

Deep Dive Bible Study Syllabus

Proverbs 2:1-6 NKJV - My son, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you, ²So that you incline your ear to wisdom, And apply your heart to understanding; ³Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding, ⁴If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; ⁵Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, And find the knowledge of God. ⁶For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding

Why this study?

Reason	Scripture Reference	Text
To gain deeper biblical wisdom which is inseparable from prudence, discretion and knowledge.	Proverbs 8:12 ESV	<i>I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion.</i>
We understand the source and character of that which we seek to gain and image.	James 3:17 ESV	<i>But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.</i>
We are “wired” this way. To be prepared and trained up for “task” assignment	Romans 12:4-5 ESV	<i>⁴For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.</i>
We are well sourced to teach and learn from each other	Romans 15:14 ESV	<i>I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.</i>

This study is founded on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Without His direction, it will fade and lose its purpose. It is ours to shape together. While our discussions will be rooted in biblical truth, we will remain mindful of the seriousness and responsibility that come with handling God’s Word.

By design, this study will differ in content and structure from a standard Bible study. We will address weightier matters—topics not often explored in broader studies that must accommodate a wide range of interests and varying stages of spiritual maturity.

In short, this study is for those who desire to dig deeply into the riches of Scripture and to do so alongside brothers in Christ who share the same passion.

OBJECTIVES: To know God on His own terms. Knowledge deepens and strengthens our gifted faith, increases our wisdom and discernment which compels us to greater reverence and loyalty to our Triune God and drives us to reflect His image as fully as possible, so that others may come to know our Lord on His terms.

ACKNOWLEDGED LIMITS: Humans are on a “need to know” basis by our Triune God, yet all that we need to know is readily available in Scripture. There will be areas of “*adiaphora*” we must

acknowledge, mysteries we do not understand and legitimate theological positions that live within the biblical fences of Trinitarianism but may differ from one person to the next in nuanced areas.

PARTICIPANT PARAMETERS:

1. To facilitate full participation this study will be limited to 8 Christ followers.
2. All must hold to the essential tenets of Protestant theology such as described in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, 381 AD. Note: the word “catholic” in the creed signifies one single, universal Church that belongs to all Christians in every place and every age, not a denomination headquartered in Rome. The non-negotiables include Trinitarianism, deity of Christ, the incarnation, the resurrection, salvation thru Him alone, final judgment and His return.
3. The topics to be studied will require a more academic approach than typical Bible studies. Therefore, participants will need;
 - a. To have previous adequate familiarity and time spend in the Old and New Testament
 - b. Spiritual maturity in their journey with Jesus
 - c. A firm grasp on the essential tenets of the faith.

Assumptions will be made that these prerequisites are present so that we can pursue the deeper insights found in scripture. This is analogous to a 300-level class in a university with prerequisites of 100 & 200 level related classes having been completed.

4. Each participant must:
 - a. Be willing and able to prepare a study on any one of the topics the group decides is a beneficial area of exploration.
 - b. Teach a study and facilitate discussion.
 - c. Be able to operate in a “learner” mode as well teacher mode. With a group of type “A” individuals, all with great insights to offer, good minds, and passion, we must guard against “pontification” to mitigate diminished participation and contribution by others.

STUDY DESIGN:

1. Date: The study will occur on the last Friday of every month
2. Time: 6PM – 8PM (end time could expand or contract as required)
3. Location: Greg Felix’s house. 14707 Costa Mesa Dr. La Mirada, CA.
4. Teaching:
 - a. All participants will at some point teach a session. Each participant likely has their own personal preferences of how to present material. There is no standardized format as content is the important matter, not form or style. Based on the attendees invited the content is certain to be coherent, organized and following a logical thought flow.
 - b. The teacher will take the first 2 week of the month to prepare his material.
 - c. Ideally it is emailed to the group at the end of the second week but no later than the end of the 3rd week.
5. Learning:
 - a. We will all be students and actively interacting with the material therefore the expectation is that each participant has read the distributed material and comes prepared with comments, questions, insights, etc. so that we get to the discussion part of the session quicker and devote adequate time to learning from each other with God’s word anchoring us in accuracy and precision.

