

LIFE'S BIGGEST QUESTIONS

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE THINGS THAT MATTER MOST

HOW WILL IT ALL END?

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

HOW DOES GOD SAVE SINNERS?

DOES GOD EXIST?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO KNOW AND LOVE GOD?

HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN

THE TRINITY?

HOW DOES GOD

RELATE TO HIS CREATION?

WHAT IS A

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HUMAN BEING?

ERIK THORNES

WHAT IS SIN?

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

HOW WELL

CAN YOU KNOW GOD?

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

WHAT DID JESUS CHRIST ACCOMPLISH?

WHAT

IS GOD LIKE?

HOW DOES GOD REVEAL HIMSELF?

Life's Biggest Questions: What the Bible Says about the Things That Matter Most

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WHAT ARE LIFE'S BIGGEST QUESTIONS?

"The unexamined life is not worth living." —Socrates

Everyone wants a meaningful life. There is nothing more human than wondering what that means. Even in days filled with shallowness and countless distractions, when the light goes out at the end of the day and you lie in bed staring at the ceiling, you aren't human if you don't think about what it all means. But a meaningful life can be found only by asking good, honest questions. Good questions get to the foundational things that everyone wonders about. Humans in every generation and culture have always asked questions such as, is there a God? What is a human being? Is there such a thing as sin and, if so, can anything be done about it? Is there life after death? Even if you try to ignore questions like these, all it takes is an inquisitive child or the death of a loved one to bring life's big questions

back to the surface. Asking questions assumes there are answers and that they can be found. But many today wonder if objective truth may be found, or if all we have are personal and cultural conventions. Even if absolute truth does exist, can we break out of our limited perspectives and discover it? Many increasingly think we are all left to ourselves to make truth up as we go and there is no way to know what is true or false, right or wrong, good or bad, worthwhile or empty. The Roman governor Pontius Pilate seemed to foreshadow our growing contemporary cynicism about truth when he asked Jesus, “What is truth?” before handing him over to be unjustly murdered (John 18:38).

Into this mounting confusion, uncertainty, and despair, Jesus Christ breaks in, declaring that he is “the way, and the truth, and the life . . .” (John 14:6) and that he alone can bring life that is abundantly fulfilling and eternally significant (John 10:10). He is the one who restores peace with God and brings the answers we long to know. He not only provides the answers we long for, he *is* the answer. The Bible is the primary source for knowing Jesus and the answers he taught. While many acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of Jesus, it is also vital to realize that he viewed the Scriptures as God’s Word and the foundation for answering life’s greatest questions. This book is an effort to clearly and concisely present those answers. If you aren’t really sure what Christians actually believe or if you’ve been a Christian for a long time but want to solidify the foundation of your faith, I hope this short book can accomplish both of those goals.

GETTING TO THE POINT

This paragraph gets to the bottom line of what Christians believe. The Bible is inspired by God and is centrally about God and what it means to have a relationship with him. God has always existed as one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He has always been revealing himself and communicating everything we

will ever need to know to live profoundly meaningful lives. The basic story line of the Bible reveals a loving and holy God who created everything just as he wanted it to be as an expression of his excellence and beauty, and he declared everything *very* good. At the pinnacle of his creation God made humans in his image, which means they are more like him than anything else. Human purpose is found fundamentally in relationship with our Creator, depending on him for everything, honoring him, and seeing all of life as an act of worship of him. “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” (Rev. 4:11). Tragically, since Adam and Eve’s fall, all humans are born in rebellion against God (Rom. 3:10–12). God rightly judges this sin, and we incur his wrath and sin’s penalty, which is death (Heb. 9:27). God loves mankind so much that he will not let us settle for anything less than satisfaction in him as our greatest joy. He provides a way of escape from this judgment by sending the eternal Son of God to become a man so that he can represent us in his perfect life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection. Christ unites divine and human in himself so that he can become the only mediator between a holy God and rebellious humans. “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” (1 Pet. 3:18). The forgiveness humanity so desperately needs but is unable to accomplish is achieved by God himself through the person and work of Christ. When the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God primarily through the witness of his church to reveal God’s awesome character, sinners see their need for a Savior and repent and trust Christ for forgiveness and a restored relationship with God as Father. All the obedience and righteousness of Christ becomes theirs through their adoption into God’s family. Holy Spirit–enabled conversion leads to Holy Spirit–empowered growth in

holiness and love, along with identification with God's people in the church until Christ returns to take over his creation once and for all. His return will bring the final defeat of sin, death, hell, and all that competes for his honor so that tears and sorrow will be no more for God's redeemed people.

