

## Get Wisdom! Articles

### Epistemology—The Science of Knowledge

Ron Kirk  
Created June 28, 2021  
Modified June 15, 2026

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7).

The science of knowledge, or how we know is called *epistemology*. As R. J. Rushdoony repeated, Christians of all people, must become epistemologically self-conscious. Without knowing how and why we know, we remain the more vulnerable to error.

### ***Epistemology—The Short Version***

Jesus says you know a tree by its fruit. This is the fundamental basis of all knowledge.

For humans, knowledge is always an *approximation* to the mind of God's created reality, not the reality itself. Not absolute.

We find sure knowledge for any particular purpose as we test what we think we know against the fruit produced in applying knowledge. Learning is a kind of spiral process which 1. Makes an assumption, based in best foundational knowledge, 2. Tests the assumption, and thus 3. Confirms it, or prompts refinement or correction. Repeat. These three expand sound, useful knowledge over time.

Knowledge is never absolute, learning never finished. But we can closely approximate God's reality to have sound knowledge, *useful* to the purpose. *Sure* knowledge as the Bible promises comes by increasingly refined testing of what we think we know. That is, we evaluate the fruit it produces, the results of our acting upon our knowledge. Eventually, our approximation is close enough to become consistently useful to our purpose, so that we can call it sure knowledge.

The Holy Spirit further confirms knowledge in His believers, especially regarding the things that ultimately matter (e.g. 1 John 3:2).

An expanded treatment follows:

### ***Definitions***

[Epistemology](#) is the science of knowledge from the Greek *episteme* (knowledge) and *logos* (*word*, that is, argument or reason). The Gospel of John reveals that Christ is the true *Word* or Logos of God (John 1:1). That is, we must understand the nature of knowledge itself, and how we know what we know—what constitutes sure knowledge. To understand knowledge, we must understand Scripture and its Word Jesus Christ. Not much could be more fundamental or needful of understanding.

Defining the subject philosophically and theologically, according to Noah Webster, *knowledge* is:

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1. A clear and certain perception of that which exists, or of truth and fact; the perception of the connection and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of our ideas.

We can have no knowledge of that which does not exist. God has a perfect knowledge of all his works. Human knowledge is very limited, and is mostly gained by observation and experience.

2. Learning; illumination of mind.

Ignorance is the curse of God, knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to heaven.

3. Skill; as a knowledge of seamanship.
4. Acquaintance with any fact or person. I have no knowledge of the man or thing.
5. Cognizance; notice. Ruth 2.
6. Information; power of knowing.

Perception requires the human senses as means to receive impressions of the world's material and spiritual realities, and the mind to process and interpret those impressions.

### ***Knowledge in the Bible***

The first use of the word knowledge appears in Genesis 2:9—the Hebrew word *da'at*. It means “*learning, discernment, insight, and notion*” (*The AMG Complete Word Study Dictionary*). Its root is *yada*, to know. Various forms of the word know and knowledge appear almost thirteen hundred times in the King James Bible, more in other versions. It is a centrally important element of faith.

In the New Testament, knowledge is essentially of two kinds. We find the first use of the word knowledge in Luke 1:76-77: “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest... to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins.” The Greek word here is *gnosis*, from its root *ginosko*. *Gnosis* is knowledge that comes by experience, starting with a first impression and then through growing as experience continues. *Ginosko* carries with it various degrees of understanding. *Epiginosko* (*upon* and *know*) is to know fully, accurately and usefully. We find a word parallel in the growth of *character* or *sanctification*.

*Eido*, first found in Matthew 7:11, is knowledge without processing, but instantaneous understanding by the mind. “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those

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who ask Him!" Eido corresponds to the English word *remembrance*, which is instantaneous recall without effort, because the memory is so ingrained, as one's name, for example. Eido results from long experience in life either directly or indirectly upon the greater collected experience that makes seeing instantly recognized as true and certain. Christian political philosopher John Locke used the English word *intuition* in the sense of eido, declaring intuition the soundest basis of knowledge. Like eido, intuitive understanding of a thing results from a sufficient vault of experiential knowledge so deep and thorough or with additional inspiration to give deep, clear and essentially instantaneous understanding without effort of reasoning.