SUGGESTED STUDY TOPICS

Assumptions:

1. The following topics all pertain to Reformation Theology to the exclusion of Roman Catholicism, Mormonism, Jehovah Witnesses, and all non-Christ based theological systems, and world religions.
2. For the sake of mental overhead reduction and efficient time utilization, to the extent possible, we will avoid overuse of Latin terms Biblical Academicians and Scholars use to describe many of these topics.
3. The topics suggested below are exhaustive but are provided to convey a sense of the “weightier” topics we might wish to tackle. These biblical concepts are suggested because they require deep study, but the group may elect to add more. They are challenging, will stretch our minds, promote spiritual growth and bring us to a closer knowledge of God on His terms because they:
 - Involve divine eternity vs. human temporality
 - Balance apparent paradoxes (sovereignty/freedom, already/not-yet)
 - Demand precise distinctions foreign to modern categories
Requires understanding of the integration and absolute harmony of God’s attributes
 - Requires sharpened hermeneutics, harmonization, literary styles, semantics and grammar
 - Evaluation of internal and external evidence
 - Involves the cultural context and influence of the time the text was written
 - Presents tension between inaugurated and future fulfillment
 - Challenges us to consider Eschatological positions (Dispensational vs Covenant)

Here is a subset of suggested topics taken from a larger set from which we may wish to tackle. Ideally, as a group, we agree on twelve topics from this or the broader list that follows it.

1. **Supralapsarianism vs. Infralapsarianism** The logical order of God’s eternal decrees (decretive will) example; predestination before or after the decree to permit the Fall. Requires untangling divine causality, time, and human freedom in eternity. Requires understanding the distinctions of God’s decretive will vs preceptive will.
2. **The Communication of Attributes** How Christ’s divine and human natures share properties without mixing (e.g., the finite human nature containing the infinite divine).
3. **Limited Atonement (Definite Atonement)** Whether Christ died effectively only for the elect or sufficiently for all but efficiently for the elect. Involves parsing intent vs. extent in the atonement’s design.
4. **The Extra Calvinisticum** The Reformed doctrine that the Logos exists beyond (extra) the incarnate flesh, even during Christ’s earthly life.
5. **Covenant of Redemption** An intra-Trinitarian pact before time whereby the Father appoints, the Son undertakes, and the Spirit applies redemption. Abstract and speculative; not explicitly scriptural.
6. **Irresistible Grace (Effectual Calling)** God’s grace cannot be finally resisted by the elect, yet humans act voluntarily. Reconciling divine sovereignty and human responsibility without coercion.

7. **The Perseverance of the Saints in Light of the Warning Passages** How Hebrews 6:4–6 and similar texts warn believers without implying true saints can fall away. Requires nuanced exegesis of “appearance” vs. reality.
8. **The Visible/Invisible Church Distinction** The true Church is invisible (known only to God), yet the visible church contains hypocrites. Practical implications for baptism, discipline, and marks of the church.
9. **The Real Presence in the Lord’s Supper (Calvin’s View)** Christ is truly present to faith by the Spirit, but not locally in the elements. Neither transubstantiation nor mere memorial—requires a “sacramental union” concept.
10. **Double Predestination** God actively elects some to salvation and reprobates others to damnation (or passes over them). The asymmetry between election and reprobation fuels endless debate.
11. **The Federal Headship of Adam and Christ** All humanity is legally represented in Adam (imputed guilt) and the elect in Christ (imputed righteousness). Forensic categories clash with modern individualism.
12. **The Active Obedience of Christ Imputed** Not just Christ’s death, but His lifelong perfect law-keeping is credited to believers. Essential for Reformed soteriology but often conflated with passive obedience.
13. **The Covenant of Works vs. Covenant of Grace** Pre-Fall covenant demanded perfect obedience for life; post-Fall covenant rests on Christ’s merits. Subtle distinctions in continuity/discontinuity across Testaments.
14. **The Third Use of the Law** The law as a guide for sanctified believers, not just to condemn or restrain. Balancing antinomianism and legalism in Christian ethics.
15. **The Order of Salvation** Logical sequence: election → calling → regeneration → faith → justification → sanctification → glorification. Debates over regeneration preceding faith.
16. **Union with Christ as the Fountain of All Benefits** Every soteriological benefit (justification, sanctification, adoption) flows from mystical union—yet union itself is ineffable and simultaneous with faith. - Greg
17. **The Distinction Between Law and Gospel** Law demands; Gospel gives. Essential for preaching and assurance, but texts often blend both, requiring careful contextual exegesis.
18. **The Role of Good Works in Final Justification.** Works as necessary evidence of true faith, not meritorious cause. Subtle nuance often misread as semi-Pelagian or antinomian.
19. **The Binding of Satan in Revelation 20:1–3 (Millennial Restraint)** Whether Satan is *currently* bound (amillennial) or will be bound in a future golden age (historic premillennial/postmillennial). Involves defining “binding,” “thousand years,” and deception scope.
20. **The Nature of the Millennium (Rev 20:4–6)** Literal 1,000-year earthly reign (premil), symbolic present reign (amill), or progressive spiritual victory (postmil)? Requires harmonizing apocalyptic genre with historical prophecy.
21. **The Timing and Nature of the Resurrection(s)** One general resurrection (amillennial simultaneous) vs. two staged resurrections (premil: saints at rapture, wicked later). Debates over “first resurrection” as physical or spiritual.
22. **The Rapture and Its Relation to the Tribulation** Pre-trib (secret rapture before 7 years), mid-trib, or post-trib (at Christ’s visible return)? Dispensational import vs. Reformed covenantal continuity.

