

Bible Doctrine

Learning & Contending

Introduction: Essential Requirements to Know Bible Doctrine

Romans 16:17; Ephesians 4:14

Read **2 Timothy 4:1-5**.

The word "**doctrine**" simply means **teaching**. When we speak of Bible doctrine we are referring to the teaching of the Scriptures. We do not speak of "*doctrines*" in the plural sense for there is only one true doctrine. The local church is the pillar and ground of the truth singular. There are not many truths, there is one truth. The truth is found in the teaching of the Bible.

First, The Priority of Doctrine

It was a Priority to Christ

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." - John 8:31

It was a Priority in the First-Century Churches

Acts 2:42, *"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer."*

Second, The Purpose of Doctrine

To Preserve Sound Doctrine

2 Timothy 2:2, *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."*

To Prevent False Doctrine

Jude 3, 4, *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

There was a constant warning in the churches through Paul’s letters to be careful of false doctrine creeping in the teachings of the churches. The following is an example of how false doctrine had taken over churches.

A Survey Conducted by Dennis P. Hollinger in 2009 asking this question: **Is Jesus Really the Only Way to God?**

Last year, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life published a major study on religious affiliation, beliefs and practices in the United States. One of the significant findings was that **70% of all Americans** believe that many religions can lead to eternal life, including **65% of all self-identifying Christians**. Perhaps the most surprising finding was that **56% of all Evangelical Christians** believe that there are many paths, other than faith in Christ, to God and eternal life.

Many so called Christians in our society are not being taught the simple doctrine of Salvation. These churches have been infiltrated with false doctrine, or they are not teaching doctrine.

Romans 16:17, 18, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not*

our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

Third, The Product of Doctrine

What we know to be true about God and His Word is vitally important because it affects every area of our lives. If you look at a person's behavior then I can show you what that person believes about God.

We can naturally divide many of Paul's Epistles into two parts. The first part is doctrine in nature, while the second part is practical in nature. If you take the book of Romans as an example you will find that division to be clear:

Romans 1-11 is primarily doctrinal (Salvation, Sanctification, Glorification)

Romans 12-16 is primarily practical

Furthermore, the practical instruction stands on the foundation of the doctrinal teaching.

When we approach the Bible, we must receive it as it is in truth the Word of God, and not as we want it to be. The opinions of men are constantly changing! But our God never changes, He is the same yesterday, today, and forever!

Knowing the importance of the doctrine in God's Word, we begin by considering some essential requirements for us to know Bible doctrine. Not everyone can learn doctrine. Not everyone will understand doctrine. How can we prevent ourselves from falling into false doctrine?

I would like to give us 6 Essential Requirements to Know Bible Doctrine. This list is not exhaustive, but it is a good place to begin.

I. We **Declare** the Word of God to be Inerrant & Authoritative

Anyone who questions the authority of the Bible is bound to be misled into error. If the Scripture is not assumed to be inerrant, then it is certain that man can never know the truth.

2 Timothy 3:16, *"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 may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."*

Lewis Sperry Chafer wrote, "As a chemist will make no advance in his science if he doubts or rejects the essential character of the elements which he compounds, so a Bible student must fail who does not accept the trustworthiness of the Word of God."

The Holy Scripture is the only true point of reference for the believer and the local church. If the inerrancy and authority of the Bible is not assumed by the Bible student, there is nothing for him to stand on.

II. We **Demand** that An Individual Must Have a Spiritual Regeneration

As I say "we demand," I am not declaring my personal demand. However, I am echoing the demand of Scripture.

1 Corinthians 2:14, *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."*

The man who is unregenerate cannot understand the Word of God. Those things of the Spirit of God can only be understood by one who has spiritual discernment. Things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man.

R.A. Torrey wrote, *“One must understand divine language in which it was written as well - the language of the Holy Spirit. A person who understands the language of the Holy Spirit, but who does not understand a word of Greek or Hebrew or Aramaic, will get more out of the Bible, than one, who knows all about Greek, and Hebrews...but is not born again, and consequently, does not understand the language of the Holy Spirit.”*

III. We **Determine** to Approach God’s Word with Humility and Godly Sincerity

True Bible knowledge always humbled the student of the Bible whether he be teacher or hearer. If boasting or pride is the result of Bible knowledge, then you have not acquired Bible knowledge.

First, It is marked by the absence of pride.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3, *“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”*

The strife and divisions in the church at Corinth was evidence that they were in the milk stage. The Bible tells us that “only by pride cometh contention.” These believers were not able to grow and be instructed because of their pride.

Second, It is marked by a humble submission to God's will.

John 7:17, *"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."*

If the believer does not submit the truth when he hear the truth of God, he will not know of the doctrine. God only reveals more truth to the believers who do God's will in the truth they have already learned. Knowing the doctrine is inextricably connected to doing His will.

Third, It is marked by a diligent self-examination.

1 Corinthians 2:15, *"But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."*

1 Corinthians 11:28, 31-32, *"But let a man examine himself...For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."*

The believer must be consistently judging himself and examining himself before the Lord and His Holy Word. This will help us remain in a spirit of humility as we study the Word of God.

IV. We **Depend** Upon the Illumination of the Holy Spirit that Has Been Given to Us

The Bible make is clear that believer need help in understanding the Scripture. We find that to be true with Christ and His disciples.

Luke 24:27, 32, 45, *"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself...And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within*

us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?...Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures..."

Jesus Christ had told His disciples that the Holy Ghost would guide them into all truth.

John 16:13, *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth..."*

It is important to always recognize Who is going the teaching. The preacher and teacher may stand to preach and teach, but the Holy Ghost is teaching wisdom. The Holy Ghost helps us to compared spiritual things with spiritual.

1 Corinthians 2:13, *"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."*

We should pray as the Psalmist...

Psalm 119:18, *"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."*

It is a wonderful things when the Lord opens our eyes to the truth found in His Word. The eyes of our understanding need to be enlightened!

Ephesians 1:17-18, *"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."*

V. We **Dedicate** Ourselves Diligently to the Study of God's Word

It is no mistake that the study of God's Word is hard work. Yes, the Holy Ghost illumines the mind and heart of the believer. Yet, the believer is to give himself to the study of God's Word.

2 Timothy 2:15, *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

Timothy is to be described as a "workman." It takes diligent work to study Scripture and faithfully and consistently divide the Word of Truth. To be lazy in the study of God Word is to put a roadblock in our ability to learn Bible doctrine.

VI. We **Detach** Ourselves from a Unwholesome Bible Interpretation

There is only one way to properly interpret the Bible. We believe that the **Bible must be interpreted into its literals, grammatical, and historical sense.**

We reject the allegorical method of interpretation founded in Alexandria Egypt which gave way to Augustinian theology.

Does the Bible have allegories, parable, and pictures? Of course it does. However, we only study the Bible as an allegory, or parable, or picture when the text indicate it to us.

Acts 8:30-31, 35, *"And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?"*

And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him...Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."

We must never arbitrarily (as some bible teacher do) declare some deeper meaning from a text of Scripture based upon some special knowledge. This makes man the authority over the Bible, and robs God of His authority! Such a practice must never be done.

2 Peter 1:20, *"...no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation."*

A man must not be guided by impulse. A man must never claim to having receive some special revelation. Feelings are never adequate the interpret the Word of God.

May the Lord help to consider each one of those essential requirements to know Bible doctrine.