We count on Inspiration by the Holy Spirit to give us eido. We depend on His inspiration to counter our sinful disposition out of the original sin to entertain the corrupt knowledge we commonly entertain and which feeds our inflated sense of self. The original sin was to make ourselves equal to God in our own opinions, made worse by demonic influence. We quite naturally form wrongheaded notions. (This is the reason we need a rigorous scientific method to keep us from wrong conclusions. I think of reading Aristotle's speculative, ostensible reasoning as to how an arrow flies through the air. Its point cuts the air open creating a vacuum. As air closes behind, it pushes the arrow forward.)

To recap, ginosko is the most basic of knowledge requiring reasoning to apply it. Epiginosko is a fully accomplished or sure experiential knowledge including processing reasoning. Eido's sure knowledge is recognition coming instantaneously and without effort from deep and accomplished learning, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit.

### ***Knowledge Is Analogical via Abstraction***

Cornelius Van Til (explained by R. J. Rushdoony, with Van Til's approval in *By What Standard*, Ross House Books, 1995) describes all knowledge as *analogic* (Gk. *ratio, proportion*). Analogy is "an agreement or likeness between things in some circumstances or effects, when the things are otherwise entirely different.... In life and growth, then, there is an analogy between a plant and an animal. Learning enlightens the mind, because it is to the mind, what light is to the eye, enabling it to discover things before hidden" (Noah Webster, *1828 American Dictionary of the English Language*<sup>i</sup>). In other words, analogy is the comparison or contrast of things to determine likenesses or dissimilarities between things, to reckon *how* a thing is uniquely identified as an individual from other individuals, or how one action is alike and different from another. Analogy reveals likenesses and differences to distinguish between things, providing identity.

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An aside on Webster's work: His dictionary provides knowledge critical to American Christians in our age. Webster's 1828 appears as the most solid basis for defining English words and determining their etymology, on several grounds. Webster mastered twenty-six contributory languages, including several dead languages, in a span of ten years study of language and languages prior to writing the dictionary. He defined words philosophically. That is, he defines words first according to their most general, historic sense. Most importantly, Webster approached life and knowledge from a profoundly Bible-centered view of life, including defining Biblical words in Biblical terms from the original languages. He took language as a Christian stewardship, protecting it from the natural effects of entropy which tends to reduce everything to its lowest commonality. Rather, Webster sought to elevate language on the best scientific grounds, particularly, once more, with its root in the normalizing effect of Scripture on all knowledge. Consider by contrast the materialistic, evolutionary view of language represented by iconic Oxford English Dictionary, which takes no responsibility of stewardship, but rather merely reflects the current state of an increasingly debased language.

Knowledge is not the same as God's reality in the created universe. Confusing or conflating knowledge with its corresponding reality is a source of endless self-deception (Proverbs 14:12). Reality is God's creation of the universe out of nothing (Hebrew *bara*, Genesis 1:1). As a part of the universe, God also created the spiritual realm beyond our senses, the dwelling place of God and the angels (Psalm 20:6; Revelation 4:1-8), and of the dead and demons (Hebrew *Sheol*, Deuteronomy 32:21, Greek *Hades* (Luke 16:22-26). God Himself specifies reality, holding all things together by the Word of His mouth (Hebrews 1:3). Mankind is separate from God, and from the rest of creation—individualized. We must experience the rest of the universe from our limited vantage as individuals. We are creaturely and derivative. In a real sense the rest of reality is external to us, even regarding our own bodies. King David exclaims in awe that we are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:9)! Any knowledge we may gain is thus derivative and analogical—comparisons and contrasts lead to defining specific individuals and relationships between them. The words *organization*, *classification* and *system* exemplify this notion. By God's design, what we know must depend upon man's experience, and upon knowledge collected and transmitted by others in the context of our cultures and histories.