That's what the Bible and this book are fundamentally about—in one paragraph. It all boils down to the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is how God restores sinful people to himself. The rest of this book unpacks this story in more detail in the hope that you not only understand the Christian faith better, but more importantly, that you may know and love the God who made you in his image so that you may live an abundantly joyful and eternally significant life.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY AND MEDITATION

“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10)

Questions for Application and Discussion

1. How do you explain the universal human inclination to ask big questions about the ultimate issues of life? Do you think ultimate answers exist and that we can find them? What are the big questions you've pondered the most?
2. Where have you tended to go to find answers to big questions? What is your primary source of authority (e.g., reason? gut feelings? religious leaders/institutions? majority opinion? parents? Freud? Marx? Oprah?)? When you need to determine what is true and real, how do you determine which authoritative voices are trustworthy?

3. What kind of authority do you think the Bible deserves to have in your life? What authoritative influence has it had in your life? Why do (or don't) you allow it to have authoritative weight in your life?
4. What has been your impression of the Christian faith before now? What has influenced you to come to this impression? What do you hope this book will help you with the most?

For Further Study

The brief summaries of the doctrines of the Christian faith found in this book are good starting points for deeper study and reflection. To that end, recommendations of key resources for further study are provided here and at the end of each chapter.

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DOES GOD EXIST?

“The worst moment for the atheist is when he is really thankful and has nobody to thank.”

—Dante Gabriel Rossetti

The question of God’s existence seems like a logical place to start to answer life’s biggest questions. So, you might think that the Bible starts here and makes it a major priority to argue for God’s existence, but it doesn’t. Rather, it assumes God’s existence from the first verse to the last. It also assumes that God has revealed himself in such obvious ways in creation and human experience (Rom. 1:19–21) that to deny his existence would be foolish (Ps. 14:1). The Bible tells us that because of God’s personal nature, he must reveal himself if we are to know him personally. God has revealed himself to us in two ways: through special revelation and general revelation.

SPECIAL REVELATION

The Bible is God's written revelation of who he is and what he has done in redemptive history. Humans need this divine, transcendent perspective in order to break out of their subjective, culturally bound, fallen limitations. Through God's written Word, we may overcome error, grow in sanctification, minister effectively to others, and enjoy abundant lives as God intends.

GENERAL REVELATION

General revelation is given by God to all people at all times. This revelation is found both in the external creation (Ps. 19:1: "The heavens declare the glory of God . . .") and in internal human experience (Rom. 1:19–20: "What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 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. So they are without excuse"). General revelation shows several of God's attributes, such as his existence, power, creativity, and wisdom; in addition, the testimony of human conscience also provides some evidence of God's moral standards to all human beings (Rom. 2:14–15). Therefore, from general revelation all people have *some* knowledge that God exists, *some* knowledge of his character, and *some* knowledge of his moral standards. This results in an awareness of guilt before God, as people instinctively know that they have not lived up to his moral requirements. Thus, in the many false religions that have been invented, people attempt to assuage their sense of guilt.

But general revelation does not disclose the only true solution to man's guilt before God: the forgiveness of sins that comes through Jesus Christ. This means that general revelation does not provide personal knowledge of God as a loving Father who redeems his people and establishes a covenant with them. For this, one needs special revelation, which God has provided in his

historical supernatural activities, in the Bible, and definitively in Jesus Christ.

ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Arguments from External General Revelation

The Cosmological Argument. The cosmological (*cosmos* = world) argument starts from the *existence* of the world and argues for an *ultimate cause* (i.e., a Creator). The existence of anything requires a sufficient cause for its existence. This is a basic assumption of science itself, and there is nothing in all creation that does not follow this principle. The world itself must have a sufficient cause because it gives absolutely no indication of being either eternal or self-created. Basic presuppositions of science and logic go against either an eternal or self-generated world. This leaves us with the need for a sufficient cause that is eternal, self-existent, and outside of creation to explain the world's existence. The Bible teaches that God miraculously created the world out of nothing, which is the most plausible explanation for how we ended up with the world as we know it.

