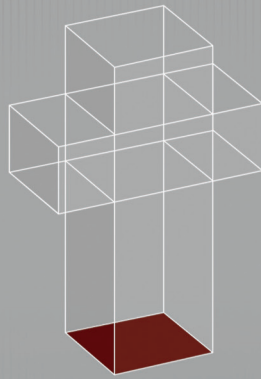


S T U D Y   G U I D E



FOUNDATIONS

AN OVERVIEW OF  
SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

R . C . S P R O U L

S T U D Y G U I D E

# Foundations

An Overview of Systematic Theology

R.C. Sproul



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# What Is Theology?

## INTRODUCTION

There is much confusion behind the word *theology*. While most disciplines such as biology or zoology are commonly understood, the study of God is usually a foreign concept. In this lesson, Dr. Sproul defines the term *theology* as a subject that encompasses all of what God has revealed generally and specially.

## MESSAGE OVERVIEW

- I. What is systematic theology?
  - a. The word *theology* can be understood by dividing it into *theos* and *logos*. *Logos* means “word” or “reason” and *theos* means “God.” Theology concerns the application of logic to God.
  - b. Dr. Sproul spoke at a college and lectured to the faculty on the topic, “What is a Christian college?” On his tour of the campus, he noticed a revealing inscription. The study of theology, not the study of religion, is at the heart of what makes a Christian education.
  
- II. What are some aversions to systematic theology?
  - a. The word *systematic* is often very negative to people. Most are not biased against mechanical systems, but the idea of a systematic way of understanding reality has been opposed by several ideologies.
  - b. As people try to squeeze biblical ideas into preconceived, anti-biblical systems, it is no wonder the Bible does not appear coherent.
    - i. Existentialism
    - ii. Relativism
  
- III. What is the nature of biblical revelation?
  - a. Biblical revelation is the Word of God. It has diversity, but within it there is order.

- i. Unity
  - ii. Coherence
  - iii. Consistency
- b. The systematic theologian depends upon the biblical scholar, for theology is rooted in the details of Scripture.
  - c. Every detail of theology has an impact on every other detail of it.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

