

# **Systematic Theology 1**

Tuesday Evenings: 7 pm September- December

## **Explanation of this class:**

Our goal this quarter is to study the doctrines of the Bible (Bibliology) and the doctrine of God (Theology). Our prayer is that as we work through these doctrinal studies, your love for the scripture and its author will be stirred up, and your confidence in His wisdom, goodness, and power will be strengthened. As we study these topics over the next several months, we will be providing notes, which we encourage you to keep in a binder for easy reference.

## **Scope and Sequence:**

This quarter, we plan to address 14 sub-topics. Seven of these topics will be on the doctrine of the Bible (Bibliology) and the other seven will be on the doctrine of God (Theology). Our goal will be to address one topic per week, though there may be times that we will take a topic into another day. Below are the topics we plan to address.

### **The Scope of Our Study: Bibliology**

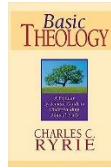
- Session 1: The Inescapable Reality of a Creator
- Session 2: Every word of scripture is God breathed
- Session 3: The scriptures are without error
- Session 4: The scriptures alone are sufficient for faith and practice
- Session 5: There is a standard that sets apart scripture from all other books
- Session 6: The privilege of reading the scriptures in English
- Session 7: Illumination and Bible Interpretation

### **The scope of our study: Theology**

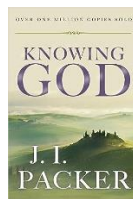
- Session 8: God in Three Persons
- Session 9: God's names and what they teach us about His nature
- Session 10: God's incommunicable attributes
- Session 11: God's communicable attributes
- Session 12: God's Providence: creation and the miraculous
- Session 13: God's Providence: salvation and prayer
- Session 14: God's Providence: evil and suffering

# Helpful Resources:

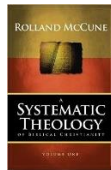
## ***Basic Theology: Charles Ryrie***



## ***Knowing God: J I Packer***



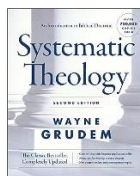
## ***A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity (Three Volumes): Rolland McCune***



## ***Systematic Theology (Four Volumes): Lewis Sperry Chafer***



## ***Systematic Theology: Wayne Grudem***



## **Session 1: The Inescapable Reality of a Creator**

### **Part 1: What is systematic theology?**

- It is a logically organized attempt to expound the most essential element of “the faith” or “sound doctrine:”
- This discipline begins with going to the scriptures to study what they say about these matters.
- This discipline through diligent study puts together a well-organized, logically connected body of facts that we can pass on to the next generation.

### **Part 2: Why is the study of Systematic Theology so important?**

- **Reason 1: American Christianity is filled with ignorance, confusion, and thoroughly unbiblical concepts:** Concepts like...
- **Reason 2: The church will crumble in a culture if sound doctrine is not being regularly expounded:**
- **Reason 3: False Teaching is personally destructive to people’s lives:**
- **Reason 4: What we do begins with what we are and what we believe:**
  - Values begin with the Creator’s design and purpose.
  - What we believe must be rooted in an objective authority.
  - The enabling to live the Christian life begins with conversion and an understanding of how God matures people.
- **Reason 5: We must articulate doctrine with clarity:**
  - We need to know what the scriptures teach about foundational matters.
  - We need to know the primary scriptures that address these issues
  - We need to know the terms.
  - We need to be aware of the debates and how they are affecting the people we love.
  - We need to communicate sound doctrine effectively.

### **Part 3: Why should we believe in the existence of God?**

- **Reason 1: The creation declares His glory: Psalm 19:1-3**
  - **Because there is a creation, you cannot escape the majesty of God: 19:1** “The heavens declare the glory of God...”
  - **Because there is a creation, you cannot escape the skills, wisdom, and order of God: 19:2** “The firmament showeth his handywork...”

