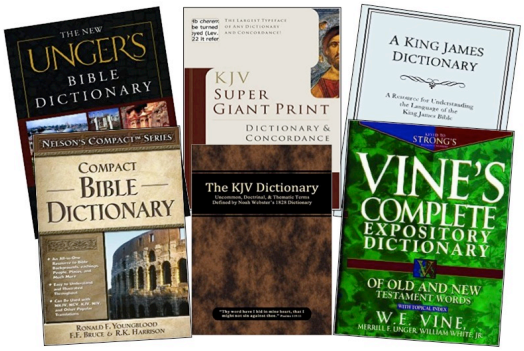
Words They Never Taught Me In Sunday School

“I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.”
[Psalms 119:99]



From personal experience, I can say with a great degree of certainty that most Christians are not taught some very important words that are in use by pastors and bible teachers. Also, there are many bible doctrines and fields of study that are very helpful for Christians to be aware of, yet their pastors, elders and other teachers in their local church are either ignorant of or not willing to take the time to teach their fellow brothers and sisters. In addition, if your church leaders are aware of these words and terms listed below, they may very well have been incorrectly taught the meaning of these words and associated doctrines, in whatever Bible school or seminary they attended, if any.

To eliminate the mystery surrounding these words, and to encourage you to further study the issues that the words pertain to, the following list has been constructed. If you take proper responsibility for discipling yourself and study these words and investigate the doctrines and issues they pertain to, then you, like the psalmist will be able to declare: “I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.” – [Psalms 119:99].

WORD	MEANING
Agnosticism	The view that we cannot know for sure if God (a supernatural omipotent diety) exists.
Amillennialism	The view that there will NOT be a LITERAL 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ on earth at some point in the future. But rather that Christ is presently reigning through the Church, and that the “1000 years” mentioned in Revelation 20:1-6 is a metaphorical reference to the present Church age which will end at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amyraldism	Amyraldism is an off-shoot of Calvinistic theology (sometimes called “4-point Calvinism” or “moderate Calvinism”). It is named after its creator, Moses Amyraut, a 16th-century French theologian, who was influential in the development of the doctrine of “hypothetical redemption” or “hypothetical universalism.” This doctrine, in essence, softens the Calvinistic doctrine of limited atonement. Amyraldism asserts that Christ died for the sins of all people, but because God knew that not all would respond (due to man’s total depravity, to which Amyraldians do hold), He elected some to whom He would impart saving faith. — http://www.gotquestions.org/Amyraldism.html The problem with this idea is that Christ’s atonment paid for all the sins of all God’s people and no more. If the atonement paid for all the sins of all people then no one would have to spend eternity in hell – if their sins were atoned for.
Animism	Animism is the belief that objects, places, and creatures all possess a spirit that connects them to each other.
Anthropomorphism	Anthropomorphism is the process of assigning human characteristics to God. Things such as God’s actions, emotions and appearance, (all of which are described throughout the Bible), are spoken of in terminology normally associated with humans.
Antinomianism	The false teaching that says a person can become a Christian but they are not under any obligation to obey any moral or spiritual laws. Those who subscribe to this teaching believe that to be “under grace” is indeed a license to sin.
Apologetics	The study and defense of the Christian faith and its various doctrines.
Arianism	A false teaching by a man named Arius that sprang up during the early days of the Church that denied Christ’s divinity and instead viewed Jesus as the highest of God’s creatures, a teaching similar to the Jehovah’s Witnesses and some other cults.
Arminianism	The belief that unsaved man has a free will to choose that which is right and holy and true and therefore he has the ability in himself to choose to become saved by inviting Christ into his life. This is a false teaching. The five points of Arminianism (from Jacobus Arminius 1559-1609) are in contrast to the five points of Calvinism. The five points of Arminianism are: • **Human Free Will** – The view that man is spiritually fallen, but he is not totally incapacitated by his sinful nature and so he still has the ability to freely choose God. His will is not completely enslaved by his sinful nature. • **Conditional Election** – The idea that God chose people for salvation based on His foreknowledge of them choosing Him, where God looked down the corridors of time into the future to see who would respond to the Gospel message. • **Universal Atonement** – The view that Jesus Christ bore all the sins of everyone who ever lived or ever will live. • **Resistable Grace** – The belief that the grace of God can be resisted so as to reject salvation in Jesus Christ. • **Fall from Grace** – The teaching that a person can fall from grace and lose his salvation.