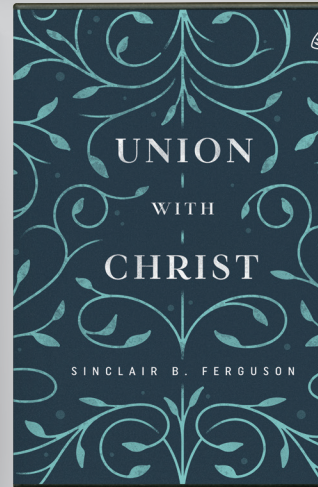
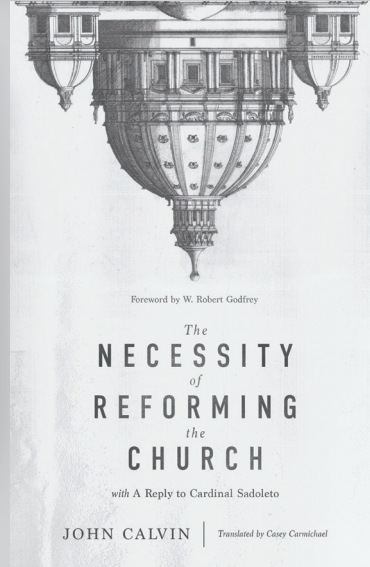
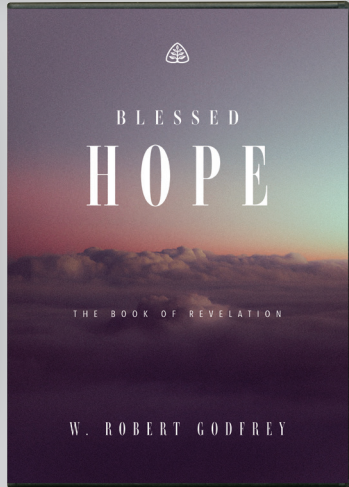
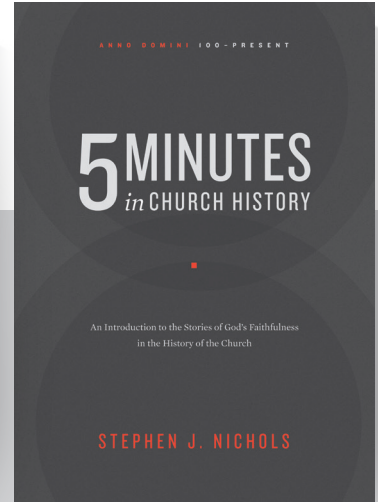
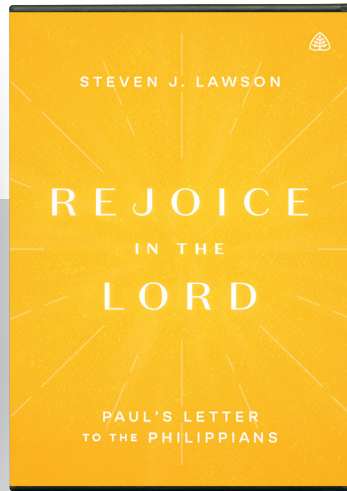
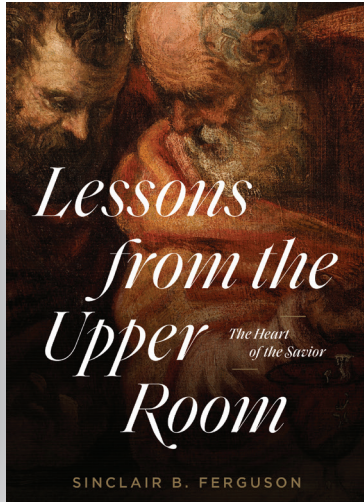
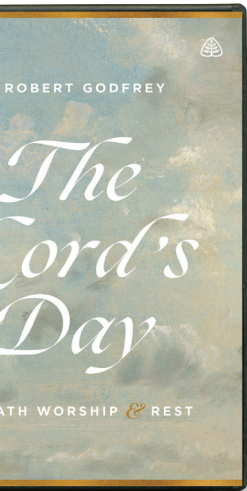
1. What is the definition of theology?
  - a. The study of Christ
  - b. The study of the revelation of God
  - c. The study of God Himself
  - d. The study of the Holy Spirit
2. What is the reason Dr. Sproul gives for why we should study theology specifically?
  - a. Theology is the light by which we see all the sciences.
  - b. Theology is the queen of the sciences and needs to be returned to her rightful place of honor.
  - c. Theology better equips the student to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.
  - d. Theology better captures what religion departments need to be teaching college students.
3. What is the goal of systematic theology?
  - a. To place the Bible into a pre-existing system of thought
  - b. To see how the Bible naturally fits together into an organized whole
  - c. To trace a particular theme throughout the Bible and to see where it leads
  - d. To see what the church has said about the Bible in times past
4. The idea of systematic theology is based on several assumptions. Which of the following was *not* mentioned by Dr. Sproul as one of those assumptions?
  - a. God has revealed Himself in His Word.
  - b. The word of God is living and active.
  - c. God is not the author of chaos; His Word is coherent.
  - d. The Word of God is rationally consistent.
5. Which philosophy has done the most harm to the study of systematic theology?
  - a. Rationalism
  - b. Empiricism
  - c. Relativism
  - d. Existentialism

6. When God speaks coherently, every detail that He says has an impact on every other detail He reveals to us.
  - a. True
  - b. False

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is systematic theology?
2. Why is theology distasteful to many people? Tell of any experiences you may have had with people who were opposed to “anything but the Bible.”
3. What is the nature of biblical revelation?
4. What questions do you hope this series will answer about systematic theology?

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