Why Theology?

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[0:00] Christ, we stand on no other foundation, no other power. We come together knowing we have nothing to bring except the hope that we have found in you.

! So fix our feet on you, Christ. Those of us who have been standing, fix our feet even stronger. And Lord, those whose feet are on sand, would you by your grace bring them to the rock that is Christ. Even this week, increase our faith and increase your glory.
We ask in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Have a seat. How good is that just for your soul already? Man, that is just so good to hear.
Take your Bibles. Open with me to Romans chapter 11. That's good. Romans 11. You may be shocked where we're going.
[1:04] Verses 33 through 36. Now this will be less of an expositional sermon and far more topical. But we will utilize that text within our time. But I just want you to hear again. I genuinely couldn't be more excited to be here with you.

This has been something. You can go look at my prayer journal. I actually don't. That's weird. But you can look at that and see I've been praying for this for years. And to hear you singing, to see us here opening God's word together, to know what we have in store, I am so thankful.
And my heart for you is that this time would be one in which you see a big and glorious God in a way that propels you to want to know him more, love him more, and live for him more.
Hear that. Our heart for this camp, and even if you drill into the theme for this week, is that you would grow in your knowledge of God, your theology, your love for knowledge of God, theology, in a way that shapes your heart and flows out into the way that you live.
So let's talk about that word, theology. What are we talking about when we say theology? And before I even get into that, there may be some of you that as I say that are going, yeah, yeah, I know that.
[2:19] I guess I'll just kind of just wait to get into it until the next session. Can I encourage you to look around and think about who is in this room and realize there are many other students in here who are coming from different places and different levels of study and different opportunities?

How good is it for them to dwell on this subject, these truths? And can I encourage you, brother, sister, to step back and once again be in awe of who God is and the reality that we can know him? Theology, simply, what is it? Theology is the study of God. Theology is the study of God. You can think of your different ologies, right, like biology in relation to life, cosmetology in relation to your makeup, archaeology, what's archaic, ancient, old.
Okay, so theology is as we're looking at who God is. Well, how do we know this? God's people, by his word, by his spirit, strive to know him.
And he has revealed himself to us. He has made himself known and done so with clarity. Take a moment just to marvel at that reality.
[3:35] Like, step back and realize how kind and gracious it is that the God of all creation cares to make himself known. He hasn't done so vaguely or confusingly, but by the spirit done so clearly and profoundly.

Like, that's remarkable and incredible and should drive us to know him. So, yes, in some ways, theology is our study of God, but also it is our knowledge of God or communicated, spoken knowledge of God.
So hear that again. It's our knowledge of God, right? This is consolidated into a term you'll hear throughout this week, doctrine, right? So knowledge of God or communicated knowledge of God. We consolidate what we understand of him into these wonderful doctrines. They're clarified statements about theology. And that's not just boring ideas. Those are unifying, soul-comforting,

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eternally wonderful truths.
Here's a really simple definition from a guy named John Nielsen. In a book he wrote called Knowing God's Truth for Students, He said that theology is God talk. Like, it's just God, it is speaking of him.
[4:50] So when we say theology, all of those apply. It's the study of him, our knowledge of him, us speaking of him. So with that in mind, that God talk in mind, that famous idea you may have heard is vitally important and helpful for us to think about.

Everyone is a theologian. Everyone. Everyone. If you're going to talk about God, when you do, you are expressing your theology. Your understanding of who he is.
So that means you have a choice. You can either be a good theologian or a bad one. You can either be a good theologian or a bad one.
And can I tell you, the reason you're here this week is because those student ministers who care about you want the first one. Like, we desperately want you to be good theologians.
We want you to carry yourself with and believe in sound doctrine. We want you to comfort and fuel your soul for all your days with rich, beautiful, glorious truth.
[5:55] And so that's why that theme, if you saw on some of the posters, of reclaim is the idea to take back, to bring something that was once ours back in front of us. It was over there. Now it's back in front of you here.

