

Systematic Theology for the Local Church
#70—Anthropology—VII¹
The Theology of Masculinity
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April 26, 2009

Helpful for the studies in biblical anthropology are House, section 46, and Reymond, 415-430.

Today both men and women float in a sea of uncertainty about the most basic features of their existence—being male or being female. Men today do not know what it means to be a husband and father in fulfillment of God-given roles. They do not even know what it means to be a man. The same is true on the side of women. In his chapter entitled “Where’s Dad?: A Call for Fathers with the Spirit of Elijah” in the fine book *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, Weldon Hardenbrook pointedly describes the problem in terms of its outcomes in fatherhood:²

Lucille Ball was the first lady of American comedy. Some time before her death she did a remarkable television interview with Merv Griffin, who asked her a very pointed and serious question. “Lucille, you’ve lived a long time on this earth and you are a wise person. What’s happened to our country? What’s wrong with our children? Why are our families falling apart? What’s missing?”

Lucy’s startling yet matter-of-fact reply came quickly. “Papa’s missing,” she said. “Things are falling apart because Papa’s gone. If Papa were here, he would fix it.” Lucille Ball was far better known for her comic performances than for her social insights. But she was right. For so many of the family problems that beset American culture have, at their root, dysfunctional fathers.

I believe that men do not know how to be husbands and fathers because they do not know who and what they are as male human beings.

There are many unfortunate outcomes of the failure of men to carry out responsibly male roles in marriage and the home—broken marriages with a high divorce rate, increased cohabitation without marriage, illegitimacy and increased crime, not to mention the large numbers of people who simply do not know who they are because a man did not fulfill a needed role in their life. Here is an article entitled “Divorce declining, but so is marriage” by Sharon Jayson that describes the problem in terms of marriages and illegitimacy:³

Divorce is on the decline in the USA, but a report to be released today suggests that may be due more to an increase in people living together than to more lasting marriages.

Couples who once might have wed and then divorced now are not marrying at all, according to *The State of our Unions 2005*. The annual report, which analyzes Census and other data, is issued by the National Marriage Project at New Jersey’s Rutgers University.

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² John Piper and Wayne Grudem, Eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, (Wheaton, IL.:Crossway Books, 1991), 378.

³ http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-07-18-cohabit-divorce_x.htm

The U.S. divorce rate is 17.7 per 1,000 married women, down from 22.6 in 1980. The marriage rate is also on a steady decline: a 50% drop since 1970 from 76.5 per 1,000 unmarried women to 39.9, says the report, whose calculations are based on an internationally used measurement.

“Cohabitation is here to stay,” says David Popenoe, a Rutgers sociology professor and report co-author. “I don’t think it’s good news, especially for children,” he says. “As society shifts from marriage to cohabitation—which is what’s happening—you have an increase in family instability.”

Cohabiting couples have twice the breakup rate of married couples, the report’s authors say. And in the USA, 40% bring kids into these often-shaky live-in relationships.

“It is important now to think beyond the divorce rate to other kinds of couple unions and look at how stable they are,” says Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, a social historian and report co-author.

“It’s a pretty short period of time for that change (cohabitation) to have occurred and to have taken hold in the way it has,” she says.

In the USA, 8.1% of coupled households are made up of unmarried, heterosexual partners. Although many European countries have higher cohabitation rates, divorce rates in those countries are lower, and more children grow up with both biological parents, even though the parents may not be married, Popenoe says.

The USA has the lowest percentage among Western nations of children who grow up with both biological parents, 63%, the report says.

“The United States has the weakest families in the Western world because we have the highest divorce rate and the highest rate of solo parenting,” Popenoe says.