The ability to think analogically depends in turn on the ability of the mind to discern qualities or attributes of anything separate from their existence. We call this ability *abstraction*. Abstraction is the act of separating, or state of being separated. God imposed on the mind of man the gift of abstraction at his creation. Thus, instantly Adam had the ability to distinguish the animals and to name them according their qualities (Genesis 2:19). Adam's *calling* (Hebrew *qara*) the animals was a declaration based on his

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reading of them (*AMG Dictionary*). Adam made intelligent decisions in terms of native language ability. The same word was used of Abraham when he called on the name of the Lord. Adam and Abraham each sought something very specific and meaningful. Since the Fall due to Adam's sin inherited by everyone since Adam, every child must overcome the natural scrambling of God-given faculties through learning. Those faculties are already in place in the human mind, the soul, but we must free those faculties through exercise, the common practice of mankind since Adam.

Finally, imagination, another gift of God to our faculties, allows us to formulate in the mind that do not yet exist. We collect and formulate something new from other things already known, but rearranged in new ways. This is properly invention. We apply the word creativity to ourselves, though for the believer only with the understanding that we do not create anything new, but derive new things. Thus, we invent. Only God created from nothing (*bara*, Genesis 1:1).

### ***Materialistic Presupposition***

All knowledge is analogical—compared and contrasted as distinct from all other things—via abstraction. Since all knowledge is circular and first taken from surrounding material reality and since we are moral beings, we must find a trustworthy basis for knowledge of important things as existence, meaning, and other traditionally philosophical concerns.

After many attempts and failures, materialistic philosophy has concluded that our apprehension of existence is not dependable. To the materialist, we *cannot* know. Given their anti-God bias, with Jean-Paul Sartre, materialists conclude that they must take a leap of faith to accept that which they think they know. Otherwise, knowledge tends toward the ancient view that reality is an illusion, absolute oneness, or a single cosmic consciousness or energy sometimes called *chi*. Yet, absolute oneness is nothingness. Post modern materialist philosophers say we can't know and it doesn't matter, so eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die (Ecclesiastes 8:14-15)—total futility and delusion. With materialists speculating that something came of nothing, they appear to have more in common with ancient *monism* than with any notion of hard, absolute science, as they claim. All this is to point out, with Van Til and Rushdoony, that all accepted knowledge rests upon *presupposition*—that which we accept as fundamentally true without argument, our root beliefs. We act upon what we truly believe. Thus, all action is by faith. Faith in who or what is the question.

## ***Presupposition that God is Reality and the Bible Represents Him***

Presupposition is foundational premise based on conviction of belief prior to applying reason; the antecedent of all following thought. The Bible-believing Christian presupposes the God of the Bible and its model of reality—physical and spiritual. Arguably, in concord with the Bible itself (2 Timothy 3:16), this model is a complete and reliable working system, explaining not only the existence of the physical world, but also meaning in life, love, the existence of evil, and eternity blessed or cursed. A fundamental of this Biblical system or worldview is faith. We must accept God on His terms, accepting certain mysteries—His hidden, private counsel. Yet having accepted those mysteries by faith, everything else falls into place. The Biblical view serves as a sound, practical working model for all of life, our presupposition.

As a part of the Biblical, faith working model, we would also add to our epistemology the *gift of understanding* from the Holy Spirit as the result of a grace-provided and faith-operated relationship with Him through Christ, that intimate relationship once lost through Adam now restored (1 John 2:27).