And what were we speaking of? We were talking about doctrine. Like, we want to take these foundational, glorious truths, help clarify what they are. That's what we're going to do in all these later sessions and why they matter, and do so in a way that would help you know God more and love him more.
We want to press you deeper. Whether you are in sixth grade or about to step out into what's next, that's what we want to do. It matches Dane Ortlund's purpose statement in his book titled Deeper. Hear this. What he wants, I want you to apply to this week. He says, The point of this exercise is to bring the living Christ himself into sharper, starker contrast, to see him loom larger and more radiant and more glorious than ever before, to trade in our snorkel and face mask for scuba gear that takes us down into the depths we've never peered into before, and to see Christian growth out and seek it out out of an accurate and ever-deepening vision of the Christ to whom we have been united.
That's what we want to do. Why? Because God and his gospel are glorious and worthy of loving with all your mind.
[7:27] Hear that again. God and his gospel are glorious and worthy of you loving with all your mind. Do you hear what I'm quoting there?

You're probably thinking of the great commandment, right? To love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And we tend to mentally gravitate towards heart, soul, and strength. We're like, yes, I'll do it with all that I am, with all that I have. But have you thought about the other one? Your mind, that peanut in your head, that God has graciously given to you, and that you're called to know him and love him with it?
I mean, he commands us to. I mean, think about that again. God and his gospel are glorious and worthy of loving with all our mind.
God, the creator of all things, the Lord of the universe, and his gospel, that gracious God who has wonderfully redeemed a people to himself, they are worthy.
[8:32] They deserve to be loved with all of our intellectual affections. So look down at our verses here. Look at Romans 11, 33 through 36.

This beautiful section that we had read over us, that we sang with one another. Why does Paul land here after 11 chapters?
Like, why do we get into this? It's not out of nowhere. I hope you're a great contextual reader placing verses where they go. Keep that there. But I want you to think of Romans 1 through 11 with me.
Why do we land here? Think of this. In chapter 1, Paul, a servant, an apostle of Jesus Christ, set apart for the gospel of God, writes of this promise and fulfilled gospel seen in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.
And he says, I am unashamed of it. It is the power of God to save all kinds of people. And we need that, for as he presses on, we stand under judgment, just judgment.
[9:33] Why? Chapter 3, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. This gracious God above all the universe shows himself here because there is hope.

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Chapter 4, that promise is realized through faith. We saw this in the past, but more fully and beautifully now. Why? Chapter 5, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Why? For while we were still weak at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly, showing his love for us, and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
The one act of righteousness leads to justification in life for all men. And this should shape us and shake us to the core. Chapter 6 says that. We should run from sin, longing to be instruments of righteousness that sing the glory of God, because we have been released from enslavement to the law.
Our flesh battles with the Spirit, but we have been set free. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. And that leads us into the beauty of chapter 8, walking by the Spirit as children of God, who can, though undeservedly so, apart from Jesus, now cry out, Abba, Father.
[10:51] Like we've been brought into the family, because those whom he predestined, he also called. And those whom he called, he also justified. And those whom he justified, he also glorified. For God has graciously and sovereignly chosen and set his love on his people, called them out of darkness into his marvelous light.

And you land in chapter 10, what marvelous news this is, that whoever confesses with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and believes in their heart that God raised him from the dead, they will be saved. That is good news, good news that must be shared, for how will they hear it if people don't go and preach that good news? And if they do, what will be the result? Chapter 11, people from every tribe, tongue, and nation worshiping the God of all creation.
And then you get to chapter 11, verse 33 through 36, after Paul has shown God and his glorious gospel.
What does he say? Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God.
[12:04] How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways. For who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counselor or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid for from him and through him and to him are all things now and forever.

To him be the glory. Amen. I mean, just look at that again. Go back to verse 33. Think through this rapidly with me. Like, hear how big and glorious God and his gospel are.
Are God and his work precious and wise? Deeply so. Oh, the depth of it. Like the vast bottom of the ocean. Like the glory of God and his gospel makes the Mariana Trench look like a puddle that children play in.
His decisions and his ways, are they like ours? Are they just simple? No, they're impossible to fully fathom. We cannot contain them or wrap our minds around them. They are inscrutable.
You won't investigate them and come to an end. This isn't a simple maze that some of you ran through already many times. They are majestic and infinitely wise beyond comprehension.
[13:09] Why can we say this? For who has known his mind? Who can say, well, this is what he's thinking or what he is doing? Or who can go to him and be his counselor giving him advice?

