

Notes from Bible Study Meeting & Discussion

Welcome to Women's Theology!

But what exactly *IS* theology?

theo _____ *logos* _____

logos in Greek philosophy: _____

parallel concept in the Old Testament: Genesis 15:1 _____

Genesis 1:3 _____

Concept of *logos* in the New Testament: John 1:1 _____

John 1:14 _____

The Point: We study theology because _____

Mini Break: Family Feud Game

Notes:

Where do we start? *The Existence and Knowability of God*

We always start with what Scripture says, not with what we think or feel on our own (Jeremiah 9:14, Jeremiah 17:9)

At your table, look at Psalm 10:3-4 and Psalm 14:1

Table Discussion: What are some reasons these verses give us for why people don't believe in God?



Reasons the Bible Gives for Why People Reject the Existence of God:

- 1.) _____ (Psalm 14:1)
- 2.) _____ (Psalm 10:3-4)

And, we also see elsewhere in Scripture:

- 3.) _____ (ex., 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Timothy 4:1-2)

So, how do we know that God exists? *Your thoughts?*

Definitions of Terms:

- **General Revelation:** _____
 - Creation - Romans 1:19-20; Psalm 19:1-4
 - Inner sense of morality – Romans 2:14-15
 - A “sense” of God – Psalm 8

But there are limits to how much we can know about God through General Revelation:

- **Special Revelation:** _____
 - God makes Himself known to us - Matthew 11:27
 - Primarily through His Word – *so much more on this point!*
 - And through the Holy Spirit – 1 Corinthians 2:10-12



The Knowability of God - God Incomprehensible

We study God – we study theology – to know God. But, there are limits to how much of God we can know:

- Psalm 145:3 _____
- Psalm 147:5 _____
- Psalm 139:6 _____
- Psalm 139:17 _____
- Romans 11:33 _____
- Isaiah 55:8-9 _____
- Isaiah 40:28 _____

Theologians call this the “Incomprehensibility” of God

Now, let's go back to our 3 reasons from Scripture on why people reject the existence of God:

What are the opposites of these things? Their natural opposites?

- 1.) Foolishness → _____
- 2.) Wickedness → _____
- 3.) Satan's Work → _____

Let's look deeper at each of these: Take a look at the account of the Fall in Genesis 3

BUT, now, after the Fall, can we simply reject foolishness, wickedness, and Satan's work?

General Revelation + Sin = a Distorted view of God

See Romans 8:7-8; Philippians 3:19; Isaiah 1:2-4; Hosea 4:1-2



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Week One: Why Study Systematic Theology?

The Existence and Knowability of God

So what do we turn to instead?

	Its natural opposite . . .	But Scripture teaches . . .
Foolishness		<p><i>1 Corinthians 1:21-23</i> <i>2 Corinthians 4:3-4</i></p>
Wickedness		<p><i>Ephesians 2:8-9</i> <i>Isaiah 64:6</i> <i>Romans 3:23-25</i></p>
Satan's Work		<p>Scripture's teaching on this point is a bit more <u>complicated</u>.</p> <p>1) _____ _____</p> <p>2) _____ _____ _____</p> <p><i>John 14:21-23; Romans 1</i></p> <p>3) _____ _____ _____</p> <p><i>1 Timothy; 2 Timothy 3:1-9</i></p>



Closing Thoughts on the Existence and Knowability of God:

- 1) In Christ are hidden ALL treasures of wisdom and knowledge – Colossians 2:3
- 2) God will HELP US as we seek Him – Isaiah 30:18, 20 – and our response will be to cast away our false gods and our sinful ways
- 3) Our knowing God is a TASTE of heaven – 1 Corinthians 13:12, 2 Peter 1:19
- 4) Our knowing God leads to RECOGNITION – John 10:14, 27
- 5) Falling prey to a false teacher will HARM you
- 6) Knowing God is REST – Matthew 11:28-30

My notes:



Day One – The Knowability of God

This week at Bible study, we looked at several passages on how God is incomprehensible. Look again at these verses, and think about how great our God is, that there is so much about Him that we can't ever know in fullness:

- Psalm 145:3 _____
- Psalm 147:5 _____
- Psalm 139:6 _____
- Psalm 139:17 _____
- Romans 11:33 _____
- Isaiah 55:8-9 _____
- Isaiah 40:28 _____

But don't let this discourage you from seeking Him! Though He is Incomprehensible, meaning that *we can't fully know God in all of His grandeur, goodness, love, vastness, etc.*, the Bible teaches us that we definitely CAN come to know SO very much about God!