Again, contrast this with the materialist's view. In this view, everything came of its own out of absolute nothingness, with order resulting from something akin to an ultimate explosion. Order derives from absolute chaos, possessing no individual wholes, no constituent parts, but only ultimate fragmentation. Paul Steinhardt, an architect of the Big Bang, and of the ordering principle called *inflation*, has now concluded that the Big Bang was impossible, with odds against it of one in a googolplex. With a purely chaotic, accidental, yet deterministic materialism as their starting place, the materialist philosophers have zero grounds for rational explanations, and have completely failed to explain meaning, individuality, relationship, love, or the fact of our eminently hospitable, coherent, seemingly infinitely complex, material home called earth. They presuppose before any other information an *absolutely accidental* reality, the world they well know. They presuppose and accept God's world without God. They do not consistently live in the ultimate chaos and contingency of universe out of nothing, yet they hope to guide evolution toward some as yet undefined utopian existence.

## ***The Trinitarian Nature of God and His Creation***

The Holy Triune God exists as One God, in the absolutely complete relationship of Three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is One, without compromise of any Individuality. The Three hold relative positions in their relative economic purposes, yet in their essential existence, each are equally and fully God, something men cannot completely understand. Yet God existing in His Triune Being, He imposed certain aspects

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of His being on nature in a manner somewhat like that of a craftsman imposing his character on a fine piece of furniture. The quality of the furniture reflects the craftsman. With respect to God's creation, everything reflects His Unity, Infinity, and Relationship in the form of individuality, diversity, and inherent relationship between every part of creation to every other part. Our Biblical knowledge of God provides confidence in both the trustworthiness of knowledge and the ability to *know*, and to organize our knowledge of God's created reality. We can trust knowledge because we trust God. This was the reasoning of the first empirical scientists such as Isaac Newton as Christendom began to migrate from the mere Aristotelian speculation of the Medieval scholastics. It once provided the philosophical basis of virtually all Western science well into the 1800s.

Without created individuality in relationship—a direct reflection of the Holy Trinity, we have nothing but ultimately fragmented—no whole of anything at all—in ultimate chaos.

### ***Biblical Epistemology: You Know a Tree by Its Fruit***

But what is the sound basis of knowledge from a Scriptural view? What specifically comprises the Biblical view of knowledge? How can we have sure knowledge when all knowledge is analogical and therefore circular? We need a handy, practical Biblical epistemology. Jesus gave us the most fundamental and sound basis for knowledge: You know a tree by its fruit (Matthew 7:17-19). Theology was historically once known as the Queen of the Sciences. Just as translating the Bible determined modern German and English languages, the Bible determines what is knowledge, science. The scientific method is a *derivative* of sound Biblical epistemology.

Knowledge approximates in the mind a certain reality. Because analogical reasoning is circular and due to the fallen condition of the world, supposed knowledge can be a true perception of reality or a mistaken perception of reality. We may misinterpret facts. Isolated facts by themselves may be misleading, an inherent problem with artificial experimentation. Sound knowledge is tested knowledge (again, the Biblical root of the historic scientific method). Even knowledge given by the Holy Spirit must be tested in practice (1 Cor 14:29). No one is good at anything important before testing or proving of knowledge and skill in practice. God requires the testing of everything. *Sure* knowledge results from testing.

We should point out that there is a difference between *speculation* and sure, tested knowledge. Sure knowledge results from refinement of thought through examining the fruit it produces, testing and retesting. A scientific law results from the successful ability

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to observe consistent results, to reduce to a working model or formula, and to make accurate predictions from the resulting model. Force equals mass times acceleration. Like the measurement of physical things, with accuracy and precision required, knowledge in general is asymptotic (an exponential math concept)—grows closer and closer to the absolute reality we seek to apprehend. We *know*—*approximate reality* in our minds—through the godly gifts of abstraction and imagination.

