



GROUP GUIDE – MODULE ONE

DEVOTIONAL

Read Philippians 1:9-11

In Philippians 1:9-11, Paul tells the Philippians that he is praying for them, and he tells them the content of his prayer. He asks that their love may abound in knowledge and discernment. Notice how Paul connects Christian love with understanding. And by making growth in both of these to be the focus of his prayer, Paul shows that they are a priority. And the result of this growth is that the Philippians would be able, not only to discern, but also to approve what is most important. In the next verse, he shows that this brings about a lifestyle of purity and righteousness. For Paul, the Christian's affections are not separated from their thought life, which is not separated from their actions.

In the same way for us, ideally, our love should grow in knowledge and understanding. This will aid us to think rightly about all parts of our world and experience. And this, in turn will aid us to live rightly and react rightly to every situation in a manner which is pleasing to God. Too often, Christians don't think well, or they don't connect their thinking with their lifestyle in a way that pleases God. It is so important to connect our affections, our intellect, and our actions together in a mutually reinforcing relationship. The name for this integrated task is theology. Therefore, learning to do theology well is a priority, according to Paul. And good theology will benefit everyone who takes this priority to heart. Please, then, prayerfully consider what it would be like for Paul's desire to be realized in your life. What specific things would change? What difference would it make? And what steps can you take to make it so?

INTRODUCTION

This first module will concentrate on the theoretical underpinnings and necessary values for doing good theology. Because there is such a wide variety of mindsets and assumptions about even the most basic aspects of our lives in the world today, it is helpful to step back and investigate the most fundamental questions. In one sense, questions as basic as "What is theology?" and "Why should we do theology?" are fairly simple and can be answered quickly. However, as we look a little deeper, the answers to these simple questions can diverge into a wide variety of important implications, which will dramatically affect our theology in the long run. That is why it is helpful to build the foundation carefully, so that the rest of the course will be more beneficial. We invite you to examine your fundamental assumptions and work to make sure they conform with God's revelation.

MODULE ONE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this module, the student will:

- Describe the nature, necessity, means and goals of Christian theology.
- Demonstrate a commitment to the priority application of Biblical truth to all areas of life and ministry.

MODULE ONE OUTCOMES

Cognitive Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this module, the student will:

- Describe theology as connecting revelation from God with its appropriate application in life
- Articulate the reasons why the theological task is necessary for Christian life and ministry
- Describe how repentance and faith are necessary for good Christian Theology
- Articulate how good theology leads to worship.

Affective Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this module, the student will:

- Prioritize revelation from God over human wisdom and tradition in doing theology.
- Appreciate the value of theology for Christian life and ministry
- Acknowledge a commitment to trusting God's revelation and changing their own mind, heart and actions to conform to God's revelation

MODULE ONE CHECKLIST

Devotion	<input type="checkbox"/> Devotion Reflection
Preparation	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Kopic pp. 9-37 <input type="checkbox"/> Read Grudem pp. 11-29 <input type="checkbox"/> Watch the Assigned Video Lectures
Reflection	<input type="checkbox"/> Course Material Response Reflection & Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> The Nature of Theology Reflection & Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Theological Task Reflection & Discussion
Research & Presentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Term Project - Part 1
Review	<input type="checkbox"/> Review Slides <input type="checkbox"/> Review Quiz
Application	<input type="checkbox"/> Application Reflection & Discussion Questions

MODULE ONE ACTIVITIES

ONE: DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

Instructions:

The student will read and consider the devotional above. The student will then reflect and write on the following:

- What does the devotional say about the goal and activity of theology? What would a lifestyle of good theology be like for a modern Christian?
- What kind of personal growth do you desire in this area as a result of this course?

The student will be prepared to discuss the devotional with the group and to encourage one another with their findings and insights.

TWO: VIDEO LECTURES

Instructions:

Students will interact with the video lectures on the course website. The student should actively engage with each presentation and not just passively watch. Blank Lecture notes are available on the course website to help the student engage with the Video Lectures.

THREE: TEXTBOOK READING

Instructions:

The student will read and interact with the assigned portions of the course textbooks. The readings are listed on the Reading Schedule for module 1, which is posted in a separate document on the course website. Each Reading Schedule has two columns:

- The first column (labeled “Required Reading”) lists those portions of the textbooks which are necessary information for this module.
- The second column (labeled “Supplemental Reading”) lists those portions of the textbooks which are not absolutely necessary for this module, but which provide very helpful, supplemental information, should the student wish to get more out of this module.

In addition, the reading schedule document contains a study guide for all the required reading sections. The student may use this guide to aid their understanding and retention of the textbook material.

FOUR: COURSE MATERIAL RESPONSE REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

Instructions:

The student will choose one or more items from either the Video Lectures or the Course Textbooks which stood out as personally significant to them. The student will then reflect and write on the item(s); how it/they challenged or added to their current understanding and how their worldview, life and/or ministry should be impacted by their new understanding.

