

Tub Jason Yang
Doing Theology in Context
Who do I want to become as a Theologian?

Who do I want to become as a theologian? To answer this question, I have to understand where I've come from. I was a youth leader in the church and eventually followed the path to a bible college. In Helmet's "A Little Exercise for Young Theologians," I was often reminded of myself. I was an "overgrown youth whose internal organs have not correspondingly developed."¹ After college, I was a young theologian who would fight for certain doctrines and miss the "symphony of witnesses and the fullness of the message."² I lost sight of the transformational heart of Scriptures because I treated the Word only as a textbook. I have seen how this caused more division and pain to His church. We drew lines in the ground and gravitated to people with similar theological beliefs. This has to change. I attributed this to my youth and immaturity. I have missed out on getting a fuller picture of the Author and His grand story.

Summary Statement –

I want to become a theologian who recognizes that the Holy Spirit is my guide and will lead me to uncomfortable places to love others like Jesus Christ. This summary stems from both readings of Adam Needer and Thielike Helmut.

The first part of the summary is the ability to recognize. This season in my life has given me time to reflect on the Author of this journey. There was a period where I questioned the sovereignty of God. I knew the theological doctrine and the biblical stories, but nothing registered when I experienced the loss of my mother and brother. How does God take away a mother who held our family together? How does my brother get inflicted with a disease that only 1 in 10 million get? No words from my closest friends would give me comfort. I often taught about His sovereignty, but I could not feel it in those moments. As time passed, I began to see His bigger picture and not focus solely on mine. I knew the doctrine, but it

¹ Helmet, Thielicke, A Little Exercise for Young Theologians. Ch. 4. Pp 12.

² Helmet, Thielicke, A Little Exercise for Young Theologians. Pp 25.

was not transformational. Going through this period gave me a transformational knowledge of His sovereignty.

The second part of the summary is being led by the Holy Spirit. Needer writes that, “the Spirit is present and active...when and where...to make himself known.”³ The Holy Spirit will guide and lead us in our understanding of Him. Being led by the Holy Spirit will also challenge us to respond. He will take us to places that are uncomfortable. Two years ago, we heard the Lord speak to us to serve overseas and to uproot our family from MN to New York. Our response was to trust in Him. The story of Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac came to mind. The King James Version translates “YHWH-Yireh” as “Jehovah Jireh,” which is translated in English as “the LORD will provide.” The Hmong translation reads, “Tus TSWV npaj tseg.” When I read the Hmong version, it adds more depth into the meaning of Jehovah Jireh. “Npaj tseg” adds the element that God has prepared in advance His provision. The difference is that God will provide in contrast to God has prepared and will provide for you. Prompted by the Holy Spirit to leave, we had no idea where we would live and how we would survive. The Lord has provided a job, home and more than we could have imagined. Slowing down for the Holy Spirit to bring self-awareness and direction is where I want to be. I don’t want to go anywhere, that He is not leading me to.

The last part of the statement is the practice of loving like Jesus. I have seen many times where I get caught up in endless theological debates and lose sight of loving my neighbor. Helmet writes that “theology is a very human business, a craft, and sometimes an art...it can be sacred or diabolical.” My desire is to grow deeper in my experiences and knowledge of him. I want to continue to read His word with a fresh lens of what this means for me. This will overflow into my love for others. Needer ends his article with an illustration of a soccer player, “He becomes invisible so that someone else can become visible. It’s hard to imagine a more vivid parable of self-emptying Christian existence.” This journey of becoming a theologian is not about me, but about Him. The Holy Spirit is my guide. My response is to act in faith and love others the way He has loved me.

³ Needer, Adam, “The Sun Behind the Clouds”