While becoming a husband or becoming a biological father may be quite simple, being a successful husband and father carries with it serious requirements. Most family and marriage failures and problems are influenced in some way by a failure of the husband or father. In turn, husband and father failures are in great part failures of masculinity. Hardenbrook describes the failure of men to carry out needed roles in the home:⁴

What is causing young people, particularly boys, to commit so much of the serious crime in this country? There are many reasons, but a key common factor is the absence of the father. “Fatherless families . . . generate far more delinquency and personality disorders than do normal or motherless families,” declares Daniel Amneus. “The ratio of delinquent children living with the mother only compared to those living with the father only is about three to one.”⁵

Psychologists and sociologists have been surfacing with evidence that identifies a new kind of disordered personality among these child criminals: a desensitized, almost passionless youth who has no feelings, no compassion toward those whom he strikes out against, no remorse. Thus we see such shocking phenomena as violent sexual crimes perpetrated by children against other children.

⁴ *Recovering*, 381.

⁵ Daniel Amneus, *Back to Patriarchy* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1979), 35.

Hardenbrook provides a letter written to him by a friend. I believe that it captures all too well the problem of the lack of responsible masculinity as seen in the life of a missing father.⁶

The kids are in bed. There's nothing on TV tonight. I ask my husband if he minds if I turn the tube off. He grunts. As I walk to the set my mind is racing. Maybe, just maybe tonight we'll talk. I mean have a conversation that consists of more than my usual question with his mumbled one-word answer or, more accurately, no answer at all. Silence—I live in a world with continuous noise but, between him and myself, silence. Please—oh God, let him open up. I initiate (once again; for the thousandth time). My heart pounds—oh, how can I word it this time? What can I say that will open the door to just talk? I don't have to have a DEEP MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION. JUST SOMETHING! As I open my mouth—he gets up and goes to the bedroom. The door closes behind him. The light showing under the door gives way to darkness. So does my hope. I sit alone on the couch. My heart begins to ache. I'm tired of being alone. Hey, I'm married. I have been for years. Why do I sit alone? The sadness undergoes a change slowly—then with increased fervor I get mad. I AM MAD. I am sick and tired of living with a sissy. A wimp—a coward. You know, he's afraid of me! Hostile, you say. You better believe it. I'm sick and tired of living in a world of passive men. My two sons like sports. They're pretty good. They could be a lot better if their Dad would take a little of his precious time and play catch with them. (I'm sorry, catch once a year at the church picnic doesn't quite make the boys into great ball players.) But Dad's too busy. He's at work. He's at the health club. He's riding his fourwheeler. He's working on the car. He's playing golf. He's tired. He's watching a video movie. So who plays catch with my boys? Me. My husband says, "You shouldn't be playing men's sports." So who's going to do it? He says he will. But he doesn't. Remember? He's too busy. Satisfying himself doing what he likes. . . . So my poor sons have to be second-rate in sports. They could have been good. Really good. Yeah—I'm mad. My daughter is a teenager. She likes boys. They notice her. They pay attention to her. She responds. I know what's coming. I try to talk to her. But it's not me she wants. It's Dad. Yeah, Dad! If he'd just hug her, notice her, talk to her—just a little—she wouldn't need those boys so much. But no . . . so she turns elsewhere for attention and love. And there's nothing I can do. A mom isn't enough. Kids need a father. And not just a body, a passive, silent presence. And here's the killer. My husband's father did the same number on him. Didn't hug him. Didn't take him to anything, let alone watch his baseball games. And he HATES his father. Now my husband's doing the same thing. Will our sons grow up to be passive? Will they be cowards?

I am a firm believer in the principle of not re-inventing the wheel. The treatment of masculinity by John Piper entitled "A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible"⁷ in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* is something I cannot improve on. So in this study I will provide his outline for what biblical masculinity is, along with my own explanations or expansions of his main points. I encourage you to read his article.

Key passages

First, here are the key biblical passages that the principles of masculinity are found in:

Eph. 5:22-33

²² Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits

⁶ *Recovering*, 385-86.

