

Theological Reflection

The purpose of a theological reflection (TR) is to put the experiences of your life in conversation with theology.

There are many events in our lives that we continually reflect upon. One reason we don't gain insights from these reflections is that we always approach the events from the same standpoint with the same preconceived notions. TRs enable us to gain fresh insights on these events by putting them into conversation with theology. These conversations enable theology to impact our future behaviors.

First, we need to select an experience in our life that we wish to learn from. In the first four steps of the TR process, we identify a story and the aspect of the story we wish to focus upon.

Identifying a Focal Point (Action Source)

(1) Select and tell an incident from your life

(2) Identify shifts in the story and pick one as the focal point

Shifts are where the action or emotional content of the story change.

(3) List your thoughts and feelings at the focal point

(4) Connect to the focal point with a Headline

Each group member individually connects and states their personal headline.

Now that we have the focus of our TR, we need to shift the lens with which we look at the event. So, the next step is to select a metaphor.

(5) Brainstorm metaphors relating to the thoughts and feelings of the focal point. Then, select the metaphor to use.

The purpose of the metaphor is to enable you to shift your perspective on the event just enough to be able to see the event in a different light.

Now the conversation between the experience and theology will begin. It begins by discussing the world of the metaphor (Action Source). At this point, we are leaving the original story, and our personal connection stories behind, because we are looking at the event from a new perspective.

(6) Examine the world of the metaphor

- What is life like standing in the world of the metaphor? (Creation)
- What is destructive or what do we do wrong in the world of the metaphor? (Sin)
- What calls us up short or hits us between the eyes in the world of the metaphor? Or when do we realize our will is not God's will? (Judgment)

- How do we show a changed viewpoint in the world of the metaphor?
(Repentance)

Now, the conversation continues by bringing theology into the discussion (Tradition Source). This is the critical step, since this is what makes this form of reflection a theological reflection.

(7) Find a religious concept that relates to the metaphor and examine it. (Tradition Source)

- What is life like standing in the world of the religious concept? (Creation)
- What is destructive or what do we do wrong in the world of the religious concept? (Sin)
- What calls us up short or hits us between the eyes in the world of the religious concept? Or when do we realize our will is not God's will? (Judgment)
- How do we show a changed viewpoint in the world of the religious concept? (Repentance)

The process continues by now allowing the metaphor and the religious concept to converse with each other.

(8) Discuss how the world of the metaphor and the world of the religious concept are alike and different.

Then, the conversation continues by bringing into the conversation concepts from the world around us (Cultural Source) and our own thoughts and beliefs (Position Source).

(9) Bring related concepts into the discussion from the world around us (Cultural Source) **and from our own thoughts and beliefs** (Position Source (10)). How do these concepts relate to the world of the metaphor and the religious concept?

Now, we start to look at what we might have learned from the reflection and/or what questions we still have.

(10) Describe what have you learned and ask any questions that you have? (Insights)

Finally, we look at how we will implement what we have learned in our lives.

(11) Explain how your new learning will affect your behavior? (Implications)

Remember: The purpose of performing TR in a group is to gain experience using the process and to develop the habit in order to use TR in your daily life.

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