Look up Matthew 7:7-8, and its companion Luke 11:9-10 – What does this Scripture teach us?

In fact, God has made our hearts to be hungry for Him. Take a look at these verses that talk about hungering and thirsting for God. Write any observations you make as you read.

- Matthew 5:6 _____
- Psalm 63:1 _____
- Psalm 63:5 _____
- Psalm 84:2 _____
- John 6:27 _____



Day Two – God Rewards Those Who Seek Him

As we seek to know God, and learn more about Him, Scripture says that He will REWARD those who are earnestly seeking Him. And the reward we get? More of Him – more depth of knowledge and intimacy and joy in relationship with the God who is Incomprehensible.

- Genesis 15:1 – What does God say about Himself? Who is God to Abraham?

- Psalm 19:11 – What leads to reward for God's servant?

- Psalm 37:5-7 – When we commit our way to the Lord, and trust in Him, what does this Psalm say will happen in our lives? What instruction does this Psalm give us about how we should live as we commit our way to the Lord?

What about when it's hard to seek and obey the Lord? Read & reflect on these promises:

- Hebrews 10:35 _____
- Colossians 3:24 _____
- Hebrews 11:6 _____

Just think . . . the more we seek Him, the more we follow Him and trust Him, the more we know Him, and knowing Him is our very rich reward! And here is one more thing to meditate on today . . . When we have the rich reward of a relationship with God in our lives, NO ONE and NOTHING can take that richness away from us.

Luke 10:42 – Look at what Jesus says about Mary, after she sits at his feet to hear His Word.

Scripture says “Mary has chosen _____”

Can she lose what she has chosen? Yes or no? Write some thoughts about this truth:



Bonus Study for Day Two:

Let's try out a very cool online Bible tool to go deeper into Mary's reward.

Open up <https://www.biblestudytools.com/concordances/treasury-of-scripture-knowledge/>

This will take you to an online cross-referenced scripture index. Navigate down to Luke 10, click through, and then select verse 42. You will see that the verse has highlighted words, with scripture references listed below. Try the exercises below using this tool.

In Luke 10:42, what is the "one thing" that Jesus says Mary has chosen? _____

Click on Psalm 27:4 – What does the Psalmist ask God for? _____

It's the SAME "one thing"! Is this your prayer, for your life?

Spend some time praying Psalm 27:4 before the Lord.

This thing that Mary has, can anyone take it away from her? No! **Click on 1 Peter 1:4.**

How does 1 Peter 1:4 describe this "one thing"?

It's an inheritance that can never _____, _____, or _____.

And, this inheritance, do you keep it for yourself, by trying really hard? No! Where does Scripture say that this treasure is kept? (1 Peter 1:4)

This inheritance is _____.

Let's look at the word "chosen" – In Luke 10, Mary makes a choice to sit and listen to Jesus. God has called His people to "choose" throughout scripture. Click on each of the verses and see what it is that God is calling His people to "choose"

Deuteronomy 30:19 _____

Joshua 24:15 _____

Joshua 24:22 _____

Psalms 17:15 _____

Psalms 119:30 _____

Psalms 119:111 _____



Day Three – Reviewing What We Learned Last Week

Thank you all so much for trusting me with your time and attention this week. Let's review & refresh your memory by defining these terms again (go ahead and use your notes)

General Revelation _____

(Romans 1:19-20; Psalm 19:1-4; Matthew 5:45)

Special Revelation _____

(Matthew 11:27; 2 Peter 1:16-21; 1 John 1:1-3)

Do you remember WHY we separate the idea of General Revelation from the idea of Special Revelation? It's because we are LIMITED in how much we can know about God just by looking around at the natural world. We cannot perceive God the way we ought to because of sin.

