

# *The Doctrine of Doctrine*

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*All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Doctrine is a systematized body of God's thoughts about life in the categories set forth in the Bible. In this booklet we explain the principle of Bible doctrine as it is taught in the Scriptures in order to help believers appropriate knowledge in the wisdom of grace. Learning to think with God categorically, according to the Word of God, will teach us to be quiet, to rest in faith, and to live peaceably with all men.

Categorical doctrine is the basis for thinking with God objectively through His Word. This motivates us to be filled with the Holy Spirit continually, and to walk humbly before God and men.

We will apply God's Word in situations of life with the wisdom from above, which is "...first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

## *Chapter One*

# LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU

We cannot separate the person of Jesus Christ from what He thinks (Proverbs 23:7) any more than we can separate the character of God from Jesus Christ. In order to learn about Him, we must exalt Him and learn what He has said in His Word about the details of life.

“Doctrine” is simply a systematized body of teaching the Word of God. Categorical doctrines are truths and teachings in the Bible on similar, individual subjects that can be put together in the same category (such as the doctrine of salvation). It enables us to think with God in accurate light and to reciprocate and receive God’s thoughts in an absolute category as set forth in the Word of God.

All doctrine is revealed and empowered in us by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). It leads us to magnify Christ, to honor His written Word in specifics (Matthew 4:4), to be objective in our

thinking, to speak and serve in the power of the Holy Spirit, and to be able to appropriate knowledge in the wisdom of grace.

Doctrine should never be taught to puff up a person with knowledge (see 1 Corinthians 8:1) or used for arguing and vain contentions. It should never be used to legislate rules and laws in the name of the Bible (see 2 Corinthians 3:6). Jesus said in John 6:63: “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: The *words* [(*rhema*—what one has said or taught)], that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”<sup>1</sup>

Beware of those who esteem the letter of doctrine but do not impart its life. They fill their minds with facts and ‘head’ knowledge, which result in egocentric pride. They use doctrine as a hammer and pound the letter of the Word of God on those who do not have a capacity for it.

Doctrine spoken to us should become spirit and life through the work of the Holy Spirit in us. It provides us with definition of thinking, direction in our daily walk with God, and power to experience victory with our thoughts, our words, and our life.

Some people will say that Christ is the issue and not categorical doctrine. That statement



may sound spiritual, but it reveals a lack of understanding. John 8:47 states: “He that is of God heareth God’s *words*...” “Words” here is *rhema* in Greek. In application in this context, *rhema* is defined as utterances in which God, through someone, declares His mind.<sup>2</sup> This could be through a preacher declaring the Word of God.

Hebrews 3:10 states: “Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart and they have not known my ways.”

The word for “grieved” is *prosochthizo*, which Kenneth Wuest tells us is a word, “expressive of a strong displeasure, amounting for an offence.” Wuest also points out that *prosochthizo* is used in the Septuagint (a Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures) to translate the Hebrew verbs for “be disgusted, to spew out....God was offended at the actions of Israel.” Why? Because they always erred in their heart. “Err” is *planao* in the Greek—to be led aside from the truth.<sup>3</sup> They did not have a knowledge of God’s ways, and so they were led astray.

In this same verse, the Greek word for “known” is *ginosko*, which speaks of a knowledge gained from experience. The people of Israel were lacking experience in knowing God’s

plan and having doctrine in their heart. As a result of not knowing the plan of God nor doctrine, they became a people of wanderers in their hearts. This is a present-day danger for us as well.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates” (2 Corinthians 13:5-6).

In this verse, we are told to examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith. The Greek word for “examine” is *peirazo*, which means to test or try ourselves for the purpose of ascertaining the quality of what we are thinking or doing: Do we think according to Bible doctrine? Are we using Bible doctrine for good or for evil? The Scriptures and categorical doctrine should help us to specifically grow in grace and to think in grace toward ourselves and others (2 Peter 3:18).

Second Corinthians 13:5 also says to “prove your own selves.” In the original Greek, “prove” (*dokimazo*) means “to test, to see if something is acceptable or genuine.” Thayer illustrates the word by comparing it to the refining process

used to test the genuineness of precious metals.<sup>4</sup> *Dokimazo* in this verse means to test to make sure a given situation finds you living in Bible doctrine (the faith).

“Know ye not your own selves....” To “know”—*epiginosko*—is to become thoroughly acquainted<sup>5</sup> with a categorical system of Bible doctrine. Are you advancing your system of thinking with God in every thought?