23. **The Antichrist: Individual, System, or Both?** A final personal lawless one (2 Thess 2) vs. ongoing spirit of antichrist (1 John). Reformation identified papacy; modern views vary—requires typological exegesis.
24. **The Great Tribulation: Future, Historical, or Ongoing?** Seven literal years (dispensational), Nero-to-Parousia persecution (historicist), or symbolic intensifying apostasy (idealist/amill)? Daniel 12 and Matthew 24 interplay.
25. **The Conversion of “All Israel” in Romans 11:25–26** Future national ingathering of ethnic Jews, spiritual inclusion of Gentiles as “Israel,” or both? “And so” (houtōs) as manner vs. sequence.
26. **The Two Ages and the Already/Not Yet Overlap** This age (evil) and age to come (kingdom) overlap post-Christ. Eschatology inaugurated but not consummated—challenges linear time intuition.
27. **The Intermediate State: Soul Sleep, Conscious Disembodiment, or Immediate Presence?** Reformed generally affirm conscious presence with Christ (Phil 1:23) vs. Lutheran soul sleep debates. Implications for purgatory rejection.
28. **The Final Judgment: One Event or Multiple Phases?** Single assize (Rev 20:11–15) vs. judgment of sheep/goats, believers’ works, and unbelievers. Role of works as evidence vs. basis.
29. **The New Heavens and New Earth: Renewal or Annihilation?** Continuity (transformed creation, Rom 8:21) vs. total destruction/re-creation. “New” (kainos) as qualitative vs. chronological.
30. **The Role of the Land Promise to Abraham in Eschatology** Fulfilled in Christ/celestial inheritance (Reformed amill), partially in national Israel, or fully in millennial kingdom? Galatians 3 vs. literal hermeneutic.
31. **The Gog and Magog Invasion (Ezek 38–39; Rev 20:8)** Pre-millennial battle, post-millennial final rebellion, or symbolic of all anti-kingdom forces? Timing and identification resist mapping.
32. **The Olivet Discourse: AD 70, Final Generation, or Both?** Preterist (70 AD fulfillment), futurist (end-time), or dual prophecy (near/far)? “This generation” (Matt 24:34) as key crux.
33. **The Man of Lawlessness and the Katechon (2 Thess 2:3–8)** Who/what “restrains” the revelation of the lawless one? Roman emperor, Holy Spirit, preaching of Gospel? Textual ambiguity fuels speculation.
34. **The Number 666/616 and Gematría** Symbolic imperfection (666 = human falling short) vs. historical Nero (Neron Kaisar). Reformation historicist vs. idealist readings.
35. **The Seven Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls: Recapitulation or Chronology?** Parallel (amillennial recapitulation) or sequential (premil/dispensational)? Literary structure of Revelation defies linear timeline.
36. **The Restoration of All Things (Acts 3:21; Apokatastasis)** Universal reconciliation (Origen) rejected; yet cosmic renewal includes animals, creation. Limits of “all things” without universalism.
37. **The Timing of the Day of the Lord: Sudden or Progressive?** Thief-like suddenness (1 Thess 5:2) vs. signs preceding (birth pains). Balancing imminence with observable precursors.
38. **The Role of the Church in the Kingdom: Present Reign or Future Inheritance?** Spiritual reign now (amill/postmil) vs. future co-regency in millennial temple (premil). Ephesians 2:6 (“seated in heavenly places”) as already reigning.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

The above topics were drawn from the broader set of key systematic theological categories in Reformation Theology representing the structural framework used to organize doctrine during and after the Reformation.

1. Theology Proper (Doctrine of God)

- Unity and Trinity of God – One essence, three persons; *economic* and *ontological* Trinity.
- Attributes of God – Aseity, simplicity, immutability, infinity, sovereignty, omniscience, omnipotence, holiness, justice, goodness, love.
- Decrees of God – Eternal, sovereign, unchangeable; includes predestination.
- Providence – Preservation, concurrence, government; rejects mere permission.