Atheism	The view that God does not exist. See also Dystheism and Misotheism (many professing atheists act more like dystheists and misotheists).
Augustinianism	The system of doctrine promoted by Augustine of Hippo in the 4th century and by Luther and Calvin during the Protestant Reformation. It is the Biblical view of salvation as expounded by the apostle Paul in many of his epistles including most notably, Ephesians chapter one and Romans chapter nine. It is the historical, orthodox view of God's sovereignty in salvation and unregenerated mankind's total inability to seek God (see Romans 3:11)
Baptismal regeneration	The belief that water baptism causes a person to become saved, i.e. it regenerates their soul. This is a false teaching and is taught by the Catholic church and the Church of Christ.
Calvinism	The Bible doctrines outlining 5 basic tenets of salvation, that roughly state that man is dead in his sins and he cannot and will not seek God until he has become saved (been made spiritually alive by the power of the Holy Spirit). These 5 tenets are commonly known by the acronym "TULIP", which stands for Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance Of The Saints. Calvinism is often referred to as "The Doctrines Of Grace".
Cessationism	Cessationism is the belief that the charismatic gifts (a.k.a. sign gifts) of the Holy Spirit (a.k.a. sign gifts) – in particular, the gifts of tongues, prophecy and healing, ceased being practiced early on in the history of the Christian Church. The alternative view is referred to as "Continuationism"
Charismatic	A group of professing Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, who are preoccupied with supernatural spiritual gifts and phenomenon such as speaking in tongues, prophetic messages, dreams and visions, supernatural healings, etc. They tend to be almost exclusively Arminian (free-will) in their view of salvation.
Christophany	A Christophany refers to a non-physical manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ, such as visions of Jesus Christ after his ascension into Heaven, such as the bright light that the apostle Paul witnessed on the road to Damascus.
Common Grace	Common Grace refers to the "good" things that happen to all of mankind. It is "common" because its benefits are experienced by the whole human race without distinction between one person and another, believers or unbelievers. It is referred to as "grace" because it is viewed as undeserved favor sovereignly bestowed by God. In this sense, it is distinguished from the Calvinistic understanding of "saving" grace, which extends only to those whom God has chosen to save. This idea of "common grace" is often used as a springboard to teach that the good things which the reprobate receive in this life are proof of God's love for them.
Compatibilism	Compatibilism is the belief that free-will and determinism are compatible ideas, and that a person can believe in both without being logically inconsistent. Compatibilism seeks to show that God's exhaustive sovereignty is compatible with human freedom.

Consequentialism	The doctrine that the morality of an action is to be judged solely by its consequences.
Continuationism	Continuationism is the view that the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit such as prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues, healings, and miracles – have not ceased and are gifts that God is still bestowing upon believers today. The alternative view is referred to as “Cessationism”.
Covenant Theology	A view of the history of God’s interaction with mankind as a series of agreements, pacts or covenants such as the Adamic Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, etc. This view of Bible history is prevelant among Reformed (Calvinist) churches. (see also “Replacement Theology”)
Deism	A false view of God as divine creator while rejecting His continuing involvement with the world. Deists believe in God but they believe He is detached from His creation and unknowable. Many early founders of the United States were Deists.
Demiurge	A view of the creator of the universe as a being that fashioned the universe out of elements that themselves were pre-existing or eternal.
Determinism	Determinism is the philosophical view that every event in the universe is caused and controlled by natural laws. This would dictate that there is no free will in humans and that all events are the result of natural and physical laws.
Dispensationalism	A view of the history of the world as periods of time (dispensations) in which God dealt with the world and His people in different ways. Dispensationalists commonly believe that the Bible timeline can be broken down into seven distinct dispensations.
Doctrines of grace	Another term for Calvinism and for the Bible doctrines of salvation by God’s grace alone.
Duty-Faith	The idea that it is the duty of the natural man to believe unto eternal salvation, even if it is impossible for him to do so in his spiritually dead condition.
Dystheism	The belief that God is not truly as good as is commonly believed.
Ecclesiology	Study of the church – church structure, worship format, etc.
Ecumenical	The practice of various churches and denominations joining together, setting their theological differences aside, at the expense of truth, for some social cause, etc.,
Efficacy of Christ’s atonement	Efficacy refers to “producing a result”. Those who rightly understand Christ’s atonement on the cross understand that it was efficacious. It produced the result of forgiveness of sins for the elect. The atonement is efficacious (i.e. fully effective) grace in action.
Eisegesis	Adding ideas to a specific biblical text, according to one’s bias, that are not meant to be derived from that text.
Eschatology	Study of end time events such as end of the world prophecies, the rapture of the Church, the tribulation period, the millennial kingdom, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and Judgment Day.

