The BAZ Group, Inc.

Toledo, Ohio

1999- 2002—Communication Consultant/Project Manager (Senior Member)

- Incredible technical, public and client/vendor relations skills developed
- Performed contract negotiation, cost analysis, requests for proposals (RFP), and restructuring of client communication services
- Technical skills gained primarily through analysis of voice and data network configuration- Included, but not limited to PBX (phone system) programming, T-1 voice/data channelization, and Sequel Platform Training
- Serviced large clients (e.g., Pilkington, 115 locations; Office Max, 1,500 locations) with high monthly financial commitments. Partnered with Accenture on various projects. Serviced small businesses and certified nonprofit (501C3) groups as well
- Negotiated high yield/traffic contracts and commitments with major telecommunications companies (e.g., AT&T, MCI WorldCom, Qwest, SBC, Sprint, Verizon)
- <https://terminal.thebazgroup.com/>

Awards/Achievements:

2013- Promotion to Executive Management Team; Named National Delivery Team Lead for Christ Together Network; 1,400 partnerships domestically

2008- Promotion offered to National Director of Human Resources, Great Commission Ministries, Inc. (GCM)

2008- Promotion to National Staff Program Manager, GCM

2008- Competitive Student Paper Selection, Central States Communication Association (CSCA), Organizational Communication Division (Madison, WI)

2008- Top Three Paper Panel, CSCA, Intercultural Communication Division (Madison, WI)

2008- Top Three Paper Panel, CSCA, Communication Education Division (Madison, WI)

2007- Top Three Paper Panel, National Communication Association (NCA), Communication Education Division (Chicago, IL)

2006- University at Buffalo, Communication Department Teaching Award (Top Grad Student Instructor)

2006- FACS Certified- Facial Action Coding System- Paul Ekman, PhD

2004- The Cooper Award Nominee, CSCA (Cleveland, OH)- Bowling Green State University Nominee for Graduate Student Instructor of the Year

Service:

2014-Present- Youth Time Foundation (Buffalo, NY)- Foundation Advisory Member

2010- 2014- Board Member- The Buffalo Christian Center (BCC), Buffalo, NY

2010- 2014- XCEL Leadership Program- Renovation Church, Buffalo, NY- Mentor for afterschool program for inner city Buffalo Youth

2007- Research Liaison, The Chapel at Crosspoint, Buffalo, NY; Researcher for demographic information regarding strategic partnerships/church plants in and around the greater Western New York Area

2007- Kingdom Come Initiative Board Member, The Chapel- Financial Disbursement of \$1.2 million, 2007 Missionary Funding campaign

2006- Vice President, Communication Graduate Student Association (CGSA)

2005- Graduate Student Association (GSA)- Senatorial Representative for the Department of Communication

2005- Greater Orlando Leadership Foundation (GOLF) Nominee

Coursework:

Quantitative Statistics

- Statistical Inference 1 & 2; Multivariate Regression; Quantitative Foundations in Communication; Statistics in Education

Organizational Communication

- Organizational Communication (Quantitative/Qualitative Assessment); Agent Based Modeling

Nonverbal Communication

- Nonverbal Communication; Nonverbal Communication and Deception

Communication Theory

- Philosophical Foundations in Communication Theory; Communication Theories; Theoretical Foundations in Communication

Research Methods

- Communication Methodological Foundations; Quantitative Methods; Qualitative Methods; Galileo Theory and Method

Professional References:

- Greg Guevara (JD, University of Michigan) Partner, Labor and Employment Group- Bose, McKinney, & Evans, LLP, Indianapolis, IN- (317) 684-5257, gguevara@boselaw.com
- Thomas Mauriello, Executive Director- Great Commission Ministries, Inc., Winter Park, FL—(407) 671-9700, tom.mauriello@gcmweb.org

- *Molly Zraik*, President- The BAZ Group, Inc., Toledo, Ohio- (419) 531-7727, mzraik@thebazgroup.com

Academic References:

- *Frank Tutzauer (PhD, Northwestern University)* Chair, Department of Communication, State University of New York at Buffalo, comfrank@buffalo.edu
- *Thomas H. Feeley (PhD, State University of New York at Buffalo)* Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Communication, State University of New York at Buffalo, thfeeley@buffalo.edu
- *Mark Frank (PhD, Cornell University)* Director, Communication Science Center, State University of New York at Buffalo, mfrank83@buffalo.edu

Professional Memberships:

National Communication Association (NCA)- *Non-Current*
 International Communication Association (ICA)- *Non-Current*
 Central States Communication Association (CSCA)- *Non-Current*
 The Chronicle of Philanthropy- *Non-Current*
 Golden Key National Honor Society (*Life Member*)
 Alpha Lambda Delta National Honor Society (*Life Member*)

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ABSTRACT

INTEGRATING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION INTO THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION PROCESS OF SUMMIT CHURCH IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015
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This project examines the integration of theological education into the spiritual formation process of the local church. The group for this project consisted of participants from Summit Church in Southwest Florida going through a fifteen-week systematic theology class concentrated on orthodox, evangelical doctrines. The purpose of the class was to engage the participants with theology, considering how those doctrines might inform individual intimacy with God and missional behavior.

Chapter 1 describes the need for the project in relation to the particular ministry context. Chapter 2 gives a biblical basis for the integrating theology into the discipleship process of a local church. Chapter 3 considers practical implications for the project. This chapter also evaluates certain ways—preaching, catechesis, and small group environments—that church leaders have disseminated theological information. Chapter 4 consists of a description of the theology class, and chapter 5 serves as an evaluation of the entire project.

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