

# BIBLE CHALLENGE 2019

Week 1: January 1-5  
*Everyone's a Theologian!*

**Read:** Deuteronomy 4:2; 11:18-21; 30:11-20; 32:44-47; Joshua 1:6-9; Ezra 7:7-10; Psalm 1:1-2; 19:7-11; 25:14; 111:10; 119:93; Proverbs 1:2-7; 4:7-9, 13, 20-22; 22:20-21; 30:5-6; Ecclesiastes 12:9-14; Isaiah 8:20; Ezekiel 3:17-21; John 17:17; Acts 17:11; Romans 12:2; 15:4; 1 Corinthians 3:10-23; 2 Corinthians 4:1-6; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 1:9; Colossians 1:9-10; 2:8; **2 Timothy 2:14-15**; 3:15-17; 4:1-6; Hebrews 5:11-14; 2 Peter 1:2-3; 3:15-16; Revelation 1:3. Also read Psalm 119 in its entirety.

The word "theologian" often makes people a little nervous. For many, the image that they have in their head of a theologian is a stuffy and aloof professor who cannot relate with anyone other than other theologians. They are considered academics and belong in the ivory towers of the academies, not the roads and marketplaces of humans. They live their lives amongst the books of dead saints and not amongst the works of the living. Sound familiar?

And, while some theologians *are* like the ones I described here, most are not...because most are people just like you and me because they are you and me. You see, anyone who has any ideas about God — what he is like, his attitude toward fallen man, what he does, etc... — has a theology and if you have a theology, you are (by definition) a theologian.

What is theology, you ask? Well, the word theology is made up of two Greek words: *theos* and *logos*. The first is the Greek word for "God;" the second is the Greek word for "word, words about, or a study of." So, as C.S. Lewis put it, "theology" is nothing more than the way we talk about God — it is "God-talk." Or, to put it in more applicable terms, it is our study of the person and works of God. Whatever you know or think you know about God is part of your theology. The real question is not who is a theologian (we all are), but who is a good theologian?

So, what is the difference between a good theologian and a bad theologian? And, what makes some theologians into heretics? What is a heretic you ask? The word, "heretic" comes from the Greek word that means "to divide" or "to create a division." And so, a heretic is one who holds to or teaches ideas that divide a person from the body of Christ.

But, with all of the disagreements and differing opinions, how do we know who is a heretic and who is not? In the early 1600's, a Lutheran theologian named Rupertus Meldinius provided a framework for this conversation. He wrote that in the essentials of the Christian faith there must be unity, in non-essentials there must be liberty, and in all things there must be love. This statement, the 19th century German theologian, Philip Schaff said, became the "watchword of Christian peacemakers."

What Meldinius was communicating is that there are some ideas that are essential to the Christian faith — these things are things that cannot be compromised if one is going to call oneself "Christian" in any meaningful sense of the term. These are doctrines like the Trinity, the Virgin Birth of Christ, the Physical Resurrection of Christ, etc... These are ideas that are typically captured within the early creeds of the Christian church.

In the early years of the 20th Century, Reuben Archer Torrey, a noted Congregational minister and evangelist, further developed these "essentials" in a series of articles written against the rise of theological liberalism. These "Fundamentals" as Torrey called them, again established what was to be understood as that in which we must find unity if we are going to call ourselves "Christian" in any meaningful sense of the word. At

the heart of this conversation, was defending the Bible as the inspired Word of God, without fault or error. In this, we declare there must be unity.

Yet, there are other "non-essential" or "non-fundamental" teachings within the Christian faith. We may have strong beliefs as to the nature of church government, on the mode of baptism, and even to some extent as to the matter of God's sovereignty. Thus there are many God-fearing, Bible-Believing people who have come to different conclusions on important, but non-essential matters. There are right and wrong answers to these questions, and these debates are important to have because a right understanding draws us closer to God — we are called to "show ourselves approved" as the old King James would word it. At the same time, these differences ought not divide us from fellowship. And the key to the debates over non-essentials is that they be done in Christian love.