Or who has given him a gift that he needs to repay them? All of these are rhetorical questions that should have us shouting, no one. No one. For he is far greater and wiser than us.
The omnipotent and omniscient Lord of all creation. We are not his counselor for he knows all things and is the comforter. The one who gives wisdom to his people abundantly. We didn't give him gifts.
He is the giver of all things. Every good and perfect gift. Who is he? He is far bigger and greater than everything.
And so what is the foundation underneath all of that? Look again at the end in verse 36. For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever.
[14:10] Everything came from him. Everything is brought about and sustained through him. Everything exists to glorify his name. Therefore, to him be the glory forever and ever.

For all time may his name be elevated. Step back and just take a moment to think on his greatness. Like all of that, even in my feeble description, should have us in awe. Should leave us trembling in reverence.
Why is this declared at the end of chapter 11? Because the glorious God of all creation has made himself known to us.

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The unsearchable, inscrutable God has with clarity revealed himself to us. He has saved us. Through Christ by the Spirit, he has brought the dead to life to the glory of his majestic name. [15:17] How great is our God. And by his Spirit, we can know him. Yes, all of us. Even if you're saying, well, I don't know about me.

If I can really go into those depths. No, no, this is good news for every, every one of you. It's the Puritan prayer in this wonderful book, if you don't have it.
It's great, called Valley of Vision. It's one of them says, O eternal God, yours is surpassing greatness, unspeakable goodness, super abundant grace.
I can as soon count the sands of ocean shores as number your favor towards me. Hear this last part. I know but a part, but that part exceeds all praise.
That's why Natalie Brand in her book, Priscilla, Where Are You?, this wonderful book encouraging women to dive into theology, but it's good for all of us. She says, to know God, with many others, she says this, to know God is to love him.
[16:18] To know God is to love him. We are called to love the Lord, our God, with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. So why theology? Because God and his gospel are glorious and worthy of loving with all our mind.

Okay, you may still be asking, yeah, yeah, yeah, but is this going that deep? Is that really still worth it? Let's talk about those benefits. Before we do, I want to give you four preliminary warnings. And that's true for this session, but even as we dive into doctrine going forward, here are these four preliminary warnings.
Number one, don't think that theology is only for those who work in the ministry. Don't think that theology is only for those who work in the ministry.
Guys, I have heard this for much of my life, and it's heartbreaking. Someone says, yeah, I don't plan to work in the ministry, so I don't really need to know that theology stuff.
Brothers and sisters, God is God whether or not you work in ministry. You are called to love him with all your mind whether or not you work in ministry.
[17:31] You get the wonderful opportunity to study and know and be encouraged by him whether or not you work in ministry. And please hear from my life. Some of the godliest men and women I know when it comes to theology do not work on staff at a church or a seminary or serve overseas as a missionary.

And they know their God. And they love their God. I want you to hear that, student. We desperately need doctors and lawyers and engineers and accountants and athletes and mothers and fathers and IT specialists and authors and musicians and so much more who cling to and love sound doctrine.
If you can hear me, theology is for you. Warning number two. Be wary of developing pride.
Be very wary of developing pride. You have heard the warning that knowledge puffs up and it can. That doesn't mean it does. It can. As we go, look how much I know.
I've got all this wonderful knowledge of God and his word. I am truly elite and better and righteous. Friends, studying God's word and who he is should humble us and humble us and humble us.
[18:57] As you get to study theology, strive to see it grow your picture of God much bigger and in light of that, your view of how great you are much smaller.

And then as it throws you to the gospel, your view of his love and grace and mercy much, much bigger. Fight pride. Which leads well into our third warning which is fight the tendency to look down on others.
Do you see how these are really tied together? Pride is driving in at you in particular but the third warning as we study theology is fight the tendency to look down on others because we can start to develop unknowingly these dangerous and awful and sinful mindsets of look what I know that they don't.
They don't do that in their church? They went to that camp? They don't take God as seriously as I do? They don't understand this doctrine? What fools they are. Do you see how this flows out of pride?
How it is magnified from this elevation of self to the deprecation and lowering of others? Again, our theology should drive us to humility and it should further have us note that all knowledge of God that we have is a gracious kindness from him to open our eyes to truth.

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[20:15] Now, don't mishear me. Theology matters deeply. How we apply it, practical theology matters deeply. You should care about that and how it unfolds within your church. But be so careful that your growth and knowledge of God and his word doesn't lead you to look down on others who are not there, who may not understand or haven't even had the chance to.