Exegesis	To expound on the meaning of a passage of scripture, usually by examining the passage in all its parts and in consideration of how words used in that passage are used elsewhere in the Bible.
Fatalism	The doctrine that our actions and decisions make no difference to the course of events – outcomes of events will occur no matter what decisions a person makes.
Futurism	The view that most prophecies regarding the End times, and passages referring to the Last Days, the Great Tribulation, and Judgment Day are still future events that will immediately precede the return of Christ.
Gap Theory	A false teaching that there were gaps of time in the order of millions of years between the 6 days of creation mentioned in Genesis chapter one. It is an attempt by corrupt theologians to deny the literal 6 day creation account in the Bible, substituting it with long time periods that evolutionists claim are necessary for their false theory of origins to be believable. Evolutionists want us to believe that the passage of time is all that is necessary to make the impossible possible.
Gnosticism	A false teaching that salvation comes through knowledge and liberation from the material, earthly world. This movement first became prevalent in the second century.
Heresy	A belief or theory that is strongly at odds with established beliefs, in particular the accepted beliefs of a church or religious organization.
Hermeneutics	Methods of Bible interpretation
Heterodoxy	Any opinions or doctrines at variance with an official or orthodox position. So it would mean an unorthodox point of view.
Homiletics	Homiletics is the methodology of preparing sermons and preaching.
Infralapsarianism & Supralapsarianism	Infralapsarianism has to do with the belief that the fall of Adam was an event that God merely foresaw but did not predestine and when He foresaw the fall, He then permitted it or at least responded to it with His plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. Whereas supralapsarianism is the belief that God, in His Sovereignty, planned the fall of Adam for His glory and for the implementation of His plan of salvation through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Many (but not all) Calvinists are supralapsarians. Most, if not all Arminians and free-willers are infralapsarians.
Irresistible grace	A Bible doctrine that states that those who will become saved are drawn to God by His grace and that drawing is something they cannot resist.
Limited atonement	A Bible doctrine that states that Christ's atonement, His sin payment was for only His elect children.

Misotheism	The hatred of God or gods. Some polytheists believe they can inflict punishment on one of their gods/godesses by ceasing to worship him or her. Many who claim to be atheists actually act and talk more like misotheists (people who hate God). They say that if they were God, they would not have created a world with suffering, hardships, death, disease, etc. Most likely they have this view because they do not believe in the fall of Adam and the resulting curse from that fall.
Modalism	Modalism, also known as *Sabellianism*, is the unorthodox belief that God is one person who has revealed himself in three forms or modes. Modalism is perhaps the most common theological error concerning the nature of God. It is a denial of the Trinity – where God is one being *eternally existing* in three persons. According to Modalism, during the incarnation (the appearance of Jesus Christ in the flesh on the earth), Jesus was simply God acting in one mode or role, and the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was God acting in a different mode. Thus, Modalism teaches that God does not exist as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit at the same time. Rather, He is one person who manifests himself in these three modes at various times. Modalism therefore denies the basic distinctiveness and coexistence of the three persons of the Trinity.
Molinism	Molinism is the idea that God is completely sovereign while man also has a free will, which is a view that lies somewhere in between Arminianism and Calvinism.
Monergistic gospel	A one-way view of the Gospel… God reaches out to man. Man does not and cannot reach out to God. Man does not cooperate with God in salvation. This is the “reformed” (Calvinistic) view of salvation, the biblical view of salvation in spite of what the Arminians and Free-willers say.
Oneness Pentecostalism	affirms that there exists only one God in all the universe. It affirms the deity of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. However, Oneness theology denies the Trinity and that the Son of God existing from eternity past. They call God the Father “Jesus”, viewing Him as someone separate from the Son of God. Oneness Pentecostals believe that in order to be saved, a person must be baptized and by immersion. They also believe that speaking in tongues is a necessary manifestation of the Holy Spirit and that only those who have spoken in tongues are really saved.
Open Theism	Open theism, also referred to as free-will theism and openness theology, is an idea that asserts that God does not exercise meticulous control over the universe but leaves it “open” for people to make significant choices – which also assumes that God has not predetermined the future. Proponents of open theism believe that God is omniscient (all knowing), but deny that this means that God knows everything that will eventually happen, so their view of God is that He is only as all knowing as they say He is.
Original Sin	Original sin is the view, based upon scripture, that every person born into the world is tainted by the Fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden, such that all of humanity is now morally corrupt at birth, and are powerless to rehabilitate themselves or even come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ unless God first intervenes and graciously saves and regenerates them.