The Teleological Argument. The teleological (*telos* = goal) argument starts from the *nature* of the world and argues for the nature of the *Creator* (i.e., a Designer). It starts with the creation and argues not just for a creator, but for a creator who is intelligent, personal, wise, purposeful, and powerful. This argument moves from the need for a cause of the world to the need to explain its amazing intelligent design. The world not only acts caused, it acts intelligently caused. There is regularity and order in the cosmos that demands a wise, intelligent creator behind it. As Voltaire said, "If a watch proves the existence of a watchmaker but the universe does not prove the existence of a great architect, then I consent to be called a fool." How can one ponder the solar system, DNA, the brain, an eye, or a flower and not say with the psalmist, "The heavens declare the glory

of God . . .” (Ps. 19:1); and, “I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made . . .” (Ps. 139:14)?

Arguments from Internal General Revelation

The Argument from Personality. It’s easy to recognize the radical difference between personal beings and impersonal things. Personal beings laugh, think, feel, decide, and reflect, and they are self-conscious. If there is no personal being who created the world, how do you explain the existence of persons? How could an impersonal, random process ever produce complex personal beings? Can the personal ever come from the impersonal? It seems obvious that no matter how much time or chance it’s given, an impersonal process can never produce something personal. Therefore there must be a personal Creator responsible for humanity.

The Argument from Beauty. The understanding and appreciation of beauty is a universal human experience. Although there can be wide disagreement about what is and isn’t beautiful, the understanding of beauty and the ability to enjoy it is common to all human cultures. How can you explain this universal aesthetic appreciation, apart from a divine artist who not only created beautiful things, but also created humans with the capacity to admire them? Natural selection or naturalistic explanations cannot account for art museums.

The Argument from Morality. All human beings have a deep inner sense of right and wrong. This “Law of Human Nature” has amazing similarities across cultures. Even those who claim to believe that morality is relative and socially constructed know intuitively that rape, or racism, or genocide are immoral, regardless of anyone’s opinion to the contrary. Even though this moral sense gets suppressed and ignored, moral outrage and admiration for goodness are a constant assumption throughout human history. How can we account for this apart from a divine judge who created us and instills a sense of morality in humans?

The Argument from Meaning. All humans want to know that their lives matters. We all have a deep longing for significance and meaning that transcends mere animalistic gratification. Where does this universal human desire come from apart from a God who created us to have meaningful lives and instilled this yearning in our hearts? As C. S. Lewis said, “If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”¹

The Argument from Religious Experience. Humans have been described as being incurably religious. Throughout history, humans have invariably had a sense of something bigger and beyond us to whom we owe our existence and worship. While there have been significant differences in how God has been conceived, there has nonetheless been a deeply religious bent to human experience. In spite of modern theories of the inevitable secularization of the Western world, these predictions have proven thoroughly untrue. While atheism may seem like it is on the rise today, it is important to realize that atheism is mostly the invention of a small number of modern, white, Western, urban males who seem to have lost a sense of their dependence and frailty before God. Even efforts to explain away the religious instinct, such as Marxism and Freudian psychology, end up replacing God with views of reality that sound very “religious.” How are we to explain this religious instinct apart from a God who created us for relationship with him and a longing for that relationship? As Augustine pointed out, we are restless until we find our rest in the God who made us for himself.

EVALUATION

These arguments do not “prove” God’s existence because he isn’t a math equation or something you can put under a micro-

¹C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (1952; New York: Touchstone, 1996), 121.

scope or discover through unaided reason and experience alone. These arguments present a cumulative case to doubt atheism and consider the claims of the Bible. When taken together, they give good reasons to believe that reality as we know it is the creation of a powerful, wise, personal Creator. The arguments do not, however, convince us of a God who loves us and is willing to forgive our sins and call us his children. They don't give us an understanding of God who revealed himself in Christ and will right all the wrong in the world. For that, we need to seek him in his Word, where he has revealed himself most clearly, personally, and powerfully.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY AND MEDITATION

“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.” (Ps. 19:1)

Questions for Application and Discussion

1. When you have a deep sense of gratitude for something no human gave you (e.g., a sunset, health, life, mountains) do you feel inclined to worship? If so, where do you think that desire comes from?
2. The Bible says that the heavens declare the glory of God. What could help you to recognize that glory in nature?
3. As you read through the arguments in this chapter, were any of your doubts about God diminished? Are you better able to reasonably refute atheism?
4. Among the arguments discussed in this chapter, which ones did you find most helpful or convincing? Are your doubts about God mostly intellectual, moral, or experiential?

