

# Theology: Why It's Important

"Life Foundations: Christian Faith Essentials", Part 1  
Pastor Vince DiPaola

***THE BIG IDEA: THEOLOGY PROVIDES US WITH HELPFUL CATEGORIES AND A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR UNDERSTANDING GOD!***

*"But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith..." (Jude 1:20a, NIV)*

*"But you, dear friends, must build up your lives ever more strongly upon the foundation of our holy faith..." (LB)*

## I) THEOLOGY: METHOD OF UNDERSTANDING GOD, HIS WORD AND HIS WORLD

### 1) Defining "Theology":

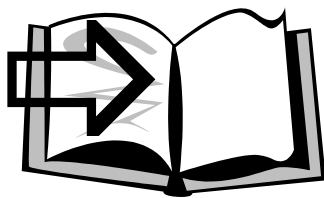
The pursuit of a SYSTEMATIC UNDERSTANDING of God and the Christian faith.

### 2) Three Major Categories Of "Theology"

a) Biblical Theology: Understanding truth through the PROGRESS OF BIBLICAL HISTORY.

b) Systematic Theology: Correlating truth from the Bible into APPROPRIATE CATEGORIES.

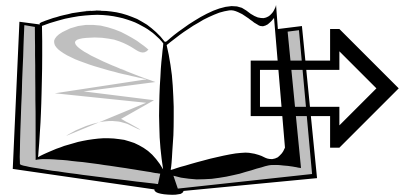
c) Historical Theology: What those who studied the Bible THOUGHT about its teachings.



Biblical Theology



Systematic Theology



Historical Theology

## II) DOCTRINE: CATEGORIES THAT HELP US KNOW WHAT REALLY MATTERS

### 1) Defining "Doctrine":

The foundational core BELIEFS that make-up the Bible's teaching on key issues of life.

## 2) The Major Categories Of “Doctrine”: Our Life Foundations For Christian Living

<b>Category</b>	<b>Technical Name</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Application</b>
The Bible	Bibliology	The Bible is God’s inspired, inerrant guidebook for life.	I will consult and live by the truth of the Bible every day.
The God-Head:	Trinitarianism	God is “The One” supreme being who exists in trinity.	I will acknowledge the person and power of God in my life.
Jesus The Son:	Christology	Jesus is God’s Son sent to earth to reveal God to us.	I will respond to Jesus by making Him Lord of my life.
The Holy Spirit:	Pneumatology	The Holy Spirit is the person and presence of God in us.	I will allow the Holy Spirit to fill and lead my life as He wills.
Angels:	Angelology	Angels are God’s special messengers who minister.	I will acknowledge the angels as models of devotion to God.
Satan:	Angelology	Satan is the chief evil angel who is opposed to God.	I will reject Satan, his angels and his adversarial schemes.
Creation:	Creationism	God created all that exists with order and purpose.	My purpose in life is to worship the Lord who created us all.
Mankind	Anthropology	Mankind is the chief object of creation who “fell” in sin.	I will acknowledge God’s love for me and live responsibly for Him.
Salvation	Soteriology	Salvation is the work of God’s amazing grace in a believer.	I will live my life w/good works toward God to say “thank you”.
Sanctification	Sanctification	Sanctification is God’s way of maturing us to be like Jesus.	I will cooperate with God and His growth plan for my life.
The Church:	Ecclesiology	The Church is the body of true believers in God’s family.	I will serve the church and help it be a light to the world.
The End Times:	Eschatology	Jesus Christ will return soon to establish His kingdom.	I will live a holy life that longs to be faithful when He comes.
The After-Life:	Eschatology	Death is the beginning (not end) of life in heaven or hell.	I will communicate the Good News of eternal life to others.

### III) WHY WE SHOULD LEARN THE TRUTH OF DOCTRINE AND THEOLOGY

(adapted and modified from T. Holladay & K. Warren, "Life Foundations: 11 Core Truths To Build Your Life On", p.11-14)

#### 1) Some Practical Reasons To Know "The Scoop" On Doctrine And Theology

a) Because it helps us KNOW GOD HIMSELF better.

*"Listen carefully to wisdom; set your mind on understanding. Cry out for wisdom, and beg for understanding. Search for it like silver, and hunt for it like hidden treasure. Then you will understand respect for the Lord, and you will find that you know God."* (Proverbs 2:2-5, NCV)

b) Because it builds for us a LIFE FOUNDATION.

*"Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instructions [doctrine] about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment."* (Hebrews 6:1-2, NASB)

c) Because it will NOURISH OUR SOULS.

*"In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following."* (1 Timothy 4:6, NASB)

d) Because it enables us to HELP OTHERS.

*"He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."* (Titus 1:9, NIV)

e) Because it protects us AGAINST ERROR.

*"But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."* (Hebrews 5:14, NIV)

f) Because how we think influences HOW WE ACT.

*"For as he thinks within himself, so he is."* (Proverbs 23:7, NASB)

#### 2) A Warning: Information Alone Without Application Is DANGEROUS!

*"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."* (2 Peter 3:18, NIV)

*"If I... can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge.. but have not love, I am nothing."* (1 Corinthians 13:2, NIV)

*"Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up."* (1 Corinthians 8:1, NIV)

### 3) Putting Truth Into Action: How To Apply It

a) Learn It: Get Started By STUDYING THE TRUTH.

*"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth."* (2 Timothy 2:15, NASB)

b) Love It: Stay Sharp By DEFENDING THE TRUTH.

*"Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."* (1 Peter 3:15, NASB)

c) Live It: Keep Strong By LIVING THE TRUTH.

*"Teach me to live according to your truth, for you are my God, who saves me. I always trust in you."* (Psalm 25:5, TEV)

***SUMMARY THOUGHT: STUDYING THEOLOGY AND DEVELOPING SOUND  
DOCTRINE IS THE BASIS FOR A SOLID LIFE!***

### IV) QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION IN GROUPS OR FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- 1) Review the definitions of "theology" and "doctrine" provided earlier. Do you understand them? What are some other ways you can reword those definitions to say the same thing?
  
- 2) Review "the major categories of doctrine" chart presented earlier. What categories were new to you? Which ones were familiar? Can you see the reason why they are ordered (from first to last) as they are? If so, explain why it is ordered this way.
  
- 3) If theology and doctrine are so important, why do so many Christians seem to have such an indifferent attitude towards these concepts? Why do they view it as boring, dry and dull?
  
- 4) What are two or three ways in which you can apply this session to your life?