Biblical Counseling

Lesson #1

Definition & Theology of Counseling

Introduction

A Note of Acknowledgement & Appreciation

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An Outrageous Claim:

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. – 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB)

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. - 2 Peter 1:2-3 (NASB)

I. What is Biblical Counseling?

A. What Biblical Counseling is NOT:

1. Biblical Counseling is not an autonomous ministry.
2. Biblical Counseling is not an activity reserved for the experts.
3. Biblical Counseling is not an optional ministry:
   a. Acts 20:31
   b. Romans 15:14
   c. Colossians 1:28
4. Biblical Counseling is not an entity separate from discipleship. It is *intensive* discipleship.

The Christian Life

B. What Biblical Counseling is:

1. Biblical Counseling discerns thinking and behavior that God wants to change.
2. Biblical Counseling uses God's Word, by the Holy Spirit, to change motives, thinking, and behavior to Christlikeness.
3. Biblical Counseling seeks the glory of God and the benefit of the counselee.
4. Biblical Counseling is "nouthetic" (Acts 20:31, Rom. 15:14, 1 Cor. 4:14, Col. 1:28, 3:16, 1 Thes. 5:12, 14, 2 Thes. 3:15)

The English word “nouthetic” is really just a word borrowed from the Greek language. The Greek word *noutheteo* is a verb which means “to counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct” (BDAG). It is variously translated as *admonish*, *warn*, or *instruct.*

When we say that Biblical Counseling is nouthetic, what we mean is that for counseling to truly be biblical, it must be primarily instructive, warning and admonishing people about sin and training them in righteousness. Colossians 1:28 sums up the process well: “*And we proclaim Him [Christ], **admonishing** every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we might present every man complete [mature] in Christ*.”

What is NANC?

- NANC is the abbreviation for the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors
- NANC is a biblical counseling organization, started in the 1970s by Dr. Jay Adams
- NANC exists today to train and certify biblical counselors
- All those desiring to minister through formal counseling in Grace Bible Church & Granbury Biblical Counseling need to pursue NANC certification

