

The Importance Of Bible Doctrine

The subject of Bible doctrine is often a polarizing one. For one, there are many disagreements that exist as to issues of doctrine among many who profess to believe in Jesus. Then, there are others who believe that Bible doctrine is largely irrelevant to their lives, claiming they only need to know and love Jesus (saying that doctrine is for church leaders and theologians). And, there are others who will even claim that there are “primary” doctrines people must agree on while others are “secondary” and insignificant for salvation. However, the word sometimes translated as “doctrine” in the Bible simply refers to teaching. Also, the Bible claims that all Scripture is profitable for learning the doctrines/teachings of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Therefore, this doctrine is essential for people to please God!

1) God only revealed one set of doctrines.

The Bible clearly speaks of teachings that come from God. In fact, this is a key part of what is revealed in the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17). For example, there is teaching that can be referred to as “sound” that comes from God (1 Timothy 6:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1). This is teaching that is healthy, uncorrupt, and with no mixture of error. This teaching, then, can be called “good” (1 Timothy 4:6). The apostle Paul explains that Christians are to be united in this single set of teaching that comes from God (Ephesians 4:1-6). That is, God (through the Holy Spirit) has not revealed conflicting teachings, but “one faith” (i.e. one set of religious belief, teaching, and practice that is acceptable to God). This has been once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3) through the message of the gospel (New Testament teachings, Philippians 1:27). Therefore, God’s people can and should all agree (1 Corinthians 1:10)!

2) Anything different from God’s doctrine is false doctrine. Not everything that is

taught in the name of “religion” or even “Christianity” comes from God. Instead, some doctrine has Satan and demons as its source (2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 1 Timothy 4:1-3) and is spread by people (Matthew 15:9; Colossians 2:20-23). This doctrine is false, must not be taught, and does not agree with the sound teaching that comes from God (1 Timothy 1:3-4; 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 4:2-4). Sadly, there are many false teachers and false teachings at work throughout the world today. But, this is nothing new – as it has been this way since Bible times (2 Peter 2:1-3). Over the past (approximately) 2,000 years, the number of false teachings have multiplied. Yet, false teachings must not be tolerated, regardless of who is teaching it or how “innocent” the teaching may appear to be (Galatians 1:6-9; 2 John 1:9-11). For, false teaching leads people away from Christ (2 Peter 3:15-18) and creates obstacles and divisions (Romans 16:17-18)!

3) God’s doctrine sets people free from sin.

While Satan and those working with him like to present false teachings as being nothing more than irrelevant differences of opinion, God says that it is the true teaching that comes from Him that sets people free from sin (John 8:31-32). You see, the doctrines/teachings you believe will influence how you obey (Romans 6:16-18). This means that only the pattern of teaching that has been revealed by God will result in freedom from sin in Jesus Christ. Anything different from this pattern revealed in the true teachings of Scripture keeps people enslaved to sin! Certainly, there are many who are teaching things that never lead others to the salvation that Jesus offers! For example, there are many today who teach salvation by “faith alone” (mental assent to truths about Jesus), while the Bible teaches otherwise (Matthew 7:21-23; Acts 2:38). Furthermore, there are many today who teach that once a person is saved, he/she cannot be lost, while the Bible teaches otherwise (2 Peter 2:20-

22). You see, while God's doctrine will set people free, those who follow false teaching will be acting on false promises for freedom that do not come to pass (2 Peter 2:19)!

4) God's doctrine guides people into how they should live. Not only does true and false teaching lead to two different places spiritually and eternally, but it also has a tremendous impact on how a person lives. This was evident from 2 Timothy 3:16-17, showing that the various teachings of Scripture are necessary to producing a life that pleases God. But, this is also evident through other passages. For example, consider the letters Paul wrote to the Romans and Ephesians. The first half or more of each book details various doctrines concerning the salvation God has offered through Jesus. Then, the end of those books gives details relevant to how those doctrines should impact the way in which we live. Furthermore, Paul demonstrated that sound doctrine promotes godliness, while false doctrine does not (1 Timothy 6:3-5). In fact, Paul speaks of people adorning the teaching of God our Savior in everything (Titus 2:9-10). Therefore, every doctrine has practical implications in the fruit of a person's life. After all, Jesus taught that how a person lives comes from the heart (Matthew 15:18-19) – and the doctrines of God are put inside the heart (Romans 6:17).

God has revealed His perfect set of teachings in the pages of the New Testament. We must, therefore, be diligent to study the Bible and learn what He teaches. This will help us in two ways (Ephesians 4:11-16). First, it will help us to stay away from the various false teachings that exist in this world. Second, it will help us to grow into the maturity of Christ so we can be effective in His service! Then, all of this will lead to the eternal salvation He offers in Heaven to those who faithfully obey Him!

Thought Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Teaching: What did you learn from this lesson?

Rebuking: What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

Correcting: How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

Training & Equipping: How can you apply this lesson to be trained and equipped in God's service?