Orthodoxy	A doctrine or practice that is generally accepted throughout the Christian Church as true or correct.
Paedo baptism	Infant baptism (Presbyterians are one of many groups of Christians referred to as paedo Baptists since they baptize infants).
Paraclete	Paraclete means advocate or helper. In Christianity, paraclete commonly refers to the Holy Spirit.
Pantheism	Pantheism typically has to do with worship of nature as if all of the Universe and everything in it forms one massive diety. It boils down to worshipping the creation rather than the Creator.
Pelagianism	A false teaching of a British monk by the name of Pelagius who taught that man is not totally corrupt and lost in sin, so he has the capacity in himself to become saved by an act of his own will. This teaching contradicts the Bible's declaration that the unsaved are "dead in their sins" (Eph 2:1) and "there are none [among the unsaved] who seeketh after God" (Romans 3:11).
Pentecostalism	A branch of Protestant Christianity that overemphasizes supernatural spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues, being slain in the spirit (falling backwards), prophesizing not realizing that Matthew 16:4 applies to them.
Perseverance of the Saints	Also known as **Preservation of the saints**, is a Bible doctrine that states that those who become saved by God cannot lose their salvation, they will unquestionably endure to the end, they will persevere to the last day and God will be the cause of that. He will preserve them, keep them from falling and present them faultless (Jude 24).
Postmillennialism	The belief that Christ's second coming will occur after the "millennium," a golden age of Christian prosperity and dominance.
Premillenialism	The view that Christ's second coming will occur prior to His millennial kingdom, and that the millennial kingdom is a literal 1000-year reign of Christ on earth.
Preterism	The view that certain biblical prophecies have occurred in the past, and therefore are considered to already have been fulfilled. This is a good field of study for those who wish to investigate alternative views to the common (popular) views on Dispensationalism.

Prevenient Grace	This unbiblical idea consists of the belief that the human race, through the fall of Adam became depraved so that they cannot now turn of themselves by their own natural strength to call God to become saved, so they therefore need God to provide the enabling power (i.e. the prevenient grace) to call upon Him for salvation and that this enabling grace precedes regeneration and that some sinners by their own "free will" will utilize this grace to call upon God and become saved, but other sinners will not call upon God, even though they have been given just as much of this enabling or "prevenient" grace. This erroneous concept was developed and promoted by those who preach the false free-will gospel of salvation. It ignores many passages of scripture that state that the unsaved are spiritually dead, not spiritually neutral as the proponents of Prevenient Grace believe. The spiritually dead person requires regeneration by God to be able to even see his own wretched spiritual condition and to be able to realize his need for Christ. So, in other words, the change that is required for a sinner to be cognizant of these things requires the new birth and nothing less. Only a new creature in Christ will have the eyes to see his own true spiritual condition before a thrice-holy God and only a new creature in Christ will want the remedy (Jesus Christ) for his lost spiritual condition.
Propitiation	Propitiation, which is also called expiation, is the act of appeasing a deity (i.e. God), and thereby incurring divine favor (e.g. salvation) or avoiding divine retribution (God's wrath). Propitiation regarding the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, means that Jesus paid the complete and unconditional pardon of those for whom He came to save (i.e. God's "Elect").
Prosperity gospel	A teaching that God wants all Christians to be financially prosperous and physically healthy. All that is required of the Christian is that they have enough faith in the promises of God about prosperity found in the Bible. This teaching takes scripture passages out of context and ignores Christ's teachings about the persecution and hardship associated with taking up one's cross and following Him.
Puritans	Originally a term used for the Protestants of the Reformation who sought to purify the church of England of errors, primarily those unbiblical doctrines and practices originating in the Roman Catholic church. Nowadays, this term is often applied to many Protestants of the past who where seeking to live and promote godly lives and sound biblical doctrine.
Reconstructionism	The belief that by the preaching of the Gospel and teaching biblical principles, it is possible to change (reconstruct) society around biblical laws. There are many groups and individuals in America today who are trying to bring America "back" to its Christian roots and heritage, not realizing that the mission of the Church is not to make the heathen act Christian but rather the mission is to preach God's word and let God convict and convert whom He wills, when He wills.
Replacement Theology	Also referred to as supersessionism, Replacement Theology teaches that the Church has replaced Israel in God's plan and is the ***Israel*** being referred to in many prophetic events that have yet to take place.