C. A Definition of Biblical Counseling

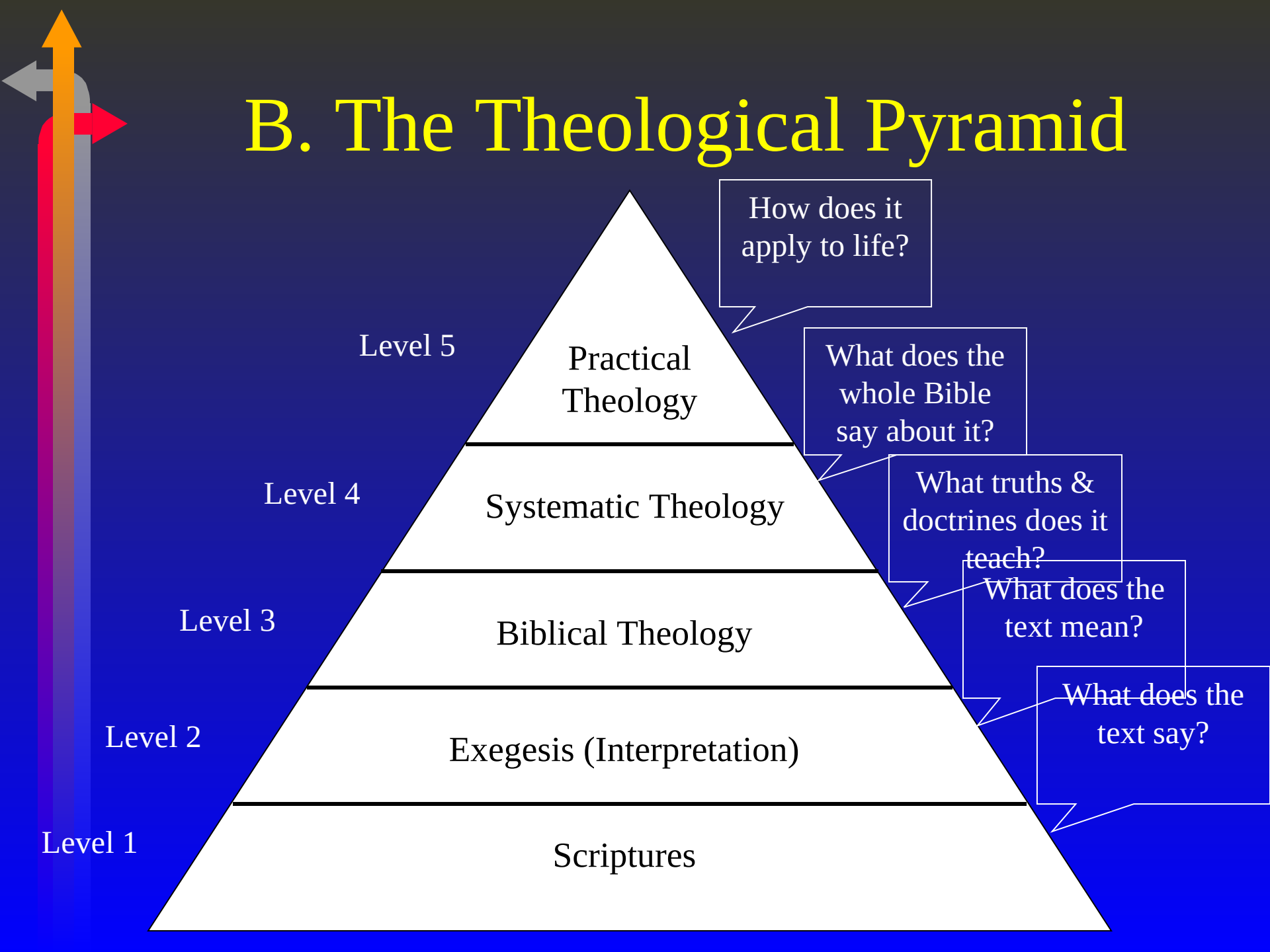
- *Biblical Counseling is the practice of training believers toward greater Christ-likeness through the careful use of the Scriptures for the glory of God.*

II. The Theological Foundation of Biblical Counseling

A. The Foundational Presupposition

1. The inspired and inerrant Word of God (the Bible) is the only authoritative source by which we can know absolute truth. Only the Scripture is totally sufficient to address any issue of life
2. *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.* – 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB)