- **This witness is universal: 19:3** "There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard..."
- **Reason 2: The rational and moral faculties of image bearers declare His existence and character: Romans 1:19-22**
  - **All people have a basic internal awareness of God: 1:19** "That which may be know of God is manifest in them..."
  - **This basic awareness is implanted by God in the conscience of every person: 1:19** "God hath showed it unto them..."
  - **This basic awareness of God in the conscience is heightened by observing and reflecting on the implications of what we see around us: 1:20** "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead..."
  - **This basic awareness of God is enough to make us accountable to God: 1:20** "So that they are without excuse..."
  - **Our problem is not a lack of opportunity, but rather what we do with that opportunity: 1:21** "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful..."
  - **Our hearts are biased against the truths to which we are exposed: 1:22** "but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened..."
- **Reason 3: The scriptures declare Him: 1 Peter 1:12-19**
  - **He was fully aware of what he was doing when he spoke and wrote as a prophet, and he wanted to leave a permanent record of God's word for these people: 1:12-15:** "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things...to stir you up by putting you in remembrance...I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.
  - **He includes himself in a group that God used to give us the scriptures: 1:16:** "For we..."
  - **He wrote from the perspective of an eyewitness, which was part of the criteria that made him qualified to be an apostle: 1:16:** "Have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty..."
  - **The scriptures are more trustworthy than the eyewitness accounts of several individuals: 1:18-19:** "And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in

the holy mount. We have also a more sure **word of prophecy**; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed..."

#### **Part 4: How have theologians historically argued with these concepts in mind?**

- **Five Basic Rational Arguments for the existence of God:**
  - **Cosmological Argument:** The fact that there is a creation means that there must be a Creator.
  - **Teleological Argument:** The fact that the creation reflects order means that there must be a rational designer.
  - **Ontological Argument:** The fact that there is a need for an absolute being means that one must exist.
  - **Moral Argument:** The fact that mankind universally has a sense of right and wrong must mean that there is a moral law giver.
  - **Religious Argument:** The fact that mankind universally senses an internal need for an absolute being compels us to believe that one exists.

#### **Part 5: How did Paul approach arguing for the existence of God?**

- **A case study of Act 17:22-31**
  - **He started with the presupposition that God exists, and that this knowledge is inherently present in the people he is addressing: 17:22**
  - **He called them to reject their superstition and embrace the gospel: 17:30-31**
  - **Paul gave the basic that contradicted their ignorant approach to Him: 17:24-25**
    - **There is one God:** "God..."
    - **He is the ultimate source of everything:** "Made world and everything in it..."
    - **He is the Supreme ruler:** "Lord..."
    - **He is the invisible God and cannot be contained:** "Dwelleth not in temples made with hands..."
    - **He does not accept manmade devices as acceptable means of mediation:** "Neither worshipped with men's hands..."
    - **He does not need anything, because He is independent of all His creation:** "As though he is in need of anything..."
    - **He is intimately involved in the affairs of people and His purposes cannot be manipulated or thwarted**

**through human devices:** "Determined times and bounds..."

- **He is righteous and will judge all men: 17:30-31** "But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness..."

#### **Part 6: God exists, how can we know Him?**

- **He has revealed Himself in three distinct ways:**
  - **Creation: Psalm 19:1-3**
  - **History: Daniel 4:35; Acts 17:26**
  - **Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:15-17**

#### **Part 7: Concluding thoughts:**

- All people everywhere have a basic knowledge of God because He has put this knowledge in their hearts, and their minds can process the things that they see in the creation.
- This basic knowledge of God is not enough to bring a person to repentance and faith in the gospel but is enough information to leave all people fully accountable to God.
- Man's basic rejection of this knowledge is not a rational rejection as much as it is a moral rejection.
- The universal presence of idolatry in the world is confirmation of both our inherent knowledge of God and our moral bias against His true nature.
- The limitations of natural revelation necessitate an objective standard given by God to govern our interpretation of general revelation.
- This objective standard is scripture, and we must understand the nature of scripture.