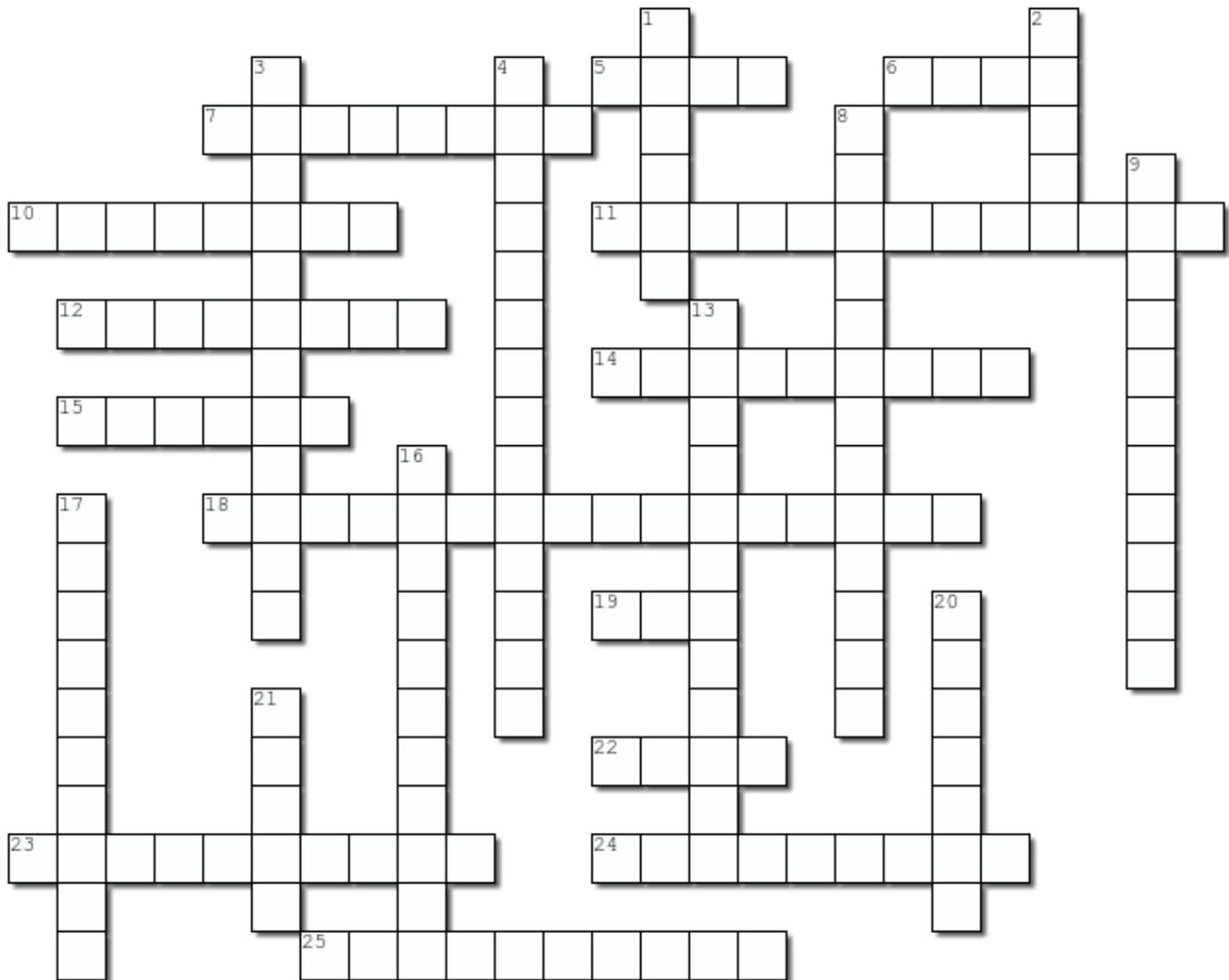
So, what is the key to being a "good" theologian and not a bad one? If you have read through the verses noted above, you should be able to answer this question easily. A good theologian is one who carefully studies the Word of God seeking to submit to its authority and to learn from it.

It is important to note that study without submission and application is what forms those stereotypical "theologians" mentioned above. By submission, I mean that we are to conform our ideas about life and the world to what the Bibles ideas are regarding the life and the world. We don't get to follow our personal preferences and we don't get to pick and choose this verse over that verse...we must take the whole as God's Word. Does any one person get all of their doctrine right? Other than Jesus, God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit, no. At the same time, we are called to grow in our knowledge to build on our faith (2 Peter 1:5). If we are to grow more like Jesus, that means we should strive to improve and perfect our theology as best as we can with the aid of the Holy Spirit. Reformed Christians often get criticized for taking their knowledge of doctrine too seriously, but if we are to honor Christ by being like him, ought not we take our theology — our knowledge of God — seriously?

One of the biggest challenges that we face, though, is that our society has embraced a thoroughly unBiblical model of thinking. Today it is believed that two, mutually contradictory ideas can be both equally true. Yet, God is not a God of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). Sadly, the generation in which we live struggles when it comes to debating ideas and much of the debate tends to descend into bashing the character or motives of the other person. Such is mud-slinging, not a debate.

And so, we will end where we began. We are called to study God's word and to teach it to others. We are called to obey God's word and we are called to know God through his Word above all else. We are called to be theologians...but not just theologians, we are called to be good theologians. To not work to that end would be sin.

# Week 1: Everyone is a Theologian!



Created using [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) [Crossword Puzzle Maker](#)

## Across

5. 'This is no empty word for you, but your very \_\_\_\_.'
6. Every word of God proves to be this...
7. The prophet is called to be this on the wall of the lives of God's people.
10. God's word is more to be desired than this (2 words).
11. The time will come when people will not endure \_\_\_\_ but will accumulate teachers to suit their passions (2 words)
12. 'The book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall \_\_\_\_ on it...'
14. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of \_\_\_\_.
15. The Gospel is this to those who are perishing.
18. These are like 'nails firmly fixed.'
19. 'You shall not \_\_\_\_ to the word that I command you, nor take from it...'
22. We are to be transformed by the renewal of this.
23. 'The \_\_\_\_ of the LORD is for those who fear him.'
24. 'Everyone who lives on milk is \_\_\_\_ in the word of righteousness.'
25. 'For this commandment that I command you today \_\_\_\_\_ for you... (3 words)

## Down

1. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of \_\_\_\_.
2. 'See, I have set before you today life and good, \_\_\_\_ and evil.'
3. This is perfect (4 words)
4. Paul speaks of Timothy being familiar with these from his childhood.
8. Paul says this is not being tossed about by every wind of doctrine or human cunning.'
9. 'Whatever was written in former days was for our \_\_\_\_.'
13. The whole duty of man is to fear God and keep his \_\_\_\_.
16. The foundation of the church is \_\_\_\_\_. (2 words)
17. The Bereans are called 'more noble' because they examined this daily.
20. '\_\_\_\_\_ is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophesy...'
21. God blessed Ezra in that his goal was to \_\_\_\_\_ the Word of God so that he could do it and teach it.