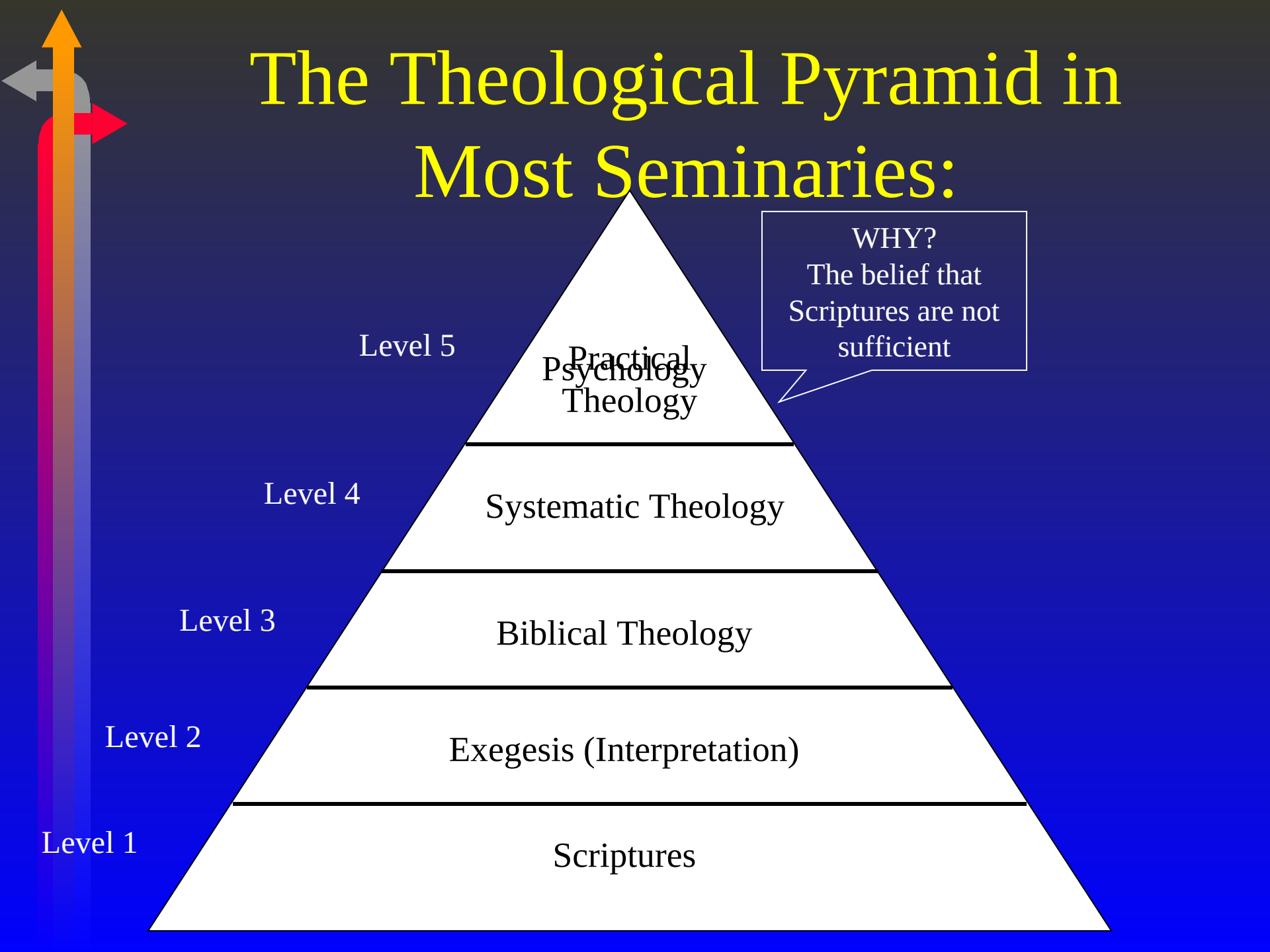
B. The Theological Pyramid



B. The Theological Pyramid

1. Level 5 without levels 1-4 is not *biblical* counseling
   a. Biblical counseling is not just a system of counseling with Scripture sprinkled over it.
   b. Too many people without theological training are telling believers (and the church) how to change and grow. The problem is in *how* they form their models and systems of counseling.
      - Human reason based on observation by unbelievers is unreliable.
      - Jeremiah 17:9 teaches that, as a result of the fall into sin, man's mind/heart was corrupted such that his thinking and reasoning are ultimately unreliable. This is called the noetic effect of sin.

The Theological Pyramid in Most Seminaries:



B. The Theological Pyramid

c. For counseling to be considered *biblical*, Scripture must have an active, functional control on any methods of change and growth believers use.

2. Levels 1-4 without level 5 is incomplete and ineffective

   a. Theology is intrinsically practical. In the Bible, theology is never given in a vacuum. It is always given with the goal of application, change, and growth.

   b. The task of biblical counselors (and believers in general) is to *minister* the Word of God, not to simply throw Bible verses at a problem.

3. In the church today, there is a battle over the sufficiency of Scripture. The battle is over level 5

B. The Theological Pyramid

4. Examples of the Significance of Systematic Theology as a Foundation for Biblical Counseling
   a. Theology – the doctrine of God
      - He is the Creator. Counseling must therefore be theo-centric (God-centered), not anthropocentric (man-centered).
   b. Epistemology – the doctrine of knowledge
      - God defines reality and gives categories of reality – Only God sees the whole picture!
      - If people want a sound mind, they must see things as God sees them and define them as He does.