2. Anthropology & Hamartiology (Doctrine of Man and Sin)

- Creation in the Image of God (Imago Dei) – Rational, moral, relational capacity.
- Covenant of Works – Pre-Fall federal relationship with Adam; conditional obedience for life.
- The Fall – Total depravity: corruption of whole person (mind, will, affections).
- Original Sin – Inherited guilt (reatus) and corruption (concupiscence); federal headship of Adam.
- Total Inability – Bondage of the will; cannot initiate salvation.

3. Christology (Doctrine of Christ)

- Two Natures in One Person – Hypostatic union; Chalcedonian definition upheld.
- Communication of Attributes – Lutheran (genus maiestaticum) vs. Reformed (extra Calvinisticum).
- Offices of Christ – Prophet, Priest, King.
- States of Christ – Humiliation (incarnation, suffering, death, burial) and Exaltation (resurrection, ascension, session, return).

4. Soteriology (Doctrine of Salvation)

- Ordo Salutis (Order of Salvation)
 1. Election
 2. Effectual Calling
 3. Regeneration
 4. Faith/Repentance
 5. Justification
 6. Adoption
 7. Sanctification
 8. Perseverance
 9. Glorification
- Unconditional Election – Based on God's good pleasure, not foreseen faith.
- Limited (Definite) Atonement – Christ died *effectually* for the elect.
- Irresistible Grace – Effectual calling overcomes resistance.
- Justification by Faith Alone (Sola Fide) – Forensic declaration; imputed righteousness of Christ.
- Union with Christ – Mystical, federal; source of all saving benefits.
- Faith as Instrument – Not a work; receives Christ's merits.

5. Pneumatology (Doctrine of the Holy Spirit)

- Personhood and Deity of the Spirit – Co-equal with Father and Son.
- Filioque Clause – Spirit proceeds from Father *and* Son (Western/Reformed affirmation).
- Illumination, Regeneration, Sanctification – Internal work of applying redemption.
- Sealing and Indwelling – Guarantee of inheritance (Eph 1:13–14).

6. Ecclesiology (Doctrine of the Church)

- Nature of the Church – Visible (institutional) vs. Invisible (elect known to God).
- Marks of the True Church – Pure preaching of the Word, right administration of sacraments, church discipline (Reformed); Word and Sacrament (Lutheran).
- Keys of the Kingdom – Authority to bind/loose through preaching and discipline.
- Church Government – Episcopal, presbyterian, congregational models debated.
- Ministry – Universal priesthood of believers; ordained ministry (pastor/elder/deacon).

7. Sacraments (Means of Grace)

- Definition – Visible signs and seals of invisible grace; covenantal.
- Number – Two only: Baptism and Lord's Supper (Reformed/Zwinglian); Lutherans retain confession as quasi-sacramental.
- Baptism – Sign of initiation, cleansing, union with Christ; paedobaptism (covenant) vs. credobaptism (Anabaptist rejection).
- Lord's Supper – Real spiritual presence (Calvin), consubstantiation (Luther), memorial (Zwingli); *sacramental union*.

8. Covenant Theology

- Covenant of Redemption (Pactum Salutis) – Eternal intra-Trinitarian agreement.
- Covenant of Works – With Adam; life conditioned on obedience.
- Covenant of Grace – Post-Fall; unilateral, based on Christ's merits; administered differently in OT (promises, sacrifices) and NT (full revelation).
- Continuity/Discontinuity – One covenant, two administrations; law/gospel distinction.

9. Eschatology (Doctrine of Last Things)

- Personal Eschatology – Death, intermediate state (conscious presence with Christ), soul competence.
- General Eschatology – Second Coming, resurrection, final judgment, eternal states (heaven/hell).
- Millennial Views – Amillennial (symbolic, present reign), Postmillennial (gospel triumph), Historic Premillennial (Christ returns before literal reign).
- Inaugurated Eschatology – “Already/Not Yet” kingdom tension.

10. Christian Life & Ethics (Sanctification and Law)

- Third Use of the Law – Guide for believers (not for justification).
- Good Works – Necessary fruit of faith, not merit; evaluated at judgment as evidence.
- Liberty of Conscience – No human authority over soul; rejection of papal tyranny.
- Vocation (Calling) – All lawful work as divine service; priesthood of all believers in daily life.

Reformation Solas (Foundational Principles – Cross-Cutting)

- Sola Scriptura – Scripture alone as final authority.
- Sola Fide – Faith alone justifies.
- Sola Gratia – Grace alone saves.
- Solus Christus – Christ alone as mediator.
- Soli Deo Gloria – Glory to God alone.