

Built On a Rock: The Heart of Christianity from Genesis to Revelation
Living the Message 2022-2023
October 2022 Study Guide for Participants and Facilitators

God Talk: *Theology In and Out of the Bible* with Pastor Lose

[Click here to watch the video.](#)

Opening Prayer

Dear God, we gather together with questions, hopes, dreams. Some of them we can name, some are hard to put words to. But we trust that you know our needs and will use this time of study to help meet them. Bless us as we listen to and learn from each other, from Christians through the centuries, and from your Word, that we may grow in our relationship with you and each other. Amen.

Focus Statement

“Theology,” which literally means “words about God,” helps us reflect on and make sense of our experience of God and our life in the world.

Six Guiding Convictions for this Course

1. You are already a theologian.
2. Questions are awesome.
3. The Bible is our primary source of theology.
4. All theology is done from a particular point of view.
5. The Bible is not the only source.
6. We will do this better as we do this together.

Which of these convictions strikes a chord with you the most? Why?

Questions

Read this passage from “Making Sense of the Christian Faith” by Pastor Lose and then think about/discuss the questions below.

“... theology is less about trying to prove a point and more about what we’ve been doing already—describing how we think about God in relation to what we read in the Bible, hear in church, experience in the world, and think with our brains... this kind of theological thinking, of God-talk, is really important. After all, how we think of God—as just, loving, angry, stern, threatening, tender, or some combination of these—is definitely going to shape our view of the world, of ourselves, and of each other. And more likely than not, it will really affect the way we relate to others.” (pp. 26-27)

1. When have you felt most comfortable or at ease with your faith? What were some of the factors that made it easy to believe?

2. Conversely, when has faith felt difficult or challenging? When was it difficult to believe?
3. What are some of the adjectives that you might use to describe God? Compassionate, loving, stern, just, tender? What kinds of picture do the words you choose offer you of God? And where do you think your picture of God came from—Sunday school, your family, the Bible, experiences with and of other Christians?

Bonus Activity

Scripture	Tradition
Experience	Reason

Google images of “Wesleyan Quadrilateral.” There are many illustrations of these four sources of theology (God-Talk) that Pastor Lose mentioned in his presentation. Many illustrations are of tables, with each source being one leg. Which leg (or source) seems strongest for you? Which leg seems weakest? Why? How would you draw your own personal “theology table” or other diagram to picture this?

Deeper Dive with Pastor Ruud

[John 20:19-29](#) “Doubting (Believing?) Thomas”

The disciple Thomas has difficulty believing Jesus has been raised from the dead until he can touch the wounds in Jesus’ hands and side.

1. Why does Thomas have a hard time believing?
2. What kinds of things make it hard for us to believe sometimes?
3. Was Jesus rebuking Thomas, or do you think he was encouraging others to have faith in spite of not being able to touch him? Why?
4. How does this story demonstrate grace and hope even amid doubt and skepticism?
5. Thomas wanted to touch and see the wounds of Jesus. What would you ask Jesus for to aid your belief?

Closing Prayer

Dear God, we give you thanks for this congregation, for the people in our class, and for the opportunity to learn the story of Scripture more deeply. Use all these things to bless us in our understanding of you so that we, in turn, may be a blessing to others. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Next Month:

Original Blessing: *Creation* with Pastor Ruud

In-person presentation Tuesday, November 1, 6:30-7:30pm at West Campus

Video emailed out by end of day Monday, October 31

