

CONTINUE IN THE DOCTRINE

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Acts 2:41-42

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

1 Timothy 4:16

“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.”

2 Timothy 2:2

“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. 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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

2 Timothy 3:15

The word “*doctrine*” simple means “*our teaching*.” When we speak of Bible doctrine, we are referring to the teaching of the Scriptures. The word “*scriptures*” simply means “*writings*.” According to **2 Timothy 3:15**, Paul called God’s Word the “Holy Scriptures.” We understand that the Bible must be separated from all other writings for they are holy writings. There is no other book like the Bible.

The Bible was written by men chosen of God. They wrote the words that God gave them. This is called “*divine inspiration*.” Over the period of 1,500 years, God used more than forty different men from a variety of backgrounds to record His words. God used human writers to pen His words who did not know each other; yet, the Bible completely agrees in its entirety and has been proven to be one hundred percent true historically and prophetically.

2 Peter 1:20-21, *“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”*

We consider two simple truths found in these two verses:

First, the prophecy of the scripture came not by the _____ of man.

Second, holy men of God spake as they were _____ by the Holy Ghost.

Answer the following questions based upon these two verses:

Is man the author of the Bible?

Who was directly involved in the scriptural revelation?

Our doctrine comes solely from a divine source which we call the 'holy scriptures,' therefore, it is of utmost importance to never elevate other writings to the level of God's Word.

Is Bible doctrine important?

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ said something that should command our attention in **John 8:31-32**,

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Jesus did not say, "if you hear my words" or "if you have my words, then are ye my disciples indeed." Christ said, "if ye continue in my words."

The first century church purposefully continued in the apostles' _____.
Acts 2:42, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Timothy was instructed to _____ in the doctrine.
1 Timothy 4:16, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

There is a neglect of biblical doctrine in churches all across our land.

Pat Boone made a statement on August 17, 2001. Mr. Boone is a Charismatic singer who typifies the attitude toward doctrine that is common among ecumenical Christians.

"Doctrine divides, experience unites. We don't all have our doctrine all completely correct, but God doesn't judge us on our understanding of doctrine."

The Ecumenical movement seeks to unify all churches into one group, by calling for a putting aside of doctrinal differences for the purpose of being unified. The Central Maryland Ecumenical Council Mission Statement reads as follows:

"The Central Maryland Ecumenical Council is a community of Christian organizations in the Greater Baltimore Region. Our Mission is to advocate for environment, racial, social, and economic justice using non-violent organizing principles in building the Beloved Community."

It is sad to see no reference to God and His Word! How sad that so called “Christian” groups and churches have completely given themselves to such topics and have forsaken Bible doctrine.

A survey conducted by **Dennis Hollinger in 2009** asked 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 was **that 56% of all Evangelical Christians** believe that there are many paths, other than faith in Christ, to God and eternal life.”

The simple doctrine of salvation is not being taught in most churches today. This should be alarming to us! Bible doctrine must not be ignored, it must be contended for!

Jude 3, *“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.”*

I. THE PRIORITY OF KNOWING DOCTRINE

The New Testament has a clear and strong emphasis on doctrine. A true New Testament church is always identified by its doctrine.

The validity of a church is **not measured by its size**, but by **its likeness to Jesus Christ**. We identify a true church **not by its popularity**, but **by its doctrinal purity**.

A. The Emphasis in Scripture

The two Greek words translated “*doctrine*” in the King James Bible are *didasklia* and *didache*. Those words are also translated “*teacheth*” and “*learning*.”

A teacher is one who **communicates doctrine**.

Romans 12:7, *“Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching.”*

The scriptures were written as our **source for doctrine**.

Romans 15:14, *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”*

These two words are used more than 140 times in the New Testament. The word “doctrine” and its companion terms are used 59 times in **First and Second Timothy** alone.

The expression “*the truth*” is used 10 times in Second & Third John alone. Truth is never abstract. There is only one true interpretation in a passage of Scripture. **There are many applications, but only one interpretation.**

3 John 4, “*I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*”

B. The Expressions of Scripture

There are several Bible words that refer to doctrine. We can also speak of doctrine as the body of truth we contend for.

We are charged to teach no _____ doctrine.

1 Timothy 1:3-4, “*As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.*”

We are to earnestly _____ for the faith which was _____ delivered.

Jude 3, “*Beloved, when I have 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.*”

False doctrine must be rebuked that the believer may be _____ in the faith. We are not to turn from the _____.

