



Week 1: Why Theology Matters

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I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return. May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God. - Philippians 1:9-11 NLT

Our Faith Foundations course is designed to give you an introduction to the primary sources of Christian theology, so that you can become familiar with the *language, key concepts, and historical figures* who have shaped this 2000-year conversation.

Christian theology is not so much the study of God as it is the study of how God has chosen to reveal who God is, what God is like, and what God is doing in the world.

To say "I believe Jesus is Lord" is to make a theological statement.

Why does theology matter?

1. What we believe about God shapes how we worship God.
2. The knowledge of God is more than knowing facts about God but it isn't less.
3. The God we worship determines, in part, the kind of people we become.

4. What we do (ethics) is shaped by what we believe (theology).

5. Good theology preserves the Christian faith so we can pass it on to the next generation.

What sources do we draw upon to do good theology?

The Wesleyan Quadrilateral

While John Wesley never taught specifically what we know as the “Wesleyan Quadrilateral” the United Methodist Church’s Book of Discipline states, “Wesley believed that the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience, and confirmed by reason.”

Scripture

Holy Scripture is the table that we all come to sit at in order to talk about theology.

Tradition

“Tradition is the living faith of the dead, traditionalism is the dead faith of the living. And, I suppose I should add, it is traditionalism that gives tradition such a bad name.” - Jaroslav Pelikan

Reason

Reason is how we love God with all our minds

Experience

God is not a subject to be studied as much as a person to be experienced. Theology is the study of how God has revealed himself.