

“What’s The Big Deal About Doctrine?”

2 Timothy 4:1-7

In a day of doctrinal deviation, personality hype, and moral lapse believers must be fervent in knowing, defending, propagating and obeying the Scriptures. Doctrine is very essential to those who desire to fulfill the purposes of God. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 3:15, “I (Paul) write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

I. What is meant when one speaks about doctrine?

- A. Doctrine simply means the teaching one has received and believes. What teaching should one receive? Everyone believes something about some position, we are correct concerning our “faith?” What is your doctrinal position regarding key theological positions? Can you defend them? What teachings would you consider essential for living a committed Christian life? The whole basis of what we are is wrapped in what we believe.
 - 1. 1 Timothy 4:13, “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”
 - 2. Romans 6:17, “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that from of doctrine which was delivered you.” The word form implies that the regular instruction in the church should be the teaching of sound words.
 - 3. There are key recognized doctrines:
 - a. Theology – Teaching Concerning God
 - b. Christology – Teaching Concerning Christ
 - c. Pneumatology – Teaching Concerning the Holy Spirit
 - d. Bibliology – Teaching Concerning the Scriptures
 - e. Anthropology – Teaching Concerning Man
 - f. Hamartiology – Teaching Concerning Sin
 - g. Soteriology – Teaching Concerning Salvation
 - h. Ecclesiology – Teaching Concerning the Church
 - i. Angelology – Teaching Concerning angels, Demons, and Satan
 - j. Eschatology – Teaching Concerning Last Things or The End Times.
 - 4. All of our practical Christian teaching, including our admonitions for believers to live a life of holiness technically comes from the above 10 doctrines, All the truth of Scripture, regardless of a particular doctrinal study, calls us to principled living.
- B. Being exposed to teaching is not enough, it must be marked by the correct kind of teaching.
 - 1. 2 Timothy 1:7, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”
 - 2. 2 Timothy 1:13, “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”
 - 3. 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”
 - a. **“Sound Words”** – Speaks of the Sufficiency of Scripture. “All Scripture”
The works and words of God, of Jesus Christ, are not exhaustive but they are sufficient!
 - b. **“Sound Words”** – Speak of the Authority of Scripture. “Given by inspiration of God.”
This is not primarily a book about God, it is a book from God. “Thus, saith the Lord” defines the Bible as His book, not the book created by ingenious men”.
 - c. **“Sound Words”** – Speak of the Goal of Scripture. “That the man of God may be...”
 - d. Truth is not decided by any church, or by enthusiastic personalities, or by eloquent communicators, or by an obnoxious minority, or by majority rule, or by the changing culture, but Truth has already been decided, is final and will forever remain truth because it is recorded in the Scriptures and God has nothing more to say concerning our ability to please Him and fulfill His purposes.
- C. Academic intelligence concerning doctrine is not enough, it must accompany personal obedience.
 - 1. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only...” – James 1:2
 - 2. The purpose of preaching is not to provide some intellectual stimulus, but preaching is a call to righteous living and submission of our will to the Will of God. When one refuses to call unbelievers and believers to a life of obedience one will lose their authority in presenting the Scriptures.

3. Doctrine without Devotion is Disobedience. "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the God" 2 Corinthians 7:1
4. Devotion without Doctrine is Deterioration and Destruction.
 - a. Example: John 3:1-7; Nicodemus. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."
 - b. Ephesians 4:14, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."
5. Doctrine with Devotion is Delight. "Well pleasing" To God.