5. How might someone find meaning or morality apart from God?

For Further Study

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO KNOW AND LOVE GOD?

“The most important thing about a man is what comes into his mind when he thinks about God.” —A. W. Tozer

The study of theology is considered by many to be dry, boring, irrelevant, and complicated. But for those who want to know God, the study of theology is indispensable. The word *theology* comes from two Greek words, *theos* (“God”) and *logos* (“word”). The study of theology is an effort to make definitive statements about God in an accurate, coherent, relevant way, based on God’s self-revelation. Doctrine equips people to fulfill their primary purpose, which is to glorify and delight in God through a deep personal knowledge of him. Meaningful relationship with God depends on correct knowledge of him.

Any theological system that distinguishes between “rational propositions about God” and “a personal relationship with God” fails to see the necessary connection between love and knowledge. The capacity to love, enjoy, and tell others about a

person is increased by greater knowledge of that person. Love and knowledge go hand in hand. Good lovers are students of the beloved. Knowledge and love of God is the goal of theology.

Knowledge without devotion is cold, dead orthodoxy. Devotion without knowledge is irrational instability. But true knowledge of God seeks to understand everything from his perspective. Theology is learning to think God's thoughts after him. It is to learn what God loves and hates, and to see, hear, think, and act the way he does. Knowing how God thinks is the first step in becoming godly.

Many like to think that just being a "good" person and "loving" God, without emphasizing doctrine, is preferable. But being a good person can mean radically different things depending on what someone thinks "good" is, or what constitutes a "person." Loving God will look very different depending on one's conception of "God" or "love." The fundamental connections between belief and behavior, and between love and knowledge, demand a rigorous pursuit of truth for those wanting to love God and to be godly. Hebrews 5:11–6:3 teaches that deepening theological understanding equips one to be able to differentiate good from evil, and it exhorts believers to mature in their knowledge of God and his ways:

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. . . . (Heb. 5:12–6:1)

Christian theology is based on the belief that God exists, is personal, can be known, and has revealed himself. These pre-suppositions motivate theologians to devote themselves to a passionate pursuit of knowledge from God’s Word. Unfortunately, the word “theologian” is used almost exclusively for vocational theologians rather than for anyone earnestly devoted to knowing God. On one level everyone who thinks about God is a theologian. But a believer whose life is consumed with knowing his Lord is most certainly a theologian, and theologians are committed to truth.

Loving God means loving truth. God is a God of truth; he *is* truth. In Scripture, all three persons of the Trinity are vitally related to truth (see fig. 3.1).

Figure 3.1

TRUTH AND THE TRINITY

Father	“So that he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of truth, and he who takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of truth because the former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my eyes” (Isa. 65:16).
	“What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, ‘That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged’” (Rom. 3:3–4).
Son	“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’” (John 14:6).
	“But that is not the way you learned Christ!—assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus” (Eph. 4:20–21).
Spirit	“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” (John 15:26).
	“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” (John 16:13).

In light of this relationship between God and truth, it should be no surprise that the Great Commandment includes loving God with one's mind: "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30, quoting Deut. 30:6). Fully loving God and obeying this Great Commandment requires actively engaging the mind in the pursuit of truth.

The second half of the Great Commandment—love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:31)—also requires a great commitment to truth. Love, kindness, and compassion must include profound concern that people understand the truth, since their lives depend on it. God meets our greatest need of relationship with him through an understanding of truth: "Of his own will [God] brought us forth *by the word of truth*, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18; see 1 Pet. 1:23). Sanctification also happens by means of the truth: "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17; see Rom. 12:2). Authentic discipleship is marked by knowing and obeying truth: "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31–32). Therefore, loving others involves having a deep desire that they understand truth. This is the reason the Great Commission has a vital teaching element. Making disciples of Christ involves teaching them to observe all he has commanded (Matt. 28:20). Jesus wants people to understand and obey truth and thereby find life in him. Failure to care whether loved ones understand the truth is failure to care about their abundant and eternal lives. People are judged and go to hell because they fail to love and obey God's truth (2 Thess. 2:11–13; see Rom. 1:18, 21, 25; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23).