Titus 1:13, “*This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith. Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.*”

We are to consent to wholesome _____.

1 Timothy 6:3, “*If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness.*”

We are to hold fast the form of _____ words.

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.*”

C. The Exhortation to Saints

We are to receive the _____ with readiness of mind.

We are to _____ the scriptures.

Acts 17:11, *“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”*

We must be faithful both to learn ourselves and to teach other also.

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.”*

II. THE PURPOSE OF KNOWING DOCTRINE

To deny or neglect doctrine is to deny and neglect the Lord. A love for God must never be separated from a love for doctrine.

Consider what Jesus Himself said in **Luke 6:46**,

“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”

It is impossible to be spiritual without being scriptural. It is interesting to consider that today’s churches have become worldly as they have forsaken doctrinal purity. Today’s churches that claim to give a spiritual experience with the absence of scripture have provided nothing more than an emotional experience far removed from biblical Christianity.

Why do we need to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered?

A. To Preserve True Biblical Christianity

True Biblical Christianity cannot be preserved in a local church unless doctrine is faithfully taught by its leadership, studied by its membership, and passed on to its future generations.

The church has been commanded to teach new believers to observe _____ things whatsoever Christ commanded.

Matthew 28:19-20, *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”*

The early church continued _____ in the apostles’ doctrine.

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

The things that Timothy heard of Paul, the same Timothy was to commit to faithful men, who in turn would be able to teach _____ also.

2 Timothy 2:2, "And these 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."

B. To Propagate True Biblical Christianity

Bible doctrine must be propagated in our community and around the world. When people think of First State Baptist members, they ought to identify us and say, "These are the people that know what the Bible teaches."

Peter and John could help but speak to things which they had seen and

_____.

Acts 4:19, 20, "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Jerusalem was _____ with the doctrine of the apostles.

Acts 5:28, "Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? And, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

C. To Prevent False Doctrine from Entering the Church

There is a constant attack upon biblical doctrine. The church must never dismiss doctrine as irrelevant. If a church considers doctrine to be irrelevant, then that church has become irrelevant.

We are exhorted to earnestly _____ for the faith once delivered.

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."

We are _____ them which cause divisions contrary to the doctrine learned.

Romans 16:17-18, “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences 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.”

Read **2 Timothy 3:1-17**, and answer the following questions:

What did Timothy fully know from Paul according to verse 10?

Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, _____, and being _____.

What is Paul’s remedy for the deception of these seducers according to verse 14?

What has been given to us that we may continue in the doctrine received as mentioned in verse 16?

III. THE PRODUCT OF KNOWING DOCTRINE

There is never a negative effect upon those who know and understand biblical doctrine. An attitude of self-righteousness and pride is never the true outcome of doctrinal understanding.

Our theology must always dictate our conduct. 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.

1 Peter 1:15, “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

What is written in God’s Word is always the forerunner of our conduct!

Do you believe that God is a holy God? Then, how are you living your life? Is your life a testimony of what you say you believe about God?

A. Our Source for Personal Growth

How can the believer grow? _____

1 Peter 2:2, *“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”*

The believer is instructed to grow in grace, and in the _____ of Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 3:18, *“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”*

B. Our Source of Power over Satan & Temptation

The Word of God is likened unto a _____ and a _____.

Psalm 119:105, *“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”*

The Bible has the power to change the lives of those who read and apply its truths. The most powerful external evidence of the Bible’s claim to be the Word of God is the testimony of changed lives.

Hebrews 4:12, *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”*

C. Our Source for Practical Living

The mercies of God is the basis for the believer presenting his body a living sacrifice.

Romans 12:1-2, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*

The believer is to _____ worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called.

Ephesians 4:1-3, *“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*

When we read 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 God never changes.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

What are the expressions in the Bible that refer to our body of doctrine:

What does the word "doctrine" mean? _____

According to **2 Timothy 3:15**, what separates the Bible from all other writings?

Fill in the blanks: We are commanded to earnestly _____ for the faith which was _____ delivered unto the saints.

What is more important in identifying a church? (Circle one)

Its size and influence

Its doctrinal purity

Does every believer have an individual responsibility to know biblical doctrine? _____

Explain why doctrine is so important as seen in this lesson?

Does Bible doctrine produce anything in our lives? If yes, what does it produce?

What comes first, doctrine or practice? _____

Why must doctrine always come first?
