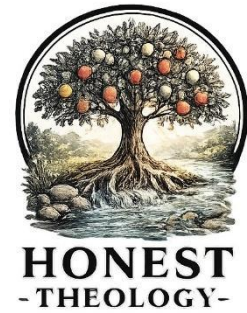


The Perfect Answer

NOTE: This post is (vaguely) connected to my post [“Rats In My Basement.”](#)

I went to seminary at the ripe old age of 60 because, Bible Nerd that I am, I wanted answers that I could not seem to find on my own. It seemed the more I studied and read about all things God (aka “Theology”) the more questions I had. It felt a little bit like falling down a rabbit hole – curiouser and curiouser.



I never viewed these questions – or even (gasp!) doubts - as “bad” mind you. The best way to get to know a person is to ask questions and seek clarification about answers so it *must be* a necessary part of growing closer in knowledge and relationship to God, right? There is this wonderful [verse in Jeremiah](#), where God says, “*Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.*” I mean come on, how cool is that?! I’ve come to believe areas that interest us (even “bug” us) are probably specific areas where the Spirit is leading us to *work harder to understand*. When I teach, some of my favorite moments are questions someone asks in which I have to say, “Gee, I don’t know! I’m going to have to research that! I’ll get back to you.” And off I go, lol.

Seminary mentally and spiritually “cracked me open.” Having grown up in a faith filled environment (I made a profession of faith at the young age of eight), I’d been steeped in all things God. It was a blessed, fertile place to learn and grow but, quite honestly, I outgrew that singular space. Seminary introduced me to *global Christianity* and *historical Christianity* and quite suddenly the small world I had all these questions about, literally became beyond the scope of my ability to absorb.

This “cracking” was overwhelming for a period of time and not necessarily in a good way. I felt ignorant, ill-equipped, and even that I may have wasted some of my life. (The introverted personality of mine has always preferred isolation and independence to community engagement and conventionality. Ironic, I know, in my teaching and speaking profession – but that’s another post.) I got so deep in my insecurity that for a period of time I thought perhaps seminary was too much for me. My lowest point happened ironically when I took my first theology course. Should I drop out?

I talked to God about it. I’d felt God’s encouragement to pursue this whole crazy seminary journey but maybe, perhaps, I’d gotten it wrong? God answered, making me realize:

1. [Not one scholar or denomination](#) was *ever* able to accurately and completely describe God. They don’t even agree with each other! That’s because human minds just don’t have the ability to comprehend divine things; no matter who they are. “*Relax Susan, you’re not ignorant, you’re human.*”
2. That God, through God’s wonderful Spirit, [continues to help us grow and learn](#) even today (it wasn’t just those Big Guns from long ago). “*Susan, I need you to share to others how you understand Me. Exactly how you are is exactly what I need. That’s what I called you to do.*”

3. God patiently and lovingly reveals Godself to humanity *as they can understand and cope with it*. This has happened since creation *and* is uniquely and independently revealed to any believer as they can understand. (The fancy theological word for this is “[The Doctrine of Divine Accommodation](#).”) “*Susan, My timing is perfect. You’re just where I need you to be and I will continue to guide you. Stay the course.*”
4. The Spiritual foundation that I needed to rely on wasn’t complicated at all: I just needed to focus on [Jesus Christ’s Mission and Message as my primary source](#). Everything else was secondary (at most). *Anything* that deviated from this Message – be it Scriptural, scholarly, religiously, or even politically – was no longer something I needed to struggle to justify. NO. THING. “*Everything that’s important is right there, Susan.*”

And then suddenly, all those complicated theological questions collapsed into one simple truth for me.

The answer is, “[Love](#).”

- Why did God bother creating humanity if God knew we were going to screw it all up? Because of love: God wants a personal relationship with [each one](#) of us.
- Why did Jesus die? Because of love: God wants a relationship with us at *all* costs (even to [death](#)).
- Why does God allow hate? Because of Love: God wants our freely chosen, freely given [love](#) at *all* costs. True love is freely given and its opposite is hate.
- Why doesn’t God punish those that do [evil](#)? Because of Love: God’s justice, God’s way, and God’s timing for us is [perfect](#). [God is in charge](#).
- Why would God want me? Because of Love: God is endlessly forgiving, patient, and merciful because we are [all that valuable](#).
- Why should I trust or believe in God? Because of Love: [All good things](#) come from God. God’s love is more than we can ever [ask for or imagine](#).

All the theological studying and questioning doesn’t always give us simpler questions—but sometimes it gives us a simpler answer. In the end, after all the books, lectures, and theological debates, the answer to every question about God seems to lead back to the same place: love.

And perhaps that is exactly how simple it was always meant to be.

Scripture to maybe check out:

- [Colossians 1:15-20](#) The Supremacy of Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God With Us

Bibliography notes:

1. For this post I used The New International Version of the Bible published by Biblica, Inc, in 1973, 1978, 1984, and 2011. Feel free to check these passages out in whatever Bible version you prefer—almost all of them are available on [Bible Gateway!](#)

What are your thoughts about this post? Email me and let me know!
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