The purpose of this activity is:

- to understand and thoroughly reflect on the course material.
- to internalize and intentionally respond to the what God is teaching you through the course material.
- and to clearly document that the first two have taken place.

The student should feel free to respond in whatever way is most appropriate for how they have been informed/challenged by the course material.

The student will be prepared to discuss their Course Material response with the group and to encourage one another with their findings and insights.

FIVE: THE NATURE OF THEOLOGY REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

Instructions:

This discussion will help you to think through the nature and necessity of theology and how to do it for yourself. You will be exposed to a few ideas about the nature of theology, and process the implications of these ideas as you formulate your own understanding of the theological task. You will be exposed to the holistic nature of Christian theology and challenged that theology is more than just an intellectual exercise. Ideally, you will begin to understand theology as a special kind of knowledge that comes from God Himself, and therefore, you will embrace doing theology with all of your heart as well as your mind, and demonstrate that commitment by adjusting your thoughts and actions accordingly. Ideally, you will see the benefit of theology, both in the nature of theology itself, and in the needs of your own life and ministry.

The student will reflect and write on how their conception of the nature of theology has been influenced by the course material. Ensure the following points are addressed.

- Your definition and attitude toward theology before interacting with the course material.
- How has this understanding and attitude been challenged and/or strengthened?
- Given your definition of theology, how are the primary means of theology appropriate to the task? And why do you think these particular means have been highlighted as most important?
- If it is true that theology demands more than just intellectual faculties, what other parts of your life must you bring to the theological task?
- What difference does this concept of theology make for the way you should think and act in everyday life?

The student will be prepared to discuss their Theology Reflection with the group and to encourage one another with their findings and insights.

SIX: TERM PROJECT – PART ONE

Instructions:

This activity is the beginning of a project that will span all five modules of this course. In this project, you will investigate and write on a theological topic of your choosing, using a method you will learn in subsequent modules. For this module's activity, all you will do is to choose a general category of topic. In subsequent assignments, you will narrow the topic down to a specific question or issue, but for this module, all you should do is choose and report a general area of investigation. Ideally, you should choose a topic about which you are personally curious, or which is currently more relevant to your life and ministry. Ideally, your chosen topic will be both. If you need suggestions or examples of suitable topics, read through the Table of Contents of the Grudem textbook for ideas.

Choose and briefly write out the general topic on which you would like to research and write in future modules.

SEVEN: PERSONAL THEOLOGICAL TASK REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

Instructions:

This journal will help you wrestle with the necessity of theology and come to a conclusion that honors God and brings benefit to your life and the lives of those to whom you minister. Ideally, you will recognize the connection between your thoughts, affections and actions, and you will commit to strengthening your own underlying theological foundation. Ideally, you will plan and commit to attitudes and actions that will help you mature in your discipleship and ministry. Ideally, you will use the content of your theological knowledge as fuel for expressions of affection and gratitude as you contemplate about the character of the Lord, and what He has done.

Write a detailed personal definition of your theological task. Include a thorough plan for your own theological growth. This should include the following points.

- Using the iceberg illustration as a guide, describe the relation between theology/worldview, beliefs, values and actions in your own life. How do they influence one another?
- In your own life and/or the lives of the people to whom you minister, what underlying theology/worldview most urgently needs to be addressed? What changes in beliefs, value and behavior would result?
- What attitudes and actions would benefit your theological growth in areas common to all maturing disciples?
- What attitudes and actions would benefit your theological growth in areas specific to your own personal gifts, callings, and ministries?
- What attitudes and actions would grow your esteem for the Lord and empower greater expressions of worship and sacrificial service for His glory?
- What personal action steps will you take as a result?

The student will be prepared to discuss their Personal Theological Task with the group and to encourage one another with their findings and insights.

EIGHT: REVIEW SLIDES

Instructions:

The student should take advantage of the review slides on the course website in order to help commit the course material to memory. The review slides are a summary of the key ideas of each course lecture put into memorable form to aid memorization. The student should not just attempt to memorize the summaries, but also to use the summaries as a framework to understand and learn the nature of the Theological task.

The group leader may choose to use the review slides as the basis of a group review, possibly including a game/competition format.

NINE: REVIEW QUIZ

Instructions:

The student will complete the review quiz on the course website as a learning and review experience. This will give the student a good assessment of how well they have learned the course material. The quiz will primarily cover material from the Video Lectures, but material from the Textbook Reading may be included.

No notes or study materials should be used while completing the quiz. Because the quiz is randomly generated, it includes different questions each time. Therefore, it may be profitably taken more than once.

TEN: APPLICATION REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Instructions:

The student will thoughtfully consider and write in response to each of the reflection questions listed on the course website. The purpose of this activity is to help the student connect the course material with their own life and ministry. The student should prayerfully think through the difference the course material can make in their personal context.

The student will be prepared to discuss their response to the discussion questions with the group and to encourage one another with their applications and insights. The group may share encouragement and accountability in how to apply these insights.