



UNITY: THE FORGOTTEN TREASURE

ETC Course Handout - Lesson 22

Theology and Doctrine: The Good and the Bad

Course Section	Section 3 - A Unifying Analysis of Our Doctrines
Book Connection	Chapter 19 - Theology and Doctrine: the Good and the Bad
Lesson Aim	Understand the proper purpose of theology and the danger of allowing systems to become shortcuts that bypass Scripture.

Key Scriptures

2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalm 119:97-105; Revelation 21:7; Colossians 2:2-3.

1. The Purpose of Theology

- Theology studies God and organizes teaching so believers can understand, communicate, and defend biblical truth.
- Doctrine is valuable when it helps us hear and obey Scripture.

Notes:

2. Biblical and Systematic Work

- Biblical theology gathers and restates scriptural data; systematic theology organizes observations and relationships among doctrines.
- Both can serve the church when kept accountable to Scripture.

Notes:

THINK ABOUT IT

Does your theological vocabulary help you return to Scripture, or does it sometimes allow you to skip the Scripture itself?

3. The Shortcut Problem

- A system can become a shortcut: once its answer is known, readers may stop wrestling with the biblical passages that support or challenge it.
- Labels can begin to replace biblical vocabulary.

Notes:

4. The Delights of God's Word

- Theology should never rob believers of direct delight in Scripture, meditation, discovery, and worship.

Notes:

5. Dangers of Theology

- Pride, overconfidence, tribal identity, and premature closure can turn a useful theological structure into a barrier to learning and unity.

Notes:

Study & Application

Use these after the lesson and related book reading. The complete chapter study-question set remains in the textbook.

1. What good purposes can theology and doctrine serve?

2. How do biblical theology and systematic theology differ in emphasis?

3. How can a theological system become a shortcut that weakens Bible study?

4. What habits keep theology connected to delight in God and His Word?

KEY TAKEAWAY: Theology is a valuable servant but a poor master; its purpose is to help us know God through His Word, not replace that encounter.

Next: Complete the 7-question Lesson 22 online quiz.