Reformed theology	The various doctrines adhered to and taught by the *reformers* (Martin Luther, John Calvin, William Tyndale, John Huss, etc.) during the protestant reformation, primarily the five points of Calvinism.
Reformers	Those Christians who sought to correct (reform) the doctrinal errors being spread by the Catholic church, primarily during the 16th and 17th centuries.
Semi-Pelagianism	A false doctrine regarding the spiritual state of man that says unsaved men are not totally corrupt spiritually, they are not spiritually dead and unable to respond to God, but rather they are corrupted by sin and are given the ability, by God, to accept salvation when they hear the Gospel. Whereas, the Bible teaches that God must give us His Spirit before we turn to Him (Ezek. 36:25-27) and before we can "see" or enter into His kingdom (John 3:3)
Social gospel	An overemphasis on social causes to the neglect of the preaching of the Gospel. Some churches and organizations that preach a social gospel believe that doing good works in the name of Christ is in and of itself evangelism of a sort, not realizing that the word of God *must* be preached in order for souls to be saved, since "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God".
Socinianism	A set of beliefs based on the teaching of a man named Fausto Sozzini, who denied the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, and original sin. He also believed that salvation is granted to those who adopt Christ's virtues which is yet another works gospel.
Soteriology	The study of God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ.
Sovereignty of God in salvation	God's sovereignty in salvation means that He saves whom He wills when He wills if He wills. Sinners are saved because God graciously chose them in eternity and regenerated and called them in history. They cannot even take credit for their faith because it is the gift that He Himself sovereignly bestows.
Syncretism (religious syncretism)	Religious syncretism usually involves the addition of a few essential parts of one religion to a dominant religion, resulting in a new religious system.
Synergistic gospel	A "two-way" view of the gospel that believes that man cooperates with God (i.e. God reaching out to man and man reaching out to God). This is the Armenian (free-will) view of the gospel and it is unbiblical.
Theonomy	A Christian form of government in which society is ruled by divine law – including the judicial laws of the Old Testament.
Theophany	The appearance of God to a person in the physical realm, typically in a human form.
Total depravity	A Bible doctrine that states that man is totally corrupt and cannot possibly worship God in spirit and in truth until and unless God gives him a new heart. And until and unless God grants salvation, no man or woman can turn to God in their spiritually dead unregenerated state of their own "free-will".
Trinitarianism	The teaching that God has revealed Himself to be three co-equal and co-eternal Persons..

TULIP	An acronym made up of the first letter of each word in the 5 points of Calvinism (Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible grace, Perseverance of the saints). The 5 points of Calvinism were written up in response to the 5 points of Arminianism.
Unconditional election	A Bible doctrine that states that those who become saved are chosen by God from before the foundation of the world, based solely on the good pleasure of God and based upon no merits of there own nor on any foreknowledge of them choosing to get right with God.
Universal atonement	The erroneous belief that Christ's atonement was for the whole world and therefore all will be saved. This belief is unbiblical.
Well-Meant Offer	The well-meant offer (a.k.a. free offer) of the Gospel is the teaching that salvation in Jesus Christ is offered to all people. This idea conflicts with God's elective plan of salvation and this teaching was rejected by the framers of the Canons of Dordt in 1618.

Other Sources For Definitions Of Theological Terms:
'heresy', authority, quarrels and words
Dictionary of Theological Terms
Theological Terminology Dictionary
Theopedia – An encyclopedia of Biblical Christianity
Monergism.com directory of topics
GotQuestions.org search page
The Encyclopedia of Practical Christianity By Robert A. Morey
The Encyclopedia of Practical Christianity By Robert A. Morey (alternate source)
Dictionary Of Theology At Carm.org