

ACBC Exam Study Guide
Theology Exam 5

Q: Explain the doctrine of common grace relating the doctrine to the ability of secular psychologists to understand true information about the human condition.

1. Definition of Common Grace (Psalm 145:8-9)

“Common grace is the good kindness of God that he shows to all people regardless of whether they have experienced the salvation that comes through Jesus Christ alone. It is called common because it comes to all people - believers and unbelievers alike. It is referred to as grace because this kindness of God is undeserved. People are born in sin and so do not deserve any blessing from God, only judgment. That God would allow people to live and to experience many blessings o life is a great kindness.”¹

“The origin of the doctrine of common grace was occasioned by the fact that there is in the world, alongside of the course of the Christian life with all its blessings, a natural course of life, which is not redemptive and yet exhibits many traces of the true, the good, and the beautiful.”
Louis Berkhof

2. Categories of Common Grace²

- a. Divine Moral Provision (Gen. 11:6-9; Romans 2:15, 13:1-4; Luke 6:33)
- b. Divine Physical Provision (Mt. 5:43-45; Acts 14:17)
- c. Divine Intellectual Provision

“In 1 Corinthians 1 and 2, Paul makes a distinction between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God. Paul’s point is clearly to show that God, through the cross of Christ, wants to make a mockery of the so-called wisdom of the world.

God does not want people to trust in their own wisdom, so he destroys it through his own wisdom, the wisdom of the cross. However, Paul mentions that there are blessings from this worldly wisdom. Although worldly wisdom does not lead to salvation, good things come from it, like the production of useful information and wealth (1 Cor. 1:26). These are the blessings we receive even when trusting in them leads to our destruction.”³

¹ Health Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 67.

² Outline adapted from *A Theology of Biblical Counseling* (Chapter 3) by Health Lambert and the Faith Lafayette *Biblical Counseling Training Conference 2015 Track 5* notebook.

³ Lambert, 69.

3. Relate the doctrine of common grace to secular psychologists.

3 levels of Secular Psychology:⁴

- a. OBSERVATION.
- b. INTERPRETATION.
- c. INTERVENTION.

“As wonderful as the doctrine of common grace is, and as much as we should be thankful for it, God never intended to provide the solution for life’s problems in common grace. He intends Jesus Christ to fulfill that purpose. The information unbelievers come to know by God’s common grace is simply not as important for counseling as the truth God reveals in the Bible about how Jesus changes people. Troubled people can know much information about counseling through common grace, but what they most deeply need is the Bible to reveal Jesus and his special grace in salvation.”⁵

Resources:

Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Zondervan, 1979), 8-9.

Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual* (Zondervan), 92.

Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, New Com. Ed. (Eerdmans, 1996), 432-446..

Paul Enns, *Moody Handbook of Theology*, rev. ed. (Moody, 2014), 346-349

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Zondervan, 1994), 657-665.

Health Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, (Zondervan, 2016), 65-101.

⁴ Lambert, 76-79.

⁵ Lambert, 100-101.