Speculative scientific propositions which cannot be tested, such as evolution or the geological column, remain what science calls *theory*. Often, we adopt one theory over another based on presuppositions. The Biblical presupposition prefers creationism over spontaneous self-existence of the universe. When science was once more generally theistic in presupposition, science would tend to adopt the speculative or theoretical model that best fit the empirical evidence. Often, as with the unfolding science of quantum mechanics, the basic theories would change every few years with competing investigations, alternative theories, and better empirical evidence. Science now tends to entrench itself in a more absolute sense, particularly with reference to the systematic omission of God as a possible Original Cause. Supposed knowledge of this latter sort can create supposed reason for political authoritarianism and tyranny, such as with the notion of global climate change or the absolute need for a vaccine to eliminate a virus. The theory of evolution served to keep men enslaved, as in 1800s America treating them as less than fully human, or eliminated as fatally inferior as with the Nazi Holocaust. Materially based sciences such as psychology, can make apt observations of what exists in a certain place and time. But as mankind is essentially a moral and spiritual being materialistic psychology cannot possibly advise moral solutions. Its materialistic treatment of moral and spiritual difficulties with drugs continues to have a notoriously bad result, including frequent suicide. Merely materialistically and environmentally determined beings cannot change fundamentally in their character. They can only modify outward *behavior*. This is a competing religion to the faith of Christ which claims, with empirical evidence in its favor, I am a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15). Absolutizing science, as opposed to science as ongoing inquiry, is not good science, and is politically and religiously dangerous.

Christians assume the best theories are those that most closely adhere to Biblical evidence and reasoning, and that best fit the empirical evidence. Real science is never finished because knowledge is never exhaustive.

Incidentally since God grants knowledge and knowledge is incomplete, there is no room for arrogance (1 Cor 4:7; 8:2). Neither do we judge Another's servant over our supposed superior knowledge (Rom 14:4).

## ***Induction/Deduction***

Testing ideas as speculation and putting into practice what we believe by faith and testing the resulting fruit are together extremely important. We desire the best models to guide our lives. If the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the ditch (Luke 6:39). You know a tree by its fruit. The practices suggested here produce a reciprocal relationship of logic between the deductive and the inductive. We read Scripture for a Command, Principle or Propositional Truth (deduction), and then apply it. We test the fruit. We follow up inductively, taking the particulars back to Scripture to re-examine, correct, refine our thinking. We also inductively take the Biblical stories as fruit and reciprocally seek its original in the form of Scriptural doctrine.

Biblical thinking requires deduction and induction working together. Humble correction is part of the process. As one grows deeper in the learning of a subject, testing, correcting, and proving all along, since knowledge is an approximation upon God's gift of abstraction, one achieves what appears as an asymptotic grasp of the subject. As with physical measurement as our tools improve, we can make a closer and closer approximation. Due to the nature of matter, absolute physical measurements are impossible. Yet we can make such a close enough approximation that our knowledge works for a given purpose. Such also is abstract knowledge. Yet we can accumulate sure knowledge—practically dependable knowledge—when we defer to God on His terms and walk by faith. As with a farmer's crop, only God can bring the increase of the fruit of learning, and make up the difference over what we lack. We do not need fully to understand the Biblical process, but we must honor it by faith. This is how divine interpreters of the Gospel could assure us the reality of God's grace (unmerited gifted favor) and the work of Christ on our behalf (Romans 4:16; Hebrews 6:19; 2 Peter 1:10).

## ***Learning Spiral***

Rushdoony characterized the Van Tilian epistemology as a learning spiral (*By What Standard*). In any given area of learning, one visits certain primary elements of a subject, and learns to a certain depth. One sub-topic leads to others—sphere knowledge. Then with accumulated knowledge, one revisits those same sub-topics for greater depth and breadth of understanding, creating a spiral of learning.