We should learn from John Newton. You probably know the great pastor from Writing Amazing Grace who, he cared deeply about doctrine. If you read about him, you can see that he did. But here's what he said when he was asked, but why do you treat those people who disagree with you so kindly?
He said, I've been 30 years forming my own views and in the course of this time some of my hills have sunk, some of my valleys have risen, but how unreasonable within me to expect that all this should take place in another person and that in just the course of a year or two.
So he's saying, I have spent 30 years studying God and his word and I've landed on this and it is wonderful and vitally important and good. How dare I look down on someone who has just started to wade in there and go, what a fool you are.
Have mercy. Have patience and recognize that should all flow out of the God who had great mercy and patience with you. Last warning.
[21:35] Strive not to merely pursue head knowledge. Strive not to merely pursue head knowledge. Steve Nichols, church historian, helpfully says, theology, theology is not just thinking towards God.

Theology is living toward God. It's not just thinking toward God, it is living toward God. This is not just a chance for you to know more, to have more information.
All that you know of God and his word must and will change the way you live. John Owen was big on this and Mike McKinley in his book Friendship with God summarizes it saying, in John Owen's understanding, you don't fully understand any point of Christian doctrine until it leads you into a closer and happier relationship with your God.
Hear that. That we don't fully get it unless it helps us love him more. This isn't just about you knowing more. It should lead us to love the Lord, our God.
Michael Reeves says it wonderfully. He says, the living God is so glorious and kind. He cannot be known without being adored. Those who truly know him will love him and without that heartfelt delight in God, we are nothing but hollow hypocrites.
[22:52] That adoration of God necessarily works itself out in a desire to grow in Christlikeness. It also fuels a love for Christ's precious bride, the church, and a desire to humbly serve rather than use her.

And lastly, loving God brings us to share his concerns, especially to see his life-giving glory fill the earth. What is he saying?
Knowing God fuels faithful living. Theology fuels faithful living. It fuels the second part of that great commandment of loving the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and then loving your neighbor as yourself.
It flows out of that glorious reality, which leads us into what we really want to talk about. Why should you love and pursue theology?
Why should you love and pursue theology? I want to give you seven reasons. Number one, God is glorious. He is glorious. He is beautiful.
[23:54] He is wonderful, filled with splendor. He is great. He is majestic, life-shaking, world-alteringly incredible. Incredible. And that fails to get it. Like, do you, Christian, know that?

I mean, ask yourself, honestly, have you lost sight of that? Like, think of that passage that we read together again.
Like, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God, unsearchable, inscrutable, all-knowing, omnibenevolent, the one that all is from, through and to, worthy of loving with all your mind, eternally worthy, unsearchably worthy.
Think about something you love. Like, something you just absolutely love. Your favorite hobby or activity or subject, not your favorite person. You're too young for that.
You don't know what the word love means. Think about that thing that you're actually obsessed with. Like, you want to know everything about it. Why?
[24:59] Because you're convinced that it's great. You're convinced that it's amazing. And so, you want to know about it. You want to talk about it. Know rightly about it. You want to dig in so you can

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look at it, listen to podcasts, listen to experts, read books, watch videos, all of it.

It affects your time. It affects your affections, your conversations. Again, why? Because you see it as great. And whether you know it or not, in some ways, you're saying, this thing is glorious.
And I'm convicted myself how easily I do this with soccer. And you may think that's ridiculous because we're in America. But I think it's great. And I would gladly try to convince you of that.
I would try to talk to you about how all the wonderful stuff works, how the league works, relegation, promotion, how the games aren't that long, the fans are incredible, the songs. And why? Why would I do all that? Because I want you to see that it's great.
And I think, think again to that thing for you. God is far more glorious. And it's not even close. Far more glorious.
[26:02] As I say these truths about him, hear them fresh again. Don't let your mind be dulled with these words. Be in awe of them. He is the Alpha and Omega. Like the beginning and end of what?

All things. He is sovereign. Entirely sovereign. Over what? Absolutely everything. He is the omni of omnis.
Omniscient. Omnipotent. Omnipresent. Omni benevolent. He is perfectly holy. Perfectly good. Perfectly loving. Perfectly just. Merciful. Faithful. And it goes on and on and on.
And that holy God has made himself known to us. He has shown examples, miraculous examples of delivering people time and time again.
That's been most beautifully and wonderfully seen in the gospel. Think again to your own soul. With you all claiming to be Christian, that great God, though we don't deserve it, has brought us from death to life.
[27:11] That God has rescued you. And he will carry you in all of life and bring you home for eternity. I shouldn't have to give other reasons. Why theology?