⁷ *Ibid*, 31-59.

to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—³⁰ for we are members of his body.³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

1 Tim. 3:1-13

3 Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.² Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.⁴ He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect.⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?)⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.⁸ Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.⁹ They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.¹⁰ They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.¹¹ In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.¹² A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.¹³ Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

1 Cor. 11:2-16:

² I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you.³ Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.⁴ Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head.⁵ And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is just as though her head were shaved.⁶ If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head.⁷ A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.⁸ For man did not come from woman, but woman from man;⁹ neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.¹⁰ For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.¹¹ In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.¹² For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.¹³ Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?¹⁴ Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him,¹⁵ but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering.¹⁶ If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God.

1 Tim. 2:8-13:

⁸ I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. ⁹ I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, ¹⁰ but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. ¹¹ A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. ¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. ¹⁵ But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

1 Pet. 3:1-7:

3 Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, ² when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. ³ Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. ⁴ Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. ⁵ For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, ⁶ like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

⁷ Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

The definition and its explanation

Piper begins with definitions of masculinity and femininity, then treats each feature in detail:⁸

At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships.

At the heart of mature femininity is a freeing disposition to affirm, receive and nurture strength and leadership from worthy men in ways appropriate to a woman's differing relationships

Here are the key features of his definition of biblical masculinity:

1. *Mature*—This indicates the need for a pattern of growth. Notice in the requirements for an elder (who is certainly a model for all men) that there is the implication that a man should strive to grow into matching in his life what an elder should be and do. In other words, if he is not there yet, he should move toward the goal.

2. *Benevolent*—This indicates that a man's responsibility toward women is for their good and rules out selfish control of women. With this and many other features of the definition, we need to keep in mind that a man carries out his masculine roles to different degrees toward different women. A man is certainly to be most benevolent toward his wife. This is found at its clearest in Eph. 5, where his benevolence is to be patterned after the self-sacrifice of Christ:

⁸ Piper and Grudem, 29ff.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

3. *Responsibility*—This captures the idea that a man has a God-given obligation toward women. The many commands in the key passages should remind us that responsible action is inherent in biblical masculinity.

4. *Lead*—This is certainly not pushing or domineering, but living out a role of helpful guidance toward solving problems or meeting needs. Responsible leadership is found in most of the key passages, and in 1 Tim. 3 we find leadership with respect to a wife and children linked with leadership in the local church. Piper considers this feature of masculinity to be so important that he adds several sub-points:

a. *Mature masculinity expresses itself not in the demand to be served, but in the strength to serve and to sacrifice for the good of woman.*

This is part of the giving of self after the pattern of Christ, as seen in Eph. 5.

b. *Mature masculinity does not assume the authority of Christ over woman, but advocates it.*

This relates to Eph. 5:23 and means that the man does not have the rights Christ does toward women. The husband is the head of the wife, but she is still answerable to God. The husband acts on behalf of Christ for her.

c. *Mature masculinity does not presume superiority, but mobilizes the strengths of others.*

Piper comments:⁹

The aim of leadership is not to demonstrate the superiority of the leader, but to bring out all the strengths of people that will move them forward to the desired goal.

In Ephesians 5:28-29 the wife is pictured as part of the man's body as the church is part of Christ's body. So in loving his wife a man is loving himself. This is clearly an application to marriage of Jesus' command, "Love your neighbor as yourself." This rules out a leadership that treats a wife like a child. A husband does not want to be treated that way himself.

Moreover Christ does not lead the church as his daughter but as his wife. He is preparing her to be a "fellow-heir" (Romans 8:17), not a servant girl. Any kind of leadership that in the name of Christlike headship tends to produce in a wife personal immaturity or spiritual weakness or insecurity through excessive control or picky supervision or oppressive domination has missed the point of the analogy in Ephesians 5. Christ does not create that kind of wife.

d. *Mature masculinity does not have to initiate every action, but feels the responsibility to provide a general pattern of initiative.*

A husband does not need to do all the decision making, thinking and planning in a marriage. But his general bent will be to be responsible to see that what needs to be done gets done.