THEOLOGICAL METHOD

Systematic theology seeks to summarize biblical teaching on particular topics in order to draw definitive conclusions that

intersect with life. God has revealed himself generally in nature and personally in human history. He has not only revealed himself in facts and statements, but what is objectively true of him has also been revealed in the subjective experience of people to whom he has revealed himself. God's revelation of himself recorded in the Bible is the foundation for knowing God today.

God's revelation in Scripture is rich, personal, and wedded to real life. But it can also be more difficult to understand than mere facts and propositions, because the historical context of the revelation is often foreign to modern people. Because revelation of God is personal and historical, the biblical understanding of God is progressive and cumulative. The theologian therefore must consider the historical context and progressive nature of revelation at every stage. The theological process must include careful study of biblical passages that are relevant to the question being answered. Furthermore, study of the Bible should be done with great sensitivity to the historical context of the passages being studied. This theological method has produced several focused areas of study.

THE THEOLOGICAL PROCESS

The theological process can be categorized under several aspects and disciplines (see fig. 3.2). In particular, systematic theology builds on the conclusions of exegesis and biblical theology. It attempts to summarize the teaching of Scripture in a brief, understandable, and carefully formulated statement. It involves appropriately *collecting*, *synthesizing*, and *understanding* all the relevant passages in the Bible on various topics, and then *summarizing* their teachings clearly so that we can know what to believe and how to live as God intends.

Figure 3.2

THE THEOLOGICAL PROCESS

Exegesis	The process of seeking to determine the correct meaning of a particular passage of Scripture.
Biblical theology	The study of scriptural revelation based on the historical framework presented in the Bible.
Systematic theology	A study that answers the question, "What does the whole Bible teach us today about a given topic?"
Historical theology	The study of how believers in different eras of the history of the church have understood various theological topics.
Philosophical theology	The study of theological topics primarily through the use of the tools and methods of philosophical reasoning and information gained from nature and reason ("general revelation") apart from the Bible.
Practical theology	The study of how to best apply theological truths to the life of the church and the world (including preaching, Christian education, counseling, evangelism, missions, church administration, worship, etc.).
Apologetics	The study of theology for the purpose of defending Christian teaching against criticism and distortion, and giving evidences of its credibility.

Reference to this sort of whole-Bible theology can be seen in Paul's insistence that he did not shrink back from declaring "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) and in Jesus's Great Commission that the church should "make disciples of all nations" by "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . ." (Matt. 28:19–20). Jesus also uses this way of understanding the Bible as he takes his disciples through the Old Testament, showing how he is found throughout (Luke 24:27, 44).

MAJOR CATEGORIES OF STUDY IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

The major topics covered in the study of systematic theology can be seen in figure 3.3.

Fig. 3.3

STUDIES IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Area of Study	Technical Title
Method and foundation	Prolegomena
The Bible	Bibliology
God	Theology proper
Humanity (or man)	Anthropology
Sin	Hamartiology
Christ	Christology
Holy Spirit	Pneumatology
Salvation	Soteriology
Church	Ecclesiology
Last things	Eschatology