God is glorious. That demands our attention and our affection. Why should you pursue theology? God is beyond worth knowing and pursuing with all that you are. Reason number two. He has called you to. He has called you to know him.
Again, that great commandment to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. You've heard it, so I'm not going to dig into it. But hear this again. That's a command and a call to every one of you. Whether you're in seventh grade or in ninth grade or a graduate or anywhere in between, you are called to love him intellectually.
He has told you to know him, to know him rightly and to worship him because of that. It's not an option or a good idea or a thought for some or a suggestion. No, he is telling you to do this.
[28:17] To do what? To love him with your mind by drinking deeply of his word. Drinking deeply of his word, filling your life with who he is and what he's done.

That may be through your own personal time and God's word through your Sunday schools or small groups or core groups or whatever you would call him. He's calling you to love him with all your mind through taking in the words you're singing and thinking about them.
Like I hope you weren't just singing those words but thinking about what they mean. Like we sing things like his grace is amazing, his mercy is more, he is holy, holy, holy.
What we sang today, my hope is in Christ alone. You're to think on that. He's calling you to love him with your mind by listening well to teaching, hopefully now, but also Wednesdays with your youth group and Sundays, particularly Sunday mornings.
Do you love to be fed by the word on Sundays? Do you treasure that? Do you take good notes not because of the quality of the person up front but because of the goodness of the God who's being spoken of?
[29:20] Do you drink that in that you would learn it and love it and apply it and grow in it? He's calling you to love him with all your mind. How else? By reading and listening to extra and fantastic resources.

Have you actually pressed yourself to learn theology, to know and speak of God outside of church? Are you looking at extra resources? Are you reading good books?
By the way, we have a number of sponsors for this event. You guys will leave with books. We have free books for you. Some of you are like, well, that's great. Some of you are not thrilled, but here, we are equipping you with good resources that you would know him and love him.
He is calling you to know him, to be a theologian, to love him with all your mind. That's wonderful, but it's daunting, right? Well, reason number three that you should pursue and love theology is

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because you can.
Because you can. You've heard me talk over and over. Let's not lose sight of how good it is that God has made himself known to us. He's called you to know him and he has enabled you to know him.
[30:26] You have more access to God's word into good theology than ever before in church history. And he has revealed himself vividly through his word in Christ.

And here, this is the big encourager to you. He has given the Holy Spirit to illuminate us, to provide clarity, the spirit of truth who leads us unto truth. I don't know how to do this. He is the helper.
He is with you. That's part of the gracious gift of the spirit to open your eyes to see wondrous things in God's word, to see him, to know him, to have your heart pierced by the truth of who he is and what he's done.
And you may be saying, well look, I'm not an academic. This isn't as easy for me as others. I just want to give you two just rapid, actually three rapid pieces of encouragement. First, Christian, you have the spirit.
Like don't lose sight of that. He is yours. He enables us to read and learn and grow wisely and faithfully. You're not running into this unequipped. Secondly, you may be thinking, oh I'm too young.
[31:29] No friends, you are not. I've served in a student ministry where my sixth graders were some of my most doctrinally sound students. Sixth graders were diving into the Bible.

That might shock some of you if you know sixth graders who are like, yeah, no chance. I'm telling you, it was wonderful and glorious. Don't sell yourself short. And thirdly, I would say, I know a number of people who would never have considered themselves academics and some of their teachers wouldn't have either, who are some of the most brilliant and wonderful theologians that I know.
Don't sell yourself short. God has called you to know him, equipped you to know him. Hear that today and bolster your soul with that truth because it is so good for you.
Here's why. Number four, why should you love and pursue theology? It protects you from error.
Why should you love and pursue theology?
It protects you from error. We're talking about eternally important error. Right? Knowing what is true helps you not say or believe what is untrue. I mean, is that a big deal?
[32:36] I mean, how would you like it if I told everyone here that your family owned the largest vacuum company in the Midwest and if they asked you rightly, you'd give them each a million dollars? Well, first you would say like, okay, that's silly, but what if they started taking me seriously and coming up to you and asking, you'd be like, hey, stop, and then you would be really upset with me and you'd say, that's not true, that's not me, stop saying that.