⁹ Ibid, 39.

e. *Mature masculinity accepts the burden of the final say in disagreements between husband and wife, but does not presume to use it in every instance.*

f. *Mature masculinity expresses its leadership in romantic sexual relations by communicating an aura of strong and tender pursuit.*

This is certainly an outworking of a husband's self-giving interest in his wife seen in Eph. 5. Jesus' pursuit of sinners is the pattern for a husband's love interest in his wife.

g. *Mature masculinity expresses itself in a family by taking the initiative in disciplining the children when both parents are present and a family standard has been broken*

In 1 Tim. 3 a man is qualified to be an elder if he manages his own family well. This includes his leadership in discipline.

h. *Mature masculinity is sensitive to cultural expressions of masculinity and adapts to them (where no sin is involved) in order to communicate to a woman that a man would like to relate not in any aggressive or perverted way, but with maturity and dignity as a man.*

This involves such things as a man's sensitivity to how he dresses, appropriate following of customs (such as opening doors for a woman).

i. *Mature masculinity recognizes that the call to leadership is a call to repentance and humility and risk-taking.*

Too many men have been overbearing and domineering and have neglected their wives. Ephesians 5:25-26 teaches that a husband is to cultivate and cherish his wife. Here is part of Piper's explanation of this:¹⁰

We should humble ourselves before God for our failures and for the remaining tendency to shirk or overstep our responsibilities. The call to leadership is not a call to exalt ourselves over any woman. It is not a call to domineer, or belittle or put woman in her place. She is, after all, a fellow-heir of God and destined for a glory that will one day blind the natural eyes of every man (Matthew 13:43). The call to leadership is a call to humble oneself and take the responsibility to be a servant-leader in ways that are appropriate to every differing relationship to women.

It is a call to risk getting egg on our faces; to pray as we have never prayed before; to be constantly in the Word; to be more given to planning, more intentional, more thoughtful, less carried along by the mood of the moment; to be disciplined and ordered in our lives; to be tenderhearted and sensitive; to take the initiative to make sure there is a time and a place to talk to her about what needs to be talked about; and to be ready to lay down our lives the way Christ did if that is necessary.

5. *Provide for*—Biblical teaching on this is found in 1 Tim. 5:8:

If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

This does not exclude a woman's contributing to the family's income, as shown, for example, in Prov. 31. But it does mean that the husband is to assume his role as the main provider.

¹⁰ Ibid, 42.

6. *Protect*—We find this in the tender care of a husband for his wife in Eph. 5, as well as 1 Pet. 3:

⁷ Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

Certainly this also includes taking the lead in protecting a woman from physical danger. This may extend to protection for women that a man might not even know, as Piper says:¹¹

Women and children are put into the lifeboats first, not because the men are necessarily better swimmers, but because of a deep sense of honorable fitness. It belongs to masculinity to accept danger to protect women.

6. *Women*—As already indicated, a man’s masculinity varies depending on the kind of relationship a man has with a woman—from marriage to the workplace to meeting a woman on the street. This is stated specifically in the next part of the definition of masculinity.

7. *In ways appropriate to a man’s differing relationships*—Just as Eph. 5:22, Tit. 3:5 and 1 Pet. 3:1, 5 refer to women relating to their “own” husbands, so also a man leads and protects women to different degrees.

I could not write a conclusion to this topic of biblical masculinity better than the one Piper provides at the end of his treatment of the subject:¹²

If I were to put my finger on one devastating sin today, it would not be the so-called women’s movement, but the lack of spiritual leadership by men at home and in the church. Satan has achieved an amazing tactical victory by disseminating the notion that the summons for male leadership is born of pride and fallenness, when in fact pride is precisely what prevents spiritual leadership. The spiritual aimlessness and weakness and lethargy and loss of nerve among men is the major issue, not the upsurge of interest in women’s ministries.

Pride and self-pity and fear and laziness and confusion are luring many men into self-protecting, self-exalting cocoons of silence. And to the degree that this makes room for women to take more leadership it is sometimes even endorsed as a virtue. But I believe that deep down the men—and the women—know better.

Where are the men with a moral vision for their families, a zeal for the house of the Lord, a magnificent commitment to the advancement of the kingdom, an articulate dream for the mission of the church and a tenderhearted tenacity to make it real?