## ***Truth in Tension***

Part of the correction necessary to ordinary human thinking lies in realizing that God's truth is always, humanly speaking, in *dialectic tension*, that is words appear to create antithesis, yet properly speaking create a both/and tension we yet need to grasp. The fallen human mind, taking itself at least as wise and knowledgeable as God, judges God on its terms. Rather God requires accepting Him, including the tension He imposes on

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us by faith. The narrow path leads to life (Matt 7:14). The narrow path requires constant fine course corrections, a tension in balance to maintain the course. We read that God *predestines* (Eph 1:11; John 15:16). Yet, "*choose you this day*" (Josh 24:15). Men should be mighty men of valor (Joshua 8:3), yet meek (Psalm 37:11). We cannot reconcile these in our minds. But then we need not. Our job in learning is to accept God on His terms by faith. Thus, we believe the both/and quite apart from our inability to rationalize and reconcile them. Because Satan is no creator, he can only corrupt (in our hearts, minds, and actions) what God made good. God made Law. He made liberty. Carnal man tends toward *authoritarianism* or *libertinism*—sinful brothers who devour upon one another. The Biblical tension is liberty under law. I restrain my liberty for God's sake and for man's, my neighbor. This is godly tension, and it works.

### ***Fruit of Sound Knowledge***

With such a view of knowledge, we can always move, by faith and the help of the Holy Spirit, toward God's righteousness and justice on His terms, and without the condemnation of the Law. Apply this understanding to every subject and endeavor in life, discerning God purpose and method, and all of life becomes instrumental in our eternal preparation and the contribution we may make according to individual calling and responsibility.

Relational government, including a Biblical understanding of authority and non-authority relationships for example, seems the least reformed as a legacy of the Reformation. It took 1600 years of Christian history before men learned civil self-government and reciprocal representation, equal justice before the law, covenant as the basis for civil association in the form of compacts or constitutions, and federal relational verticality of authority with simultaneous peer relationship without authority, which solves the problem of scale—all of which maximize liberty, while providing for justice. (These may be new concepts. The reader can investigate them by reading [Thy Will Be Done: When All Nations Call God Blessed](#), or a deeper dive via [Get Wisdom! Making Christian Heroes of Ordinary People](#).)

I taught in our school science classes that new and true knowledge is a gift from God. Scientists, like farmers, make their investment by faith, but God raises the crop. Men cannot make a crop grow. Science in the future therefore, as it was before Mach, Michelson, Einstein, etc., but rather as with Faraday and Maxwell, will prosper in the hands of bold men of God who trust Him and will not let sinfulness corrupt it. The just walk by faith. Who knows what grand inventions the Lord might yet let us discover from scientific investigation? Antigravity?

## ***Epistemology and Taxonomy***

Returning to the subject of knowledge taxonomy, of classification and order, if I want to learn something, I need to know how to find it. How do we organize knowledge to make it useful *and* maintain our appropriate focus on the Creator?

Based on understanding of the philosophical One and Many, Wholes and Constituents, Relationship of Individuals, we come to the concept of sphere topic. A sphere topic is an aptly defined individual subject of thought. It is a whole of some kind—farming, real estate, law, mathematics, ecology, recreation, home, theology. Every sphere topic consists of contributing subtopics, themselves a whole of some kind. Likewise, every sphere topic exists in relationship to other sphere topics, and is a constituent of a larger topic. *Tree leaves* consist of cells, cells of molecules, molecules of elemental atoms. Tree leaves exist as a part of a greater system, including twigs, branches, trunk, and roots, each containing the ability to transmit nutrients. These various constituents together form a whole tree. A group of trees form a copse, woodland, or a forest. A forest of trees exists in a greater system of living organisms and their supporting functions—an ecology. Ecological systems of various kinds form the earth's single, functional, natural system as a whole. The earth exists as it does, in the context of a solar system, the sun providing energy needed to supports the earth's functions. Likewise, large planets with their great gravitational fields function to protect the earth from damaging objects moving about space. In seeking knowledge of such vast numbers of subjects with seemingly endless relationships, an order is necessary. Typically, we go from the more general to the more specific. We call our attempts of such order *taxonomy* or *classification*. Again, our knowledge of any individual subjects is analogical—comparison and contrast with other things to establish both individuality and contextual relationship.