If you're gonna keep saying that, it shows you don't even know me. Do you see how much more serious of an issue that would be with the God of the universe? Like heresy, blatant error, declaring what is untrue of God to be true of him is no minor deal.
This is eternally important. It's horrible. The results are false knowledge, false hope, false worship, which is no minor deal at all. Go look at Leviticus 10.
Nate Abedib, who just said, nah, we're just gonna worship how we want, who cares what God said about how we're to worship. What happened? They were consumed by fire. Why?
Because God had revealed himself to his people, he had rescued them, and he had spoken clearly of who he was and how he was to be worshipped, and they said, I don't care. Friends, theology protects you from speaking what is untrue of God.
[33:54] And it also is good for your soul, because that protects you from leaning into false hopes, whether that's health and wealth and prosperity, or he'll never give you something that you can't handle, or he'd never have a part in anything hard or difficult in your life, or he's just love, love, love, love, loving, or he just wants you to be happy, or he changes over time.

Friends, don't believe the lies. Theology helps you know what is true, so dig in and love it. Knowing God's word, reading truths from other Christians who have studied his word, reading from saints of the past who have stood on truth for centuries helps you run from foolishness and stand on solid ground.
Further, number five, why should you love and pursue theology? It sanctifies you. It sanctifies you. Right? It helps you to fight sin and pursue righteousness. God, through Christ, by the Spirit, has opened your eyes to truth, to theology, and that helps you. It purifies you, sets you apart, helps you

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conform more and more to the image of Christ.
I mean, have you thought about that? Like, are you seeking to fight against sin? I love this. idea from Dane Ortlund in that book, Deeper. He says this, one common reason we fail to leave sin behind is that we have a domesticated view of Jesus.
[35:18] That we have a domesticated view of Jesus. You can think of, my students have heard me say that before, you can think of my chubby little corgi that I have at home. I own him. He is in my house.

He is not a wild beast roaming the wilderness anymore. He is domesticated and lives in my house. I am over him. Dane Ortlund saying we have a domesticated view of Jesus.
He says a domesticated view that for all its doctrinal positions, we may understand some of the gospel, but he says it has downsized the glory of Christ in our hearts. We may be struggling to fight sin because we fail to understand who our God is and how problematic our sin is.
in his institute, John Calvin says, our wisdom insofar as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom consists entirely of two parts. So he says sound wisdom consists of this, knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves.
Knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves. So sound wisdom is drawn from knowledge of God, this theology we're talking about, and that theology flows on into your doctrine of man. How does this help?
[36:31] In Gentle and Lowly, Gavin Ortlund says, there's only one way to know we're sinners and that's to have some dim, glimmering conception of God. Like you get just a glimpse of him and you'll realize how unholy we truly are.

But theology frees us from that. It lifts up our eyes from our self-obsession as we see his glory. We're pulled away from the lies of the world to the beauty of the king.
John Piper says this of a particular sin and I'm paraphrasing some but his thought is great. It's true of any sin. He says, there is something about bigness that's something about the beauty of God that helps battle against puny, small, cruddy use of the mind to fantasize about sinful things.
There's something about the glory of God that equips us to fight sin. That's the idea of Psalm 119.11 of hiding his word in your heart. That's not merely so you would know truth statements or dominate at Bible drill but so that you would know the one who stands behind those statements. Sin is so worth fleeing. God is so worth worshiping and when you see him as great and glorious and you as fallen and sinful and then him as merciful and kind then you long to run to him and his word.
[37:57] It aids you in sanctification that then shapes the way you live. Number six, why should we pursue this? Theology promotes evangelism.

Theology promotes evangelism. Often these are thrown in juxtaposition to each other. No, no, think about this. Again, think about the hobby that I expressed I love. Because of my high view of it, I long to speak out of it.
It pours out of me. Think on yours. What hobby or niche interest that you have that you are so prone to want to speak about? Is that true of God and his gospel?
Well, that's where theology plays in. Listen to Michael Reeves in his book God Shines Forth. He says, until we honestly find God to be beautiful and enjoyable, we'll have nothing worth saying to people around us.
Until we see him all right, we'll have no genuine desire to fill the world with the knowledge of our God. And so, on the contrary, when we do, when we find him truly to be beautiful and enjoyable, it will pour out in your speech, in your life, in your passions, in your vocations.
[39:09] I mean, think about the flow of the great commandment. You love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and then it flows out into your love for your neighbors. Like theology, sound doctrine, equips you to care for others.

