

# MBC WOMEN'S STUDY

## Class 1: Biblical Counseling and Systematic Theology

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### INTRODUCTION TO THE SEMESTER

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- This semester is going to take the introductory material that we have learned over the past year and start to purposefully place it along side systematic theology.
- By way of review, systematic theology is not placing a system on God or the Bible. It is simply taking all the Bible says about a particular topic putting it together. It tends to be exhaustive in nature.
- Generally speaking, there are **10 systematics** which are studied: Bibliology, Theology proper, Christology, Pneumatology, Anthropology, Hamartiology, Soteriology, Angelology, Ecclesiology, Eschatology.
- In many systematics, there is also a Prolegomena section. This literally means *to say before*. It is a section in systematic theology that lays out the authors presuppositions to his writing.
- This is extremely important to understand as you pick up and read a systematic theology. It is going to lay forth the author's views, how he gets to those views and then how he rightly applies those views.
- This would be the place where one's views on original sin, gifts of the Spirit, deity of Christ, etc. would come out so that you would know what kind of book you are reading.

### How do we get our systematic theology? Why should we care about it?<sup>1</sup>

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- Exegetical theology supplies the building material for the foundation and structure.
- Biblical theology provides the foundational support for the structure.
- Systematic theology serves as the structure built on the foundation.
- **Exegetical theology** involves the methodical organization of Scripture by dealing exegetically with the individual texts of the Bible. This is properly an initial component of both biblical and systematic theology. **As a result, every word, sentence, and paragraph of Scripture is examined in detail.**
- **Biblical theology** is characterized by the organization of Scripture thematically by biblical chronology or biblical author with respect to **the progressive revelation of the Bible**. This is properly a component of systematic theology. It serves as a bridge from exegetical theology to systematic theology.
- **Systematic theology** is the organization of Scripture by a synthesis of scriptural teaching, summarized by major categories that encompass the entirety of God's written revelation. **Systematic theology develops out of exegetical and biblical theology and pulls all the teaching of Scripture together as a whole.**

<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 38.

- We cannot take a teaching from a verse into our systematic theology that has not been brought through our exegetical and Biblical theology.
- We get our teachings, or doctrine, from the Scriptures which we have exegetically studied and put through the lens of Biblical and systematic theology.
- Biblical doctrine, therefore, refers to the teaching of Scripture, whether it be proclamation, expositional, or categorical. That makes all Scripture “doctrinal,” whether it be read, taught, preached, or systematized into theological categories. Systematic biblical doctrine (systematic theology) refers to a categorical summation of biblical teaching that follows normally employed themes or categories.<sup>2</sup>
- **Example:** A counselee is struggling with anxiety...
  - Which systematics would you think about to start to help them get out of this mindset?
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - Which verses of Scripture would you start to think about reading to them?
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- What verses would we not use because they are not exegetically correct for this application?
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- It is important that we are not just using verses that sound good, but that are proper to the application. You will find that you will be using many of the same verses over and over in your discipleship / counsel.
  - This is because while there are many fruits that people struggle with, there are a limited number of roots that they will struggle with in their lives.

## INTRODUCTION FOR CHAPTERS 1 AND 2

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- These first two chapters set the tone for the rest of the book. They are foundational to your understanding of Biblical counseling.
- The two inseparable truths that you must accept for proper Biblical counseling:
  - Theology matters in counseling.
  - Scripture is sufficient for all things and where we find our theology.
- What we believe about God and what He has said will greatly impact how we counsel and what we say to our counselee’s.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 40

## COUNSELING AND THEOLOGY

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- “Most people do not assume the theological nature of counseling. Most believe that theology is what future ministers of the gospel study in seminary in order to be qualified to lead a church or preach sermons or go on the mission field. They do not understand that theology has a serious role to play in helping people with their counseling problems.”<sup>3</sup>
- What we believe about God is directly related to what we think in general and how we act. Therefore, if our thinking of God is not correct, our thoughts and actions are also going to be incorrect.
- When we say *theology*, it is important to understand that it is not just a “study about God” but it is also a study about all that God has revealed to us in the inspired Scriptures.
- This means that the farther we get away from the Scriptures in our counseling, the farther we are getting away from God.
- “Good theology must be contemporary theology.”<sup>4</sup> This means that we should not just study theology for the sake of knowing more about God, but the end goal is to find out how we are to live.
- This is a critical point in the realm of counseling. There are many people who know what the Word says and what they are supposed to do, but they don’t do it.
- Conversely, there are many people who *think* they know what the Word says, they act on it, but they don’t have the power to actually do it.
- These two types of people may be evangelistic opportunities for the counselor.<sup>5</sup> As we talked about last semester, if someone is not saved, they are not going to be able to follow the commands of the Bible.
- We must firstly see to it that they are saved and that they understand their relationship with the Scriptures in their walk with the Lord.
- You may need to fix some wrong thinking (theology) along the way as well.

<sup>3</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 12

<sup>5</sup> This is, as Jay Adams says, pre-counseling.