

Why Your Teen Secretly Craves This Oft-Ignored Study

Should teenagers study theology or is it something only for the scholars? To answer that question, we have to understand the purpose of theology.

Ephesus was one of the greatest churches in the ancient world, and yet Jesus gave it a stunning rebuke in the book of Revelation:

“But I have something against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first” (Rev. 2:4).

The Bible makes it clear that our relationship with God is not a relationship based on agreement to the right religious creeds or following the right codes of behavior. It is a relationship that should be passionate. We receive the love of God and respond to that love with our whole heart. Jesus called this the first commandment:

Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the first and great commandment” (Matt. 22:37-38).

Fuel for the Relationship

If our relationship with God is to be built on love and passion, how do we fuel our love for Him? One of the key ways to fuel love for God is to study who He is. When we love someone, we naturally begin to study them. We discover what they like and do not like. We notice details about them. We discover subtle aspects of their personality. We become familiar with their family and friends. We learn their story and their history.

Studying someone who we love is never a burden. It is a natural result of love and is deeply enjoyable. We think nothing of investing hours in getting to know someone who we love, and the more that we discover about them, the more pleasure we take in who they are. Growing in knowledge about a person fuels our love for them.

The Bible was given to us to fuel our love for God. In its pages, we find stories of who God is and how He relates us. All of this reveals His person, and the more we learn about His person the more we grow in love for Him. Studying the Word of God in order to more deeply know and love the

person of God is the ultimate goal of theology. 

When many believers think of theology, they tend to think of academic study and books that are difficult to read. There is certainly nothing wrong with academic study, but theology is not primarily an academic study. It is primarily an exploration of who God is, an exploration that is provoked by our love for God and fuels a deeper and more passionate love of God. Because God is the most beautiful person who exists, the more we know about Him, the more deeply we love Him.

Theology is not ultimately something just for professors and brilliant intellectuals. It is for every believer. It does not require great intellect or years of study. It is simply fuel for experiencing the love of God and loving Him in return.

As a teenager, you face incredible temptations and deep questions. Nothing answers the yearning of your heart more than the knowledge of God. For too long, the church has given teenagers shallow answers to the challenges you face when what you really need is the knowledge of God. He is the ultimate answer your heart is looking for, and you are not too young to

explore the depths of the knowledge of God. Theology is for you.

Here's three reasons why you need the study of theology:

Love Provokes Study and Study Provokes Love

When we love someone, we naturally spend time studying them. When we feel deep love for God, studying Him is the natural expression of that love. When we feel like our love is in danger of growing cold, studying theology is fuel for the love of God. Gazing deeply at who He is awakens love for Him.

Understanding God Is Key to Understanding Who We Are

Human beings were made by God. He enjoys us, and we were created to enjoy Him. The more we understand about God, the better we understand ourselves and our purpose. Our identity, basically, is defined by who He says we are, and the study of God leads to profound confidence because it gives us a better understanding of who we are according to Him.

We Love the Truth

Jesus warned us that there would be false Messiahs. In our generation, we are surrounded by false gods, false gospels and rampant confusion on who God is. Truth is often distorted in the name of a false Jesus. God gave us the Bible to help us navigate the murky, confusing waters in our generation. As we study the person of God, it protects our hearts from counterfeit ideas about God. We must know who God is so we can easily reject falsehood and deception in our generation.

So, should teenagers study theology? Absolutely. The true study of theology is the passionate exploration of the most beautiful person in the universe. The reward for that study is more than knowledge. The reward is a greater understanding of God's fiery love for us which fuels our love for Him.

Which stories are you studying to pursue greater love for the

Lord? {eoa}

This summer, join thousands of young believers from across the nation for times of corporate worship, powerful teaching and times of ministry during our annual Fascinate conference.

*Copyright © 2017 – International House of Prayer Missions Base of Kansas City. Reprinted with permission. **Samuel Whitefield** is a preacher, teacher and writer. He serves on the senior leadership team of the International House of Prayer of Kansas City and as a faculty member of the International House of Prayer University. He is the director of OneKing, a ministry that helps connect the global church to God's plan for Israel and the nations. Samuel and his family share a passion to declare the beauty of Jesus until He is loved and adored on earth as He is in heaven.*