

# SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

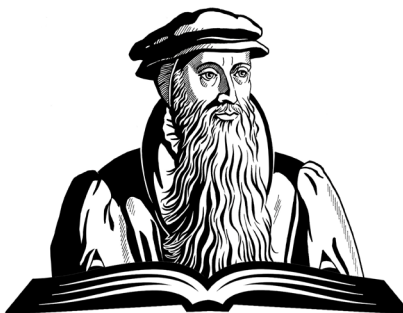
## Video Lecture Series

by Robert D. McCurley, ThM

# STUDY GUIDE

*Module 1:*  
**INTRODUCTION and  
THE DOCTRINE OF FIRST PRINCIPLES**

*Lecture 3:*  
**SCRIPTURE**



**The John Knox Institute**  
of Higher Education

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*Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide*

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# SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

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## STUDY GUIDE

Module 1

### *Introduction, and The Doctrine of First Principles*

*Introduction:*

1. Methodology
2. Creeds and Confessions

*The Doctrine of First Principles:*

- 3. Scripture**
4. Revelation
5. The Inspiration of Scripture
6. Properties of Inspired Scripture
7. The Canon of Holy Scripture
8. Preservation and Translation of Scripture
9. Interpretation of Scripture
10. The Continuity of Scripture

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## STUDY GUIDE

Module 1:

THE DOCTRINE OF FIRST PRINCIPLES

Lecture 3:

Scripture

### ***Introduction***

There's a parallel between discerning real money from counterfeit money, and discerning true religion from false or counterfeit religion. The Christian believer's aim should be to study in depth all the details of the only true religion, to such a degree that they are able to recognize false religions immediately. Rather than wasting time and energy studying false religions, the Christian needs to know and cling to the perfect truths God has revealed to us.

**Theme:** *The nature of theological knowledge within the true religion.*

### **I. Scriptural Basis**

*“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*

—1 Corinthians 2:12–14

1. The Spirit of God and the true knowledge of God.
2. Unbelieving theology is vain and foolish.

### **Questions:**

1. According to Paul, in 1 Cor. 2:12–14, the unbeliever does not receive the things of God. Why?

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2. How does the Christian have true knowledge of the things that are freely given by God?

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3. Why should the believer have confidence in their knowledge of the truth? Why is unbelieving theology unworthy of the name “theology”?

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## **II. Doctrinal Overview**

1. Spiritual blindness leads to idolatry.
2. Theological knowledge is built on two principles—the doctrine of God, and the doctrine of Scripture.
3. Eternal life is rooted in the knowledge of God and Christ.
4. Distinguish between God’s knowledge of himself—his self-knowledge—from the knowledge that he has revealed to us.
5. Theological knowledge reinforces the need of regeneration through the work of the Spirit.
6. Theological knowledge also shows the necessity of faith.
7. Theological knowledge teaches the necessity of union and communion with Christ, both in grace and in glory.

### **Questions:**

1. How do we know from the Bible that natural man begins with knowledge, but they twist, distort, and suppress that knowledge in their sin? Why do we say that false religion, throughout the world and in history, emphasizes the need for true theological knowledge?

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2. What two principles provide the foundation for theological knowledge?

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3. What should be the real fruit of theological knowledge? How is this connected to the fact that “eternal life is rooted in the knowledge of God and Christ”?

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4. Why is it important to distinguish between God’s self-knowledge and the knowledge that God has revealed to us?

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5. How does theological knowledge reinforce the necessity for regeneration, faith, union, and communion with Christ?

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### **III. Polemical Exposition**

Objection 1: *“There is no distinction between true and false religion, or true and false theological knowledge.”*

Objection 2: *“No one can know absolute truth about anything, so there really isn’t theological knowledge.”*

Objection 3: *“Theological knowledge is merely intellectual notions.”*

#### **Questions:**

1. Please answer the first objection, using biblical proofs. Meanwhile, try to prove that this objection itself is irrational.

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2. How do we know that the statement, “*No one can know absolute truth*” is self-contradictory?

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3. Why is it that theological knowledge cannot be confined to just a clear grasp of truth with our mind? What other things are impacted by this knowledge?

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#### **IV. Practical Exposition**

1. Every Christian is responsible to pursue and obtain theological knowledge.
2. Theological knowledge should always produce genuine humility and teachableness, and an increased intimacy with the Lord.
3. Prayer is necessary in the pursuit of theological knowledge.
4. Theological knowledge must include the whole person.

#### **Questions:**

1. How does the Bible show us that every Christian has a keen interest in true theological knowledge? Please give examples.

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2. What should we bear in mind and heart as we are dealing with holy and high and eternal matters? What do we learn from the experiences of Isaiah (in Isaiah 6), Daniel (in Daniel 8), and the Apostle John (in Revelation 1)?

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3. What makes prayer so necessary to the pursuit of theological knowledge?

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4. How can the Christian employ the whole person in the service of the living God?

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**V. Self-Reflection**

Do you have a zeal for pursuing and obtaining theological knowledge? What is your motivation for that? As you finish this lecture, it would be good to set a time to review what you learned, mark the important points, and prayerfully apply the truths to your own heart and life.

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