2 Corinthians 4:4 – The god of this age (Satan) has _____ our minds before we are believers in Christ

John 12:40 – Our eyes are _____ and our hearts are _____
(see also Isaiah 6:10 for context)

But thankfully, God has spoken to us! Special Revelation – when God speaks to us -- counteracts the blindness and hardness of our hearts that stand in the way of us knowing God.

2 Peter 1:19 – We pay attention to “the prophetic message” as to _____

BONUS STUDY: But what exactly is this “prophetic message”? Good question! Scholars generally agree that “the prophetic message” are the prophecies concerning Christ in the Old Testament, which are fulfilled in His coming. You can tell that this makes sense by looking back just a few verses, where Peter talks about how he heard the voice of God saying that Jesus was God's son. (*v. 17-18; compare to Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35*) We'll take a look again at Peter's certainty about the reliability of the Old Testament prophecies about Christ when we talk about how we trust Scripture in the next few weeks.



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Week One: Why Study Systematic Theology?

The Existence and Knowability of God

If you missed Bible study, or missed one of these points as we were talking, here is a completed chart describing what the Bible has to say about *why* humankind doesn't know God

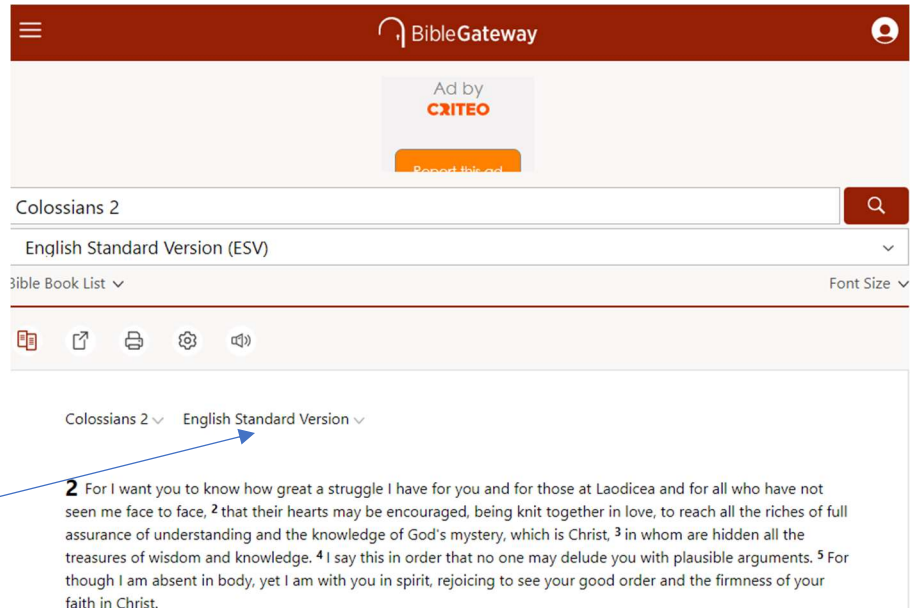
<p>We don't know God because of our foolishness</p>	<p>We might try to overcome our foolishness through wisdom</p>	<p>But ultimately, we cannot know God NOT through wisdom, but through Christ crucified <i>1 Corinthians 1:21-25</i></p>
<p>We don't know God because of our wickedness</p>	<p>We might try to overcome our wickedness by trying to be good or righteous</p>	<p>But ultimately, we cannot know God NOT through doing good or by being a good person or a holy person, but we can only come to know God through grace by faith <i>Ephesians 2:8-9</i></p>
<p>We don't know God because of Satan's work to deceive us, to blind our minds, and to suppress the truth of God</p>	<p>We might try to resist Satan on our own, or do our best to fight hard to make it in this dark world</p>	<p>But, we know God only through Christ's work on the cross, which we must receive by grace through faith, AND we also must respond by keeping God's commands as we walk in relationship with Him <i>John 14:21-24</i> We call this human responsibility</p>

Thank you, God, for revealing yourself to us! Help us as we seek you.