“How that Jesus Christ is in you...,” in 2 Corinthians 13:5, is in the locative case which means Christ is in us. Therefore what He thinks about a subject takes over our soul, and we are changed to His image on the inside in that area. We learn to actually think what He thinks, as Paul says in Philippians 2:5, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

Again in 2 Corinthians 13:5, “Reprobates”—*adokimos*—means disqualified, not proving to be what we ought to be. When we stop thinking with God, we become disqualified in the details of life, unable to function in the objectivity of the Word. We end up fashioning ourselves according to the former lusts of the flesh in our ignorance, because we have not allowed the Word to teach us.

As 1 Peter 1:14*b* illustrates: “not fashioning

yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance [*agnōia*—lack of knowledge].” When we are ignorant of Bible doctrine, we simply lack the information and intelligence of it, whether through disinclination, lack of study, or outright refusal to hear. Thayer defines “ignorance” as a want of knowledge, especially in divine things.<sup>6</sup>

### *Eat the Word*

If we do not make categorical Bible doctrine the issue, then we will find ourselves conforming our mind and character to a different pattern outside of Bible doctrine.

Here is a list of verses that express the importance of thinking in categorical doctrine:

“I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name (Psalm 138:2).

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart; for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts” (Jeremiah 15:16).

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and

make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

"He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (John 14:24).

"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

"For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

"For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was" (James 1:21-24).

"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:5-6).

These verses teach us that when Christ is the issue (this includes living in what He thinks), and when our life is sanctified by doctrine, then we will reveal doctrine in the purity of the Holy Spirit. We must remember that the Word of God will judge us in the last day, according to John

12:47-48:

“And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”

<sup>1</sup> Thayer's Greek Lexicon of New Testament, p. 562

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Wuest, Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, "Hebrews in the G.N.T.", p. 76

<sup>4</sup> Thayer's Greek Lexicon, p. 154

<sup>5</sup> Thayer's Greek Lexicon, p. 117

<sup>6</sup> Thayer's Greek Lexicon, p. 8

## Chapter Two

# THAT WHICH IS TAUGHT VS. WHAT WE ARE LEARNING

*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* gives a clear picture of two words, *didache* and *didaskalia*, that are both translated as "doctrine" in the King James version of the Bible.<sup>7</sup> Though both words are sometimes used to refer to that which is taught, more often, *didache* speaks of God's authority behind the teaching, while *didaskalia* is used to speak of that which we are actively learning.

### **Didache in the Bible**

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine" (Matthew 7:28).

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9).

“But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden” (Revelation 2:24).

### *The True Doctrine*

“And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine” (Mark 4:2).

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Romans 16:17).

The following two paragraphs, found in *The Complete Biblical Library: The New Testament Greek-English Dictionary*, helps us to understand the use of *didache* in the Bible:

New Testament usage reflects two senses. Teaching (*didache*) can refer to “instruction,” either of Jesus (Matthew 7:28; Mark 1:22; 11:18) or of others (Matthew 16:12, of the Pharisees and the Sadducees; Acts 2:42, of the apostles; Hebrews 13:9, of the opponents of the gospel).

*Didache* also carries the more developed understanding of “doctrine,” i.e., a set of truths or practices to be learned and followed (e.g., Titus



1:9; Hebrews 6:2; 2 John 9, 10; cf. Revelation 2:14,15) which are entrusted to the Church (e.g., Romans 16:17; Titus; 1:9). As such, the only true “doctrine” or “teaching” is that of Christ. In one sense Jesus’ general instruction is ultimately this same “doctrine.” It comes from God (John 7:16) and has the authority of God (John 7:17f.; cf. Mark 1:27).<sup>8</sup>

Jesus is the one who gives the message to the messengers. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me” (John 13:20). The messenger is obedient to preach the Word in truth, and the congregation is obedient to receive the Word preached, “not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

### ***Didaskalia in the Bible***

“If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained” (1 Timothy 4:6).

“Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour,

that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. 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" (1 Timothy 6:1,3).

"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1).

"Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2:10).

"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Timothy 4:13).

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (1 Timothy 5:17).

### *Teaching Sound Doctrine*

"Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching [*didaskalia*]" (Romans 12:7).