As you're filled with this, then you cannot help but you're going, you have to hear about the one who made the heavens and the earth. You've got to hear about the one who's sovereign over everything. I mean, everything. You need to hear about this one who takes away sin.
Friend, his mercy is great. He is good and loving and just and holy. You must know, my God, like does that pour out of you? These truths should drive evangelism.
These truths should encourage you as you feel the tension of fear of man. It should help you say, I am unashamed of the gospel for it's the power of God to save and I know who he is. He has the power to save.

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I mean, this truth shapes people and it shapes some people you probably know and I hope it shapes some of you in this room to go and to be missionaries, moving your whole life and your family to where the gospel is unknown so they would hear of God and his glorious gospel.
[40:20] Theology isn't stagnant. It moves us. It fuels us to speak of the one above all to a world that is longing for any hope.

And that leads us to number seven, our last one. Why should you love and pursue theology? Theology equips you for the real world. Theology equips you for the real world.
I cannot encourage anything more to prepare you for the days ahead of you than to know God and know him deeply. I mean it. Really think, who are you walking this life with and for?
I mean, knowing him aids you and encourages you and empowers you and bolsters you, Natalie Brand says that we need theology because truth about God and his gospel fortifies the Christian. Theology fortifies the Christian. It equips you, it armors you up for real life. In your great joys, you recognize he's the gracious giver of all things, that your gifts and talents are from him.
[41:31] In your darkest valleys, you know that he has a purpose in suffering. His sovereign hand in suffering helps you to endure and trust. Like I remember when I lost my dad, people came to me and said, hey, don't worry, God had nothing to do with this.

As if those words were supposed to comfort my soul. Well then how do I know if he has anything to do with anything tomorrow? Or what about next week? Or what about when I'm driving to work? How do I know?
Or I could turn to Psalm 90 and go, his days were numbered. My days are numbered. And we could look at that and know who God is and say, Lord, teach me to number my days that I would gain a heart of wisdom.
Because you see, theology sustains you in the highs and the lows. It gives you wisdom in the best days and the worst days. And it's even more practical day to day.
It helps you handle your education wisely, to honor your parents, to date with wisdom, to make big decisions, to care for your community, to receive compliments, to receive insults, to have little, to have much.
[42:41] You see, without theology, you're hoping in a vague God that you have a vague idea of and hoping it makes you feel vaguely better as you look to vague assurances. With theology, in any and every circumstance, you can say, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

So here, brothers and sisters, theology is for you. So my encouragement is to make the most of this week.
The people coming to speak after me are excellent, brilliant, wonderful. They love the Lord and they love His Word and what it tells them about Him.
Soak it up. Our heart for this week is that you would hear similar to what Kevin the Young hopes for the next generation. He says, we want you to think more deeply about your faith.
We want you, Christian, to realize, like I did, like your leaders did, one day that we have a lot more to learn and what we have to learn is so good for our souls. That's why Stephen Nichols, as he's summarizing the Puritan, William Ames, says this, theology is the good life and theology is happiness.
[43:59] Do you want the good life? Do you want happiness? Be a theologian. So hear my charge as we conclude, summarized to you in the words of Dane Ortlund.

I love this and hear this as application to you. Determine today before God that through the Bible and good books explaining it, you will spend the rest of your life wading into the unsearchable riches of Christ.
For God and his gospel are glorious and worthy of loving with all your mind. Will you do that? Let's pray. Lord, you are glorious.
The depth of your magnificence is humbling to even attempt to proclaim. Lord, forgive me for any failings to honor you and your glory rightly.
But Lord, I pray that your word would be an encouragement to each and every heart here. Lord, I pray for these students. Lord, that they would begin to think now, do they have a big view of who you are?
[45:15] A right view of who they are? And do they have a deep desire to love you with all their mind? Lord, would you remind them of your goodness most beautifully seen in the gospel of Jesus Christ how you have rescued them.

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Lord, that it would fuel them to want to know you and love you and live for you in all of life for the rest of life. May this week be a small bit of time that helps us to do that.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.

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