Let's remember again *why* we are seeking God together – what we are hoping to achieve by coming to Bible study. Look up Colossians 2:2-3 and write the entire verse out by hand:

Now, let's use another online Bible study tool that can be helpful for us. Open up www.biblegateway.com and look up "Colossians 2" by typing it in the search box.



Use this dropdown menu to change which translation of the Bible you see.

Select a version other than the one you used up above and write that out. We recommend the English Standard Version (ESV), the New Living Translation (NLT), the Wycliffe Bible, the King James (KJV), or the Amplified Bible, Classic Edition. Reflect on the different verbs and adjectives these translations use to describe Paul's encouragement and write about what this means for your personal faith and our life together as a church seeking Christ together.



Days Four and Five – Getting Ready for Next Week's Study

Congrats on making it this far into the homework! I know it's a commitment, and I'm praying you are being blessed by the work you are putting in.

This coming week, we are going to jump into studying **The Word of God and the Canon**.

When theologians talk about "the canon" they are talking about which ancient writings are considered part of the Bible. There are standards theologians have used through history to determine what ancient writings "count" as being authoritative for our lives.

We will talk about this in more detail at Bible study, but as a way of preparing, I'd like you to complete a challenge I periodically give to myself to help me as I study God's word. Put your Bible away, because the challenge for this exercise is doing the whole thing just from memory, off the top of your head.

In the blanks below, I want you to write out the names of the books of the Bible. Then, in the space provided to the right, I want you to write out one or two things you remember about each book. What is the book about? Can you remember any key themes this book teaches to us? Do you remember any major Bible stories that we learn there?

Good luck. I am always humbled when I take the time to complete this exercise. I realize both how much God has taught me, and how much more I need to learn as I seek Him.

<i>Name the book of the Bible</i>	<i>What is this book about? What do you remember?</i>



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BONUS STUDY: Do you really know what it means to be a Christian?

Take a look on YouTube at this short film called "Searching for God: Is There Any Reason to Believe in God Today?" <https://youtu.be/7LUhq1A7Tzs>

The lady with grey hair at around the 5 minute mark – Is she a Christian? Why or why not?

What would you say to her if you were talking to her? (If you're not sure what you would say, talk to another Christian lady and see if the two of you can practice what you might say.)

To be "nominally Christian" means to be a Christian in name only. In other words, the person just says they are a Christian, but maybe they have no idea what that means. In your own words, explain what makes someone a Christian, and why does that make them a Christian?

The filmmaker interviews people on the street, who say three main things about Christianity:

- 1) That God is a symbol we've created to give us something to believe in
- 2) That Christianity is a tool used to control people and to incite fear
- 3) That all religions are the same, and that we should just pick one that works for us



Have you heard people say these things before? Do any of these seem true? Do any of these make you doubt or question what you believe?

If you were defending Christianity, how would you answer each of these three statements? Can you think of any scriptures that would help you answer?

- 1) That God is a symbol we've created to give us something to believe in

- 2) That Christianity is a tool used to control people and to incite fear

- 3) That all religions are the same, and that we should just pick one that works for us



Let's get excited about the upcoming weeks by taking a walk down the Romans Road:

Maybe you've been around the church for a while, and you've heard people talk about "the Romans Road" (Or, maybe you're sitting here reading this, thinking to yourself, "What?!")

The "Romans Road" is a short Bible study using only four verses that summarize the Gospel message. It's a very simple way to explain the Gospel.

Follow along in your own Bible by looking up these verses. Maybe write some thoughts and questions you have as you read these verses

- 1) Romans 3:23 – All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

- 2) Romans 6:23 – The wages of sin is death.

- 3) Romans 6:23 – The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus

- 4) Romans 10:9 – Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead

There is so much more to say on each of these four points, and we are going to spend time on each of them in the upcoming weeks!

Romans 3:23 → The Doctrine of Sin – Week 7

Romans 6:23 → The Atonement – Week 8

Romans 10:9 → Repentance, Faith, and Justification – Week 9