B. The Theological Pyramid

c. Anthropology – the doctrine of man
   - Man is God's creation
     - He is not an animal
     - He is not a victim
     - He is not a god
   - Man is not autonomous
   - Man is directed by his heart/mind (his mission control center). This is the area in need of change

Mission Control Center

Outer Man

BEHAVIOR

Mark 7:20-23, Matthew 12:34

Inner Man

Proverbs 4:23

WILL

DESIRES

EMOTIONS

CONSCIENCE

THOUGHTS

BELIEFS

Ephesians 4:23

Romans 12:2

B. The Theological Pyramid

d. Hamartiology – the doctrine of sin
   - All people are sinners, born with a bent toward unrighteousness
   - Sin renders people helpless to change themselves
   - Sin leads to many other problems (feelings of guilt and shame, depression, unhappiness, physical problems, worldly "syndromes")

e. Soteriology – the doctrine of salvation

f. Christology – the doctrine of Christ
   - Christ was the second Adam – He is the model
   - Christ died as a substitute for people
   - Christ is Lord – Nothing is needed apart from His help. There is no problem He can't solve. Nothing is hopeless!

B. The Theological Pyramid

g. Pneumatology – the doctrine of the Holy Spirit
   - The Holy Spirit is a person.
   - The Holy Spirit is needed for a person to truly change.
   - The Holy Spirit is needed for a person who is trying to help others change.

h. Ecclesiology – the doctrine of the church
   - The church is the body of Christ – Jesus is the head
   - The body of Christ is the place of worship and sanctification – believers need other believers to grow!
   - The church has authority – it is the pillar and support of the truth

B. The Theological Pyramid

5. Theological Problems with Some Christian Counseling Books & Methods:
   a. Absence of the Holy Spirit
   b. Neglect of the Church
   c. Lack of emphasis on prayer
   d. No commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture
   e. The renaming of sin and the omission of repentance
   f. Man-centered, feeling-oriented, needs-oriented
   g. Psychologized terminology & concepts

C. Four Elements of a Biblical Theology

1. A High View of God
   a. Since God is holy, we should be holy as well.
   b. A failure to have a high view of God leads to:
      - A toleration of sin.
      - A focus on man, evidenced in teaching and programs.
      - Result: the church reflects a man-centered ministry that attempts to please peers rather than glorify God.
   c. Questions to consider:

C. Four Elements of a Biblical Theology

2. The Authority & Sufficiency of Scripture
   a. It has authority – it speaks to every area of life.
   b. It has relevancy – it is totally relevant for every situation.
   c. A failure to acknowledge these truths leads to:
      - A pursuit of comfort rather than obedience.
      - Personal experience becomes the authority rather than God's Word.
      - Contemporary thinking becomes the guide instead of the principles of the Bible.
   d. Questions to consider:

C. Four Elements of a Biblical Theology

3. An Accurate Anthropology
   a. Mankind is totally depraved.
      - On his own he cannot do good (Rom. 3:10-18).
      - His heart is deceitfully wicked (Jer. 17:9-10).
      - His goal in life is selfishness and only evil continually (Gen. 6:5).
   b. Man was created to glorify God, but because of sin, he seeks to glorify himself (Rom. 1:18ff, 3:23).

C. Four Elements of a Biblical Theology

3. An Accurate Anthropology
   c. A sinner is alienated from God, and as a result, he will seek fulfillment from the world's system (1 John 2:15-17). The implications:
      - Christ will not be seen as the only solution to man's problems.
      - People will try to provide substitutes that promise fulfillment.
      - The focus is on dealing with felt needs instead of "real" needs.
   d. So the goal of all true ministry must be to lead people to a greater relationship with God through obedience to His Word.
   e. Questions:

C. Four Elements of a Biblical Theology

4. The Purpose of the Church
   a. The church is the pillar and support of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15).
   b. The church exists to provide a context of loving fellowship with one another for the purpose of mutual edification (Eph. 3:16-19, 4:12-16).
   c. The church is a training center whereby people can grow through the application of teaching and the utilization of their spiritual gifts.
   d. The church exists to evangelize the lost (Titus 2:11-14, Matt. 28:19-20).
   e. Questions:

Homework:

- Read the introduction & chapter 1 in MacArthur. Read chapter 1 in Tripp.
- Memorize 2 Peter 1:3
- Prayerfully select one area of your life that you would like to grow in for your personal project