When the Lord visits us from on high and creates a mighty army of deeply spiritual men committed to the Word of God and global mission, the vast majority of women will rejoice over the leadership of these men and enter into a joyful partnership that upholds and honors the beautiful Biblical pattern of mature manhood and mature womanhood.

¹¹ Ibid, 43.

¹² Ibid, 53-54.

Questions for Further Study

1. What difficulties do you feel a Christian man faces today in carrying out biblical commands concerning manhood?
2. If you are a man, what things do you wish Christian women would do differently to make it easier for you to carry out the biblical male role?
3. One of the prime requirements for a husband is communicating well. Is this difficult for men?
4. A husband must be a nourisher and cherisher of his wife. What is involved with this?
5. How can Christian men help each other to better fulfill their biblical manhood role?
6. When does a husband yield to his wife's input regarding a decision and when not?
7. Whether you are a man or a woman, what godly men have had an impact on your life? What specific biblical practices and principles have they exemplified in their lives? (Use Scripture.)
8. Where have you seen failures of men to obey biblical teaching about what a man should be?
9. How should a Christian man seeking to follow biblical commands go about finding a wife?

Running compilation of key definitions

1. Systematic theology: The organized presentation of all that the Bible teaches about God and His works.
2. Exegesis: The actual practice of studying or interpreting a document or other message to determine its meaning.
3. Context: Context in a document or utterance is the surroundings of a portion of a word, a word, or a group of words.
4. Bibliology: The doctrinal study of the nature of the Bible.
5. Biblical authority: The quality inherent in Scripture by virtue of which human beings are completely answerable to its content.
6. Revelation: The information about Himself given by God to human beings.
7. General revelation: God's disclosure of Himself, available directly to everyone, given through means other than dreams, visions, direct words and Christ Himself.
8. Special revelation: The disclosure of information from God that is not available directly to all human beings.
9. Inspiration: A term applied to the Bible denoting that it is the product of God's creative activity, figuratively breathed out from Him (2 Tim. 3:16); applies to the process of recording Scripture, not specifically to the people involved; actually, *expiracion* would be a better term to reflect the concept of 2 Tim. 3:16; the result is *inerrancy*.
10. Textual criticism: The science and art of attempting to discover the original text of a literary work for which the original document does not exist. It is especially important for biblical studies, and the foundational endeavor to all subsequent investigation of the Scriptures.
11. Canon: Transliterated from a Greek Word meaning 'standard'; as used of the Bible, it refers to books authenticated as possessing divine origin and therefore authoritative; the Jewish canon consists of thirty-nine books, the Protestant of sixty-six and the Catholic of eighty (including apocryphal books).
12. Inerrancy is a term applied to the Bible, although not specifically found in it; it denotes that the Bible, as originally written, possessed no humanly induced deviations from the message God intended to be recorded and that it is true in every respect; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Cor. 2:13; 1 Pet. 2:19.
13. Infallibility: Although some assert that this term has a different meaning from inerrancy, the two terms are, for purposes of biblical study, synonymous; the Bible is infallible because inerrant, and inerrant because infallible.
14. Illumination is the teaching ministry of the Spirit of God that imparts understanding of the message of Scripture to the believer; not to be confused with inspiration, which in the Bible is used of the work of God in giving Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16); 1 Jn. 2:20; Jn. 16:13.
15. Spirituality: God is not physical, but immaterial, incorporeal, invisible and alive.
16. Self-existence/Aseity: God exists independently of anything else. He is self-existent.
17. Immensity: God is infinite in relation to space.
18. Eternality: God is infinite with regard to time.
19. Simplicity: God is not a plurality and cannot be looked at as divisible into parts.
20. Pure actuality: There is nothing about God that is potential. He is not unfinished in any way.
21. Necessity: God is uncaused and exists because he must exist.
22. Immutability: God is unchanging and unchangeable.
23. Impassibility: God is incapable of being changed or disturbed by what he experiences and is incapable of suffering.
24. Transcendence: God and the world are distinct; he is not part of the world, and the world is not part of him.
25. Immanence: God is present in the world.
26. Infinity: There are no limits to God's person and his perfections.
27. Omnipotence: God can do whatever he wills.
28. Omniscience: God knows everything there is to know.
29. Omnipresence: God is present everywhere in his creation
30. Holiness: God is morally pure and separated from all moral evil and sin.
31. Goodness: A quality that describes or includes his love, benevolence, mercy and grace
32. Truth: God's person, actions, knowledge and revelations correspond to reality
33. Love: God's continual communication of himself to his creatures.
34. Benevolence: God's goodness toward his creatures.
35. Mercy: God's goodness toward those who are helpless.
36. Grace: God's goodness toward sinners.
37. Glory: The greatness of God's perfections.