II. Why is commitment to sound doctrine teaching important?

- A. It insures the presence and power and blessing of God.
 - o 1 Kings 18 – Elijah and the false prophets at Mount Carmel.
- B. It allows one to correctly address the questions and problems of life from God's perspective.
 - o 2 Timothy 3:15, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."
- C. Sound doctrinal teaching makes one profitable for the ministry.
 - o 2 Timothy 3:16
- D. Sound doctrinal teaching prevents believers from falling for "every wind of doctrine" or drifting into error.
 - o The average believer feels that doctrine belongs in the seminary classroom or on the shelf of the minister's library, but it is not to be brought over into the pew or into the daily living of the child of God. Yet, apart from a knowledge of the doctrines of the Word of God, we will continue in spiritual immaturity and will be tossed about by every wind of doctrine." *Things which Become Sound Doctrine*, J. Dwight Pentecost, (p. 9).
 - o I suspect that young people whose spiritual lives simply revolve around a Saturday night interdenominational rally, where their spiritual diet gets little beyond the singing of spiritual nursery rhymes, have great problems in standing for Christ in the world, unless they withdraw themselves and live a sheltered life." (p. 51) *The Systematic Theology*.
- E. It halts believers from doing irreparable damage to the cause of Christ.
 - o The teachings regarding redemption are vitally important for one's eternal life to be settled, however, a correct doctrinal position includes more than just teaching about salvation. We must be committed to the "whole counsel of God" to see the entire Gospel message acted upon accurately.
- F. It allows you to adequately defend the Word of God and to give an "answer to the hope that is in you."
 - o Mark 16:15, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature..."
- G. We have a responsibility to imitate the correct Biblical responses of former devoted believers.
 - o 2 Timothy 2:1-2 "The things that thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
 - o Titus 2:1,7,8a "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: that the aged men be... In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned"
- H. All ministers of the gospel are answerable to Christ for how faithfully they protected and nurtured their congregations.
 1. As a minister of Jesus Christ, your first responsibility is to maintain the purity of the church and its protection from false doctrine.
 2. Unfortunately, there are many pastors whose churches expect them to do everything under the sun except what Christ intends-teaching the Word of God.
 3. An effective ministry centers its energies on teaching sound doctrine, and the key is diligent study.
 - o 2 Timothy 2:15 "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth."

III. Why aren't more churches or individuals following after sound doctrine, if it's so great?

- A. There has been a serious lack of discipleship and doctrinal teaching in the lives of believers.
- B. There has been a magnitude of false teachers making their messages attractive and appealing.
 - o 1 Timothy 4:1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils."

- D. There are those individuals who are consumed with acquiring the pleasures and pursuits of this life: and lack the necessary discipline or desire or power or wisdom to patiently and consistently and willingly follow after those things that are righteous and godly.
 - o 2 Timothy 4:3, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine: but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: And they shall 'turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."
 - o 2 Timothy 4:10, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world..."
- E. They are currently caught in the blindness of deceit and have always been involved with false teaching since early childhood.
 - o Ephesians 4:18, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness (or hardness) of their heart."
- F. There are many individuals who will just ignore the truths of Scripture, never acknowledging them. These people are arrogant individuals standing directly opposed to God's truth.

IV. What are some essential doctrinal teachings that are commonly rejected, compromised, watered down, ignored, or misunderstood that believers should caution themselves concerning?

- A. You must be committed to teaching the whole counsel of God.
- B. You must never compromise the Gospel message.
 - o 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."
 - o 2 Corinthians 11:13-14, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."

Why is it that you can talk about God, and nobody gets upset, but as soon as you mention Jesus, people often want to stop the conversation? Why have men and women down through the ages been divided over the question, "Who is Jesus? *This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times.* McDowell, Josh. *A Ready Defense*.

- C. You must never minimize the person of Jesus Christ. Philippians 2:9-11
- D. You must never take away the power of the cross, the blood, the crucifixion, the resurrection, the second coming.
- E. You must never question the adequacy and accuracy of the Scriptures.
- F. You must always stress the personal relationship with God that is only attainable through Jesus Christ.
- G. You must always stress the need for personal responsibility and repentance and confession and restoration and forgiveness. Never make light of sinfulness or wickedness.
- H. You must never minimize the importance of personal holiness and developing God honoring standards.
- I. You must not stress unity in spite of doctrinal differences.
- J. You must separate yourself from those who should not be interested in "coming out of the world" or who have departed in error not desiring any pursuit of righteousness.
- K. You must do all things in love (1 Corinthians 13)

V. What can I do to avoid false doctrine?

Satan and his servants can deceive us by appearing to be attractive, good, and moral. Many unsuspecting people follow smooth-talking, Bible-quoting leaders into false teaching that alienate them from their families and lead them into the practice of immorality and deceit. Don't be fooled by external appearances. Our impressions alone are not an accurate indicator of who is or isn't a true follower of Christ. Ask the following questions or consider the following thoughts:

- A. Do the teachings of men confirm what the Scriptures say. (Acts 17:11) Study the Scriptures diligently.
- B. Does the teacher affirm and proclaim that Jesus Christ is God who came into the world as a man to save people from their sins. (1 John 4:1-3)

- C. Is the teacher's life-style consistent with biblical morality. (Matthew 12:33-37)
- D. Does it stress man-made taboos rather than God's grace?
- E. Does it stress formulas, secret knowledge, or special visions more than the Word of God?
- F. Make the Bible you final authority for faith and practice.
- G. Make sure you resolve conflicts immediately because the first steps toward doctrinal compromise include a rebellion against established authority, a breakdown in standards of holiness and an entertainment of foolish questions. This typically leads to a partial or complete renunciation of the faith. Many people change their theology to accommodate their morality.