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning [*didaskalia*], that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

*Didaskalia* is a noun that means teaching, in-

struction. In Romans 12:7 and 15:4 it is to be understood in the ordinary sense of “teaching” or “instruction.” More importantly, *didaskalia* (singular) came to describe proper Christian “doctrine” in contrast to the false “teachings” (plural) of men which threatened the Early Church.

Correct *didaskalia* was a crucial plea from Paul in the Pastoral Epistles. The communities—indeed, “sound teaching” itself (1 Timothy 1:10)—were threatened by false teachers who had imported their own “teachings” (plural). They could not stand sound doctrine, preferring instead the doctrines of devils (1 Timothy 4:1). The solution to these erroneous teachings was the “good doctrine” (*tes kales didaskalias*, 1 Timothy 4:6; cf. 1 Timothy 4:13; 6:3; 2 Timothy 3:10; 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1, 10).<sup>9</sup>

Categorical doctrine is vitally important to every believer because it is the expression of the binding character of Christ. Also, categorical doctrine marks the difference between the truly mature congregation and the various unbalanced movements which threaten the Church today.

There are many movements in these end times that leave the emphasis of Bible doctrine and focus instead upon the emotional involve-

ment of the listener. But Jesus forbids this kind of one-sided worship in John 4:24: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit *and in truth*.”

<sup>7</sup> Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, pp. 333-334.

<sup>8</sup> The Complete Biblical Library: The New Testament Greek-English Dictionary, Vol. 12, pp. 118-119, World Library Press.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

### *Chapter Three*

## THE DOCTRINE OF JESUS CHRIST

“...The people were astonished at his doctrine” (Matthew 7:28).

“And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine” (Matthew 22:33).

“And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him” (Mark 1:27).

“And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine” (Mark 11:18).

“And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power” (Luke 4:32).

“Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me” (John 7:16).

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

“The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine” (John 18:19).

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed” (2 John 9-10).

## *Chapter Four*

# DOCTRINE IN THE EPISTLES

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you” (Romans 6:17).

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Romans 16:17).

“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” (1 Timothy 1:3).

“For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:10).

“If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of

Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained" (1 Timothy 4:6).

"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Timothy 4:13).

"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).

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (1 Timothy 5:17).

"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" (1 Timothy 6:3).

"But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience" (2 Timothy 3:10).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2).



“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9).

“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1)

“In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity” (Titus 2:7).

“Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (Titus 2:10).

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed” (2 John 9,10).

## *Chapter Five*

# THE APOSTLES' DOCTRINE VS. THE DOCTRINES OF MEN

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

“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” (Acts 5:28).

“Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord” (Acts 13:12).

“And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?” (Acts 17:19).

As we see in these verses, there have been faithful men who have both preached and continued in the doctrine of God. But when men

teach doctrines to their people that emphasize a system of works, they teach the doctrines of men.

“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men” (Isaiah 29:13).

“But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9; also Mark 7:7).

“Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Matthew 16:12).

“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” (Ephesians 4:14).

“Which all are to perish with the using; after the commandments and doctrines of men” (Colossians 2:22).

“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" (1 Timothy 4:1).

"Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth" (Titus 1:14).

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace..." (Hebrews 13:9).

"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication" (Revelation 2:14).

"So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate" (Revelation 2:15).

The teaching that we receive is from the kingdom of light or the kingdom of darkness. Satan, after all, does present himself as a minister of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). First Timothy 4:1 clearly states that Satan has his own doctrine by which he causes some believers to depart from the faith. If believers are not careful, Satan will use the doctrines of men to lead them to his own doctrines and thus lead them astray. (See Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:7; Isaiah 29:13, 1 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 2:14; Revelation 2:15.)

## CONCLUSION

Let us purpose to always be available to God's thoughts on every subject. Be ready to hear the Word preached by a pastor-teacher who rightly divides the Word of God, line upon line and precept upon precept.

When we receive His Word with meekness (James 1:21), mixing faith with it as we hear (Hebrews 4:2), the word preached profits us in every category of life, and it is able to deliver our souls.

God gave us the Bible so that we could know Him. He gave us His Word so that we could be conformed to His image and have an answer for every detail of life. This is why we need to know the Doctrine of Doctrine.

This booklet was designed to help us see the need for daily Bible doctrine. We teach Bible doctrine to others both by word and by personal example, as we appropriate doctrine in wisdom and understanding from God's heart, in the spirit of life (John 6:63).