In the study of any subject, we begin with a reduced, carefully defined, simple whole principle, as we did above with the sphere topic of *knowledge*. We learn further of a subject by examining its context in the greater universe, and its constituting parts. Music is one of the arrays of sphere topics that both serve to glorify God and to feed the soul, with poetry, the visual arts, and drama, for example.

As to constituting subtopics, music is harmony and melody. Literature is an important idea, well expressed. Mathematics is the science of numbers to enable counting and measuring, simplifying material reality toward better understanding and use. Real estate is landed property that has come into some ownership through occupancy and improvement.

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The Van Tilian learning spiral suggests how to learn a subject beginning with constituent rudiments—sub-topics—in some order, expanding their study each time one revisits them. Thus, like a spiral, each time one revisits a sub-topic, the subject reaches out farther into related subjects. As the spiral expands, new sub-topics may arise. As Solomon suggests (Ecclesiastes 12:12), there is no end of learning in this fashion, as one sphere topic reaches out to other topics and ultimately to every other topic. Exhaustive mastery of any subjects is thus impossible, which would require absolute knowledge of everything—solely God's domain. Nonetheless, great depth of understanding is available. One area of endeavor will also grow out into other areas.

In order to make sense of the vast universe of knowledge, we attempt to reduce knowledge to a taxonomy, a simplified organization, accessible, yet sufficient to support serious study. Classification supports learning and understanding. A sound classification giving God His due promises improved results. How can we expect God to bless us if we ignore Him in our life pursuits?

If we live in a materialistic world, a humanistic classification system, however fragmented and isolated subjects may appear, as they typically are presented, may serve. However, if God is God, then we ought to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and our systems of knowledge ought to glorify God and His purposes among men, particularly to the leading of all things toward restored relationship between God and men, and men and men, with a view of eternity together. Epistemological self-consciousness, and a godly order of all things, serves these ends.

Much of this essay builds upon the thoughts of aerospace scientist and Christian apologist Glenn Salisbury.

### ***Modern Natural Science***

Science is the gaining of useful and dependable knowledge. Modern *natural* science historically built upon the Queen of the sciences—Biblical theology. From the Bible, over time, men discerned the nature of true knowledge. The scientific method is a reduction of sound Biblical epistemology. However and in one important sense, the contemporary formulation omits the important element of *previous investigation*. True science builds upon past learning. We learn what works and what doesn't, what ideas reflect reality and what ideas do not. If we refuse to learn from previous scientific efforts, we must start from scratch every time. If we insist on ignoring past learning, we defy God's Providence in leaving His heritage work to men, which is a faithless thing. The French Revolution acted in this manner, throwing out historic measurement system in defiance of

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Providence, and in favor of a completely man-centered view of life. Interestingly, God has used that rebellion, and the French Revolutionary metric system has come to serve science in a way similar to the way ancient Latin language provides a universal naming system for taxonomy as in Carl Linneaus's genus and species system, which we continue to use to this day. God uses what men mean for evil to produce good.

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<sup>i</sup> Webster's 1828 appears as the most solid basis for defining English words and determining their etymology, on several grounds. Webster mastered twenty-six contributory languages, including several dead languages, in a span of ten years study of language and languages prior to writing the dictionary. He approached life and knowledge from a profoundly Bible-centered view of life, including defining Biblical words in Biblical terms from the original languages. He defined words philosophically. That is, he defines words first according to their most general, historic sense. Webster took language as a Christian stewardship, protecting it from the natural effects of entropy which tends to reduce everything to its lowest commonality. Rather, Webster sought to elevate language on the best scientific grounds, particularly, once more, with its root in the normalizing effect of Scripture on all knowledge. Consider by contrast the materialistic, evolutionary view of language represented by iconic Oxford English Dictionary, which takes no responsibility of stewardship, but rather merely reflects the current state of an increasingly debased language.