

Doctrines of Grace

Reformed theology emphasizes the doctrines of grace, best known by the acronym TULIP.

T stands for total depravity. This does not mean that all persons are as bad as they could possibly be. It means rather that all human beings are affected by sin in every area of thought and conduct so that nothing that comes out of anyone apart from the regenerating grace of God can please God. As far as our relationships to God are concerned, we are all so ruined by sin that no one can properly understand either God or God's ways. Nor do we seek God, unless He is first at work within us to lead us to do so.

U stands for unconditional election. If sinners are as helpless in their depravity as the Bible says they are, unable to know and unwilling to seek God, then the only way they could possibly be saved is for God to take the initiative to change and save them. This is what election means. It is God choosing to save those who, apart from His sovereign choice and subsequent action, certainly would perish.

L stands for limited atonement. Reformed theology stresses that Jesus actually atoned for the sins of those the Father had chosen. He actually propitiated the wrath of God toward His people by taking their judgment upon Himself, actually redeemed them, and actually reconciled those specific persons to God.

I stands for irresistible grace. Left to ourselves we resist the grace of God. But when God works in our hearts, regenerating us and creating a renewed will within, then what was undesirable before becomes highly desirable, and we run to Jesus. Fallen sinners do resist God's grace, but His regenerating grace is effectual. It overcomes sin and accomplishes God's purpose.

P stands for perseverance of the saints. A better name might be "the perseverance of God with the saints," but both ideas are actually involved. God perseveres with us, keeping us from falling away, as we would certainly do if He were not with us. But because He preserves we also persevere. In fact, perseverance is the ultimate proof of election. We persevere because God preserves us from full and final falling away from Him.

Source: James Montgomery Boice
<http://www.reformedreader.org/t.u.l.i.p.htm>

Ordo Salutis

Order of Salvation

Ordo Salutis is Latin for "*the order of salvation*," which deals with the logical sequence of steps or stages involved in the salvation of a believer (e.g. election, foreknowledge, predestination, redemption, regeneration, justification, sanctification, glorification (*Rom.8:29-30*)).

1. **Foreknowledge:** God's knowing (in this sense) prior to salvation those who would be saved
2. **Predestination:** God's choosing before time all who would be saved
3. **Election:** God's choosing of all who would be saved
4. **Evangelism:** The communication of the Gospel by which one can be saved
5. **Regeneration:** God's renewing of one's life (not physically, but as opposed to the spiritual death caused by sin)
6. **Faith:** Belief and trust in the message of the Gospel
7. **Justification:** God's freeing of one from the penalty of sin; the pronouncement of "not guilty" on a sinner
8. **Repentance:** One's turning from sin to God
9. **Conversion:** One's turning to God based on the Gospel
10. **Sanctification:** God's separation of one from the lure of sin
11. **Perseverance:** One's continued true belief; remaining in the state of salvation
12. **Glorification:** God's final removal of all sin from the life and presence of one (in the eternal state)

Solas of the Faith

The Five Solas are five Latin phrases (or slogans) that emerged from the Protestant Reformation intended to summarize the Reformers' basic theological principles in contrast to certain teachings of the Roman Catholic Church of the day. "Sola" is Latin meaning "alone" or "only" and the corresponding phrases are:

1. **Sola Fide, Faith alone.** This means that we are saved from our sins by faith alone in Christ alone and not by faith in anything we do—whether it be baptism, church membership, good works, sincerity, or anything. God is the proper object of faith. When we have faith in the work of Christ and His sacrifice on the cross we are justified (*Rom.5:1*).
2. **Sola Scriptura, Scripture alone.** The Scriptures alone are the final and the highest authority. Everything that the Scriptures address are to be used as the final word on that topic. All things that we learn from other sources must be compared to Scripture and if they do not match Scripture or if they contradict Scripture, then we are not to affirm them. The Bible says not to exceed what is written (*1 Cor.4:6*).
3. **Sola Christus, Christ alone.** This position means that Christ Jesus is the only means of salvation (*John 14:6*), the only mediator (*1 Tim.2:5*), and the only human revelation of God. In other words, God has revealed Himself to the person of Jesus and no other person who has ever lived is God in flesh as Jesus is (*John 1:1, 14*).
4. **Sola Gratia, Grace alone.** This means that we are saved from our sins and damnation by the unmerited grace of God alone without any of our works. Grace is the completely unmerited, undeserved favor of God that He bestows upon us. The grace of God is completely motivated out of His own character and is His kind intention and merciful action upon various individuals. Thus, we are saved from His righteous judgment by His unmerited and unearned favor and there is nothing that we can or have done that can move God to be gracious to us.
5. **Soli Deo Gloria, Glory to God alone.** This means that God alone is the one who is to receive all the glory. He alone is the author and finisher of our salvation and works all good things through our lives. He has revealed Himself in the person of Jesus, who in great humility and love died on the cross, bearing our sin (*1 Pet.2:24*) so that we might enjoy His presence forever. We are to live for Him and glorify Him (*Is.43:7*).

Source:

<https://carm.org/what-are-the-five-solas>

Systematic Theology

Systematic theology is a discipline that addresses theological topics one by one (*e.g. God, sin, humanity*) and attempts to summarize all the biblical teaching on each particular subject. The goal is to present the major themes (i.e. doctrines) of the Christian faith in an organized and ordered overview that remains faithful to the biblical witness.

General areas of systematic theology:

- Bibliology: the study of the Bible
- Theology Proper: the study of the doctrine of God
- Christology: the study of Jesus
- Pneumatology: the study of the Holy Spirit
- Angelology: the study of the angelic beings
- Anthropology: the study of humanity
- Hamartiology: the study of sin
- Soteriology: the study of Salvation
- Ecclesiology: the study of the Church
- Eschatology: the study of last things or end times

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