



# Blueprints for Belief

Laying the Theological Foundations for Constructing Your Faith

Introduction to Theology – January 8, 2025

## Theology – “the study of God”

*A system of beliefs and practices, convictions held about God.*

Every Christian has a theology and it’s important to be self-aware.  
*None of us can think about or talk about God without doing theology.*

### Two Extremes:

- “I don’t need theology. It’s divisive and promotes arrogance.”
  - Titus 2:1 – *teach what accords with sound doctrine*
  - Romans 16:17 – *watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught*
- Head knowledge without heart knowledge.
  - 1 Cor. 8:1 – *some “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up*
  - 1 Cor. 13:2 – *if I have all knowledge, but have not love, I am nothing*

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
the Maker of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried;

He descended into hell.

The third day He arose again from the dead;

He ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;  
the holy catholic church;  
the communion of saints;  
the forgiveness of sins;  
the resurrection of the body;  
and the life everlasting.

Amen.

“The Christian is not in that creed saying just how he thinks about God. He is not there giving out a notion of God, nor saying that God has such and such attributes, and that He exists in this and that way. Instead, he confesses...the Christian gives expression to the fact that God is the living and the true God, that He is God as Father, Son, and Spirit, the God of His confidence, to whom he has wholly surrendered himself, and upon whom he rests with his whole heart. God is the God of his life and his salvation.

What the Christian goes on to confess about that God is not summarized by him in a number of abstract terms, but is described, rather, as a series of deeds done by God in the past, in the present, and to be done in the future. It is the deeds, the miracles, of God which constitute the confession of the Christian.” – Herman Bavinck

### **Why Study Theology?**

- Leads to greater love for and trust in God
- Enhances our worship of God
- Protects us from false teaching
- Informs our conscience and helps us make better decisions
- Equips us for ministry and service in the church
- Promotes unity and community around shared values
- Engages the mind
- Connects us to a bigger story
- Humbles us
- Helps us share our faith more clearly

### **How We Form Our Theology**

- At Christ Fellowship, we believe Christian theology should rely entirely on God’s revelation to us in Scripture.
- In other words, our theology is derived from Scripture, not Scripture in addition to other writings or decrees.
- SCRIPTURE → THEOLOGY → PRACTICE

### **Three Theological Influences:**

- Confessional Heritage – historical doctrine of the Church, including confessions, creeds, catechisms, and other writings.
- Present Community – the doctrine of your local church and any other outside influences
- Personal Judgment – your own private beliefs about God.

### **The Dangers of Underemphasizing:**

- Confessional Heritage – ignoring centuries of the Holy Spirit’s work in God’s Church
- Present Community – ignores the need for accountability, easily misled
- Personal Judgment – going through the motions, inauthentic faith

### **The Dangers of Overemphasizing:**

- Confessional Heritage – ignores the need for reform, makes doctrine functionally equal to Scripture
- Present Community – trendy but shallow, this is also how cults get started
- Personal Judgment – arrogance, this is how cult leaders get started