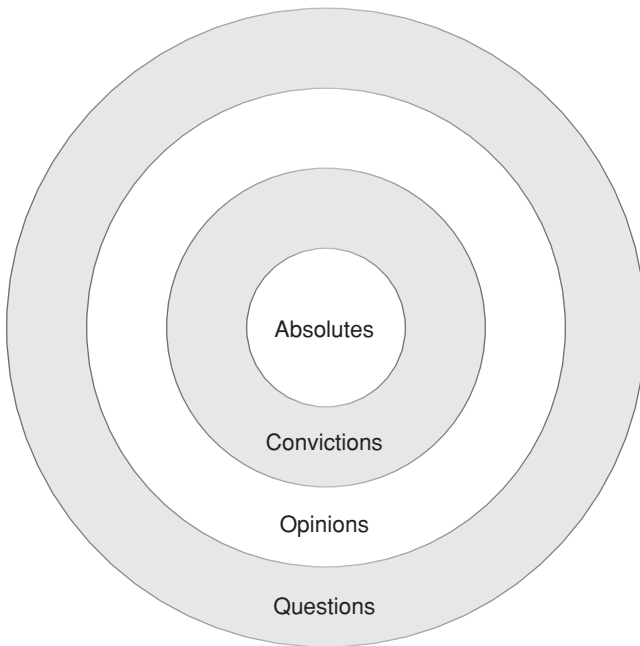
ESSENTIAL VS. PERIPHERAL DOCTRINE

The ability to discern the relative importance of theological beliefs is vital for effective Christian life and ministry. Both the purity and unity of the church are at stake in this matter. The relative importance of theological issues can fall within four categories: (1) *absolutes* define the core beliefs of the Christian faith; (2) *convictions*, while not core beliefs, may have significant impact on the health and effectiveness of the church; (3) *opinions* are views or personal judgments that generally are not worth dividing over; and (4) *questions* are currently unsettled issues. These categories can be best visualized as concentric circles, similar to those on a dart board, with the absolutes as the “bull’s-eye” (see fig. 3.4).

Into which category an issue falls should be determined by the cumulative force of at least eight considerations: (1) biblical clarity; (2) relevance to the character of God; (3) relevance to the essence of the gospel; (4) biblical frequency and significance (how often in Scripture it is taught, and what weight Scripture

Figure 3.4

DISCERNING THE WEIGHT OF BELIEFS



places upon it); (5) effect on other doctrines; (6) consensus among Christians (past and present); (7) effect on personal and church life; and (8) current cultural pressure to deny a teaching of Scripture. We should consider the cumulative weight of these criteria when determining the relative importance of particular beliefs. For instance, just the fact that a doctrine may go against the general consensus among believers (see item 6) does not necessarily mean it is wrong, although that might add some weight to the argument against it. All the categories should be considered collectively in determining how important an issue is to the Christian faith. The ability to rightly discern the difference between core doctrines and legitimately disputable matters will keep the

church from either compromising important truth or needlessly dividing over peripheral issues.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY AND MEDITATION

“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” (Mark 12:30)

Questions for Application and Discussion

1. What has been your attitude toward the study of doctrine? Has anything in this chapter helped to increase your appreciation of doctrine?
2. Can you think of any issues in your life that will improve with a better understanding of a particular doctrine?
3. How should a true understanding of God as the sovereign, wise Creator shape your daily life?
4. What are things you do (or should do) that demonstrate your conviction that truth really matters?
5. What are issues you would consider absolutes? Convictions? Opinions? Questions?

For Further Study

General Resources

These resources will be helpful for further study of all the topics covered throughout this book.

Douglas, J. D. *The New Bible Dictionary*. 2nd ed. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1982.

- _____, *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978.
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- Elwell, Walter, ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.
- _____, ed. *Topical Analysis of the Bible: With the New International Version*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991.
- Erickson, Millard, J. *Christian Theology*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.
- _____. *The Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Rev. ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.
- Holloman, Henry. *Kregel Dictionary of the Bible and Theology: Over 500 Key Theological Words and Concepts Defined and Cross-Referenced*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2005.
- House, Wayne. *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.
- Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2001.

Theological Presuppositions and Method

- Benson, Clarence H., and Robert J. Morgan. *Exploring Theology: A Guide for Systematic Theology and Apologetics*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007.
- Davis, John Jefferson. *Foundations of Evangelical Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984.
- Frame, John. *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1987.
- House, H. Wayne. *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.
- Lawrence, Michael. *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

Machen, J. Gresham. *Christianity and Liberalism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1923.

Woodbridge, John D., and Thomas E. McComiskey, eds. *Doing Theology in Today's World: Essays in Honor of Kenneth S. Kantzer*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991.

Since the beginning of time, people everywhere have asked the same questions: *Does God exist? Is there life after death? What is the meaning of life?* The superabundance of these invariable questions, asked over and over, leads us to believe that there just might be answers to be found. Professor Erik Thoennes knows the importance of questioning the fundamental things that we all wonder about. If you aren't really sure what to believe, or if you've been sure of the answers for a long time but want to solidify the foundation of your faith, this concise book takes seriously the inquiries of the ages and leads us all to investigate the truth for ourselves.

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Divinity School, Samford University



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