



GRACE LEADERSHIP TRAINING
Class 3 Epistemology

Instructor: Pastor Jon

Class Summary: This lesson focuses on knowledge, asking how we can know, what we can know, and with what degree of certainty can we know God and truth?

Epistemology

Epistemology defined: Epistemology is the study of _____ and seeks to specifically answer the questions; _____ do we know? _____ do we know it? Can we know with _____?

"In short, Epistemology is really about authority, verifiability, truth, and certainty."
Christopher Cone *Epistemological Foundations for a Biblical Theology*

Question: When did the first epistemological attack take place? What can we learn from this?

Discussion: How is building a biblical epistemology foundational to “training leaders for the home and the church”?

God is and Biblical Epistemology:

- God is _____
- God is _____
- God is _____
- God is _____
- God is _____

What insight would an all knowing, all powerful, faithful, good, eternal, and unchanging being, Who created all things have regarding issues of epistemology?

God has spoken and Biblical Epistemology:

Now, if only the God Who Is would have meaningfully communicated His knowledge to us in a detailed, understandable, and trustworthy manner!

The Building Blocks of a Biblical Epistemology**Building Block #1- _____**

Upon whose authority should we build our epistemology? The authority of man or the authority of God?

- Proverbs 1:7
- Proverbs 2:6
- Proverbs 9:10

Building Block #2- _____

If knowledge comes from someone outside of ourselves, then how has this knowledge been communicated to us? and how can we be sure that we are receiving/interpreting it correctly?

"God's usage of language is perhaps the greatest single evidence for the usefulness of language in accomplishing the purpose of communicating with absolute clarity the meaning of God's truth...As God used language to communicate Himself to man it is clear that He intended His revelation to be understood— even creating the very vehicle He would use to carry His truths."

Christopher Cone *Prolegomena: on Biblical Hermeneutics and Method*

- I Peter 1:19-21
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- John 17:17
- I Corinthians 13:8-12

Building Block #3- _____

What are the limitations of mankind, as revealed in Scripture, that are necessary to take into account as we establish a Biblical Epistemology?

- Universal limitations
 - Genesis 3:5

- Job 38-40

- Limitations upon natural (unbelieving) man
 - In relation to God's general revelation (Romans 1:18-23)

"In the cognitive sense man has understood God's general revelation (Romans 1:18-23). There is no doubt here that man's failure is not one of lacking understanding of the character of God, rather it is lacking the proper response to submission to Him as God. The cognitive fundamental of His existence has been resisted by the fallen human mind, and has been replaced by worship of the creation itself, the failure here not being a lack of understanding, but a lack of fearing Him as God, and thus man possesses ultimately an innate inability to arrive at wisdom."

Christopher Cone *Prolegomena: on Biblical Hermeneutics and Method*

- In relation to God's special revelation (I Corinthians 2:12-14)

"In the cognitive sense man has understood God's special revelation through Scripture. As revealed using the tools of language, Scripture is grammatically understood by the unbeliever, yet the unbeliever understands the self authenticated truths to be foolishness (I Cor. 2:14) and thus fails to respond positively, ultimately rejecting the claims of Scripture."

Christopher Cone *Prolegomena: on Biblical Hermeneutics and Method*

- In relation to God's revelation of Himself through Christ (John 3:17-19)

In the cognitive sense man has understood God's personal revelation in Christ Jesus. Every man has been enlightened by the incarnation of Christ (John 1:9) —

Christ has explained he Father, and while understood cognitively, He is not received, for darkness is preferred by humanity over the light He provides (John 3:19)."

Christopher Cone *Prolegomena: on Biblical Hermeneutics and Method*

Building Block #4- _____

What solutions are there to the limitations upon man as discussed under Building Block #3?

- Solution to the universal limitations upon man
 - II Peter 1:3-4

- Solution to the limitations upon natural (unbelieving) man (Acts 17:22-34)
 - Man's part
 - Vs. 22-23- God is _____

 - Vs. 24-29- God _____

 - Vs. 30-31- God has _____

 - Vs. 32-34- the _____ of man

 - God's part
 - The choice of God- (Ephesians 1:4-9)

- The calling of God- (Galatians 1:4; 15)
- The drawing of God- Through the work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-11)
- The Word of God- (I Corinthians 2:1-5)

Building Block #5- _____ (Next two classes)

How is one to interpret the revelation that God has revealed to us? Hermeneutics!

- Theological interpretation
- Historical theology
- Allegorical interpretation
- Experiential interpretation
- Moral interpretation
- Normal interpretation (Literal, grammatical, historical)

Application: How does our understanding of Epistemology impact how we interact with others in the areas?

Involvement in Politics-

Counseling believers vs. unbelievers-

Methods of Evangelism-

Place for and methods of apologetics-

Education of our children-

Relevant Scriptures

- **The attack of knowledge**
 - Genesis 3:5
- **The prerequisite to knowledge**
 - Proverbs 1:7
- **The source of knowledge**
 - Proverbs 2:6
 - Proverbs 9:10
 - Proverbs 15:33
 - John 17:17
 - James 3:13-18
- **The communication of knowledge**
 - Psalm 19:1-2
 - John 1:9-10
 - Romans 1:18-20
 - 2 Tim 3:16-17
 - Hebrews 1:3; 2:1-5
- **The obstacles to knowledge**
 - Genesis 6:5
 - John 3:19
 - Romans 1:28
 - I Cor 2:14
 - 2 Corinthians 4:3-4
 - I Timothy 6:20
- **The attainment of knowledge**
 - For the unbeliever
 - Ephesians 1:4-9
 - John 16:7-11
 - I Cor. 2:1-5
 - Galatians 1:4; 15
 - For the believer
 - I Cor 2:12-16
 - I John 2:27

For Further Study

Books- (in order of recommendation)

1. Cone, Christopher *Prolegomena: on Biblical Hermeneutics and Method*
2. Lisle, Jason *Ultimate Proof of Creation*
3. VanTil, Cornelius *The Defense of the Faith (reformed, non-dispensational)*
4. McManis, Clifford *Biblical Apologetics (reformed, dispensational)*
5. Bahnsen, Greg *Always Ready (reformed, postmillennial)*
6. Feinberg, John *Can You Believe It is True? (Not a presuppositionalist)*

Articles by Christopher Cone (can be found at www.Dr.cone.com)

1. *Epistemological Foundations for a Biblical Theology* (January 24, 2017)
2. *A Dialogue on the Relationship of Apologetics and Philosophy to Evangelism* (September 21, 2012)
3. *The Interconnectedness of Philosophy Theology, and Worldview* (October 2, 2021)
4. *Presuppositional Dispensationalism Part 1* (February 5, 2016)
5. *Presuppositional Dispensationalism Part 2* (August 9, 2016)

Audio:

1. "The Great Debate: Does God Exist?" Dr. Greg Bahnsen verses Dr. Gordon Stein at the University of California, Irvine, 1985.