38. Trinity: There is only one true God, existing as a single Being comprised of three Persons who are equal in every way, yet distinct in their tasks and relations to humanity.
39. God's decree: The decree of God is his plan for the universe that includes all things and is certain to come to pass.
40. Providence: God's care for and upholding of his creation.
41. Sovereignty: God's control over his universe.
42. Christology: The study of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
43. Incarnation: The joining of deity and humanity in one person forever. The word is based on the Latin word for flesh: the Lord Jesus Christ is God joined with human flesh.
44. Pre-existence: Used of the Son, it means that he existed before Bethlehem.
45. Theophany: An appearance of God.
46. Christophany: An appearance of Christ.
47. Priesthood: The system that God established to remedy the problem of alienation between a holy God and sinful human beings.
48. Son of God: A name for Jesus that describes his deity and his approval by the Father at the resurrection.
49. Son of Man: A messianic name for Jesus that emphasizes his humanity backed by deity and his role of taking humans to God through suffering and humiliation.
50. Messiah: A transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning 'anointed one'; used of the expected national deliverer of Israel; the linguistic equivalent of Greek *christos*, 'Christ'.
51. Efficacious grace: Efficacious grace is the working of God in an individual that cannot be thwarted and that leads that person to faith in Christ. It is also described as effective calling and irresistible grace.
52. Regeneration: Regeneration is the unseen and unfelt work of the Holy Spirit that overcomes depravity and brings spiritual life and the capacity to please God and exercise faith.
53. Spirit baptism is the nonphysical act of the Spirit of God that places a believer in the Body of Christ and makes him a partaker, along with all other believers, of the work and merits of Christ; should be distinguished from filling, sealing, and indwelling; cannot be felt or noticed, and hence must be appropriated by faith; there is no warrant in Scripture for assuming a second act of God for power, a 'baptism,' after salvation.
54. Sealing is a guarantee that the believer will persevere in Christ all the way to entrance into heaven, when God completes his work of purchasing the individual. It begins at the moment of salvation when the Father places the Holy Spirit in the believer for permanent indwelling. It is unseen and unfelt and should result in praise and obedience to the Spirit.
55. Indwelling is the spiritual presence of the Holy Spirit in every individual who has placed personal trust in Christ as Savior. Described in Jn. 14:17, this is the basis of His other ministries to the believer, such as sealing, anointing and filling and establishes the believer as a part of the spiritual temple that God is building today.
56. The filling of the Spirit is 1) A constant characteristic of a believer's life that consists of regular control by the Spirit that produces Christlikeness through Scripture; 2) A special enablement at particular times for service during the first century.
57. A spiritual gift is a God-given ability for service.
58. A cessationist (with regard to spiritual gifts) is a person who holds that the miraculous gifts are not present in the Church today as part of God's plan.
59. A continualist (with regard to spiritual gifts) is a person who holds that the miraculous gifts are present in the Church today as part of God's plan.
60. An angel is an individual, personal spirit being originally created by God to assist him in his plan for saving the elect.
61. The cosmos is Satan's organized spiritual system, in rebellion against God.
62. A demon is a fallen angel that is free to assist in carrying out Satan's plan of opposition to God.
63. Biblical anthropology is the study of what the Bible teaches about the nature and purpose of human beings.