

BIBLE DOCTRINE

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Session 1: What is Doctrine?

Doctrine. This is a word that produces many emotions. Some find it intimidating, some find it boring, some find it scary, and others have no clue what it is. In this session we will discover what doctrine is and why the study of Bible doctrine is so essential to our spiritual growth.

What thoughts and emotions do you have when you hear the word: doctrine? _____

How would you define doctrine? _____

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” – 1 Timothy 4:16

Definition of Doctrine: Doctrine is the act or substance of teaching. It refers to the foundational principles upon which a belief system is established.

Definition of Bible Doctrine: The foundational teaching of the Bible or the foundational principles upon which the Christian faith is established (orthodoxy).

Definition of Orthodoxy: Adherence to or acceptance of a certain creed. It refers to the foundational beliefs of a Christian or the church.

Based on the definitions of doctrine, Bible doctrine, and orthodoxy; how would you explain the importance for every Christian to study Bible doctrine? _____

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” – 2 Timothy 2:15

Write 2 Timothy 2:15 in your own words. _____

Why should we study Bible doctrine? _____

What does it mean to be a *workman that is not ashamed*? _____

What does it mean to *rightly divide the word of truth*? _____

Session 1: What is Doctrine?

"You must not do, you must not even try to do, the will of the Father unless you are prepared to 'know of the doctrine.'" - C.S. Lewis

"You can have all of your doctrines right - yet still not have the presence of God." - Leonard Ravenhill

"Now, in order that true religion may shine upon us, we ought to hold that it must take its beginning from heavenly doctrine and that no one can get even the slightest taste of right and sound doctrine unless he be a pupil of Scripture." - John Calvin

"It is an undoubted truth that every doctrine that comes from God, leads to God; and that which doth not tend to promote holiness is not of God." - George Whitefield

"Good conduct arises out of good doctrine." - John Stott

"People go wrong in their fellowships before they go wrong in their doctrine." - John R. Rice

Which of the above quotes is most intriguing to you and why? _____

How can the study of Bible doctrine help you to live better as a Christian? _____

What are you looking forward to learning from this study of Bible doctrine? _____

Additional Notes

Session 2: Defining Terms

There are several doctrinal categories that we will be learning. Every Christian should be able to define the following terms:

Bibliology = The study of the Bible

Theology Proper = The study of God

Christology = The study of Jesus Christ

Pneumatology = The study of the Holy Spirit

Anthropology = The study of man

Soteriology = The study of Salvation

Ecclesiology = The study of the Church

Eschatology = The study of End Times or Bible Prophecy

Which of the above doctrinal categories are you most excited about studying and why? _____

Bibliology

In Bibliology we will learn a brief history of how we got the Bible. We will also examine the inspiration, inerrancy, infallibility, and preservation of scripture.

Theology Proper

Theology Proper is the study of God in general. In this study we will consider who God is and we will take a close look at the various attributes of God.

Christology

The person and work of Christ will be examined in the study of Christology.

Pneumatology

The Holy Spirit is one of the most missed understood persons of the trinity. In Pneumatology, we will consider the work of the Holy Spirit in the Godhead, in the lives of unbelievers, and in the lives of believers.

Anthropology

The study of man gives us a perspective on who we are and how we relate to God.

Soteriology

Salvation is the most important doctrine to understand. The work of the cross and understanding how one comes to faith in Christ is essential to any doctrinal study.

Do you believe that the Bible is the Word of God? If so, how do you know for sure? _____

Evidence for the Bible as God’s Word:

Archeological Evidence = There are numerous things that have been discovered that proves the accuracy of the Bible.

Prophetical Evidence = Most of all the prophecies in the Bible have already been fulfilled. Those that have yet to be fulfilled are becoming more and more possible as current events develop. Every prophecy concerning Jesus in the Old Testament has been fulfilled. Several of the prophecies concerning Israel have already been fulfilled.

Preservation = The Bible has survived many attacks and revisions. Yet, the message of the Bible has never changed. God has supernaturally preserved His Word.

Extraordinary Accuracy = Copies of the Scriptures were hand-written with perfect accuracy. As the Scriptures were handed down through the years, the message has never changed.

What are some of the evidences for the Bible that you have learned? _____

What we need to know about the Bible:

I. Divine in Origin (John 1:1)

Logos = Word (John used this term to refer to Jesus)

To the Jewish mind, logos refers to God’s active power. God spoke and history changed, God spoke and blessing or judgement occurred, God spoke and miracles happened. God’s speaking was so powerful that nothing could stop His Word. John called Jesus that ‘Word’.

The Bible comes directly from God because it is also ‘the Word.’

Jesus is the living Word of God. The Bible is the written Word of God.

II. The Breath of God (Hebrews 4:12)

(2 Timothy 3:16) – Inspiration = Theopneustos = God Breathed

(Genesis 2:7) – Life came from the breath of God. The Bible is no ordinary book because the Bible brings life.

(1 Peter 1:23) – The Word of God lives and abides forever.

Archeologists once uncovered an ancient tomb. In that tomb they found seeds. They planted those seeds and watered them and they sprouted. With water and sunlight those seeds grew after being hundreds of years old. God’s Word is the same. When the water and light of a believing heart provide soil for God’s Word, life springs forth. You and I were saved because of that life giving quality of God’s Word.”

III. Indestructible (Hebrews 4:12)

The Word of God is living and active, it cannot be destroyed.

(1 Peter 1:24 ; Matthew 24:35) – God’s Word will last forever.

IV. Convicting Power (Hebrews 4:12)

The Word of God discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The Word of God shows us what is right and wrong and cuts into our hearts and changes our lives.

V. Clear in its Message (Hebrews 4:2)

The Bible is not complicate. It is only complicated when our lives are filled with sin. When people hear the Bible with an open and believing heart, its message is clear.

VI. The Believer’s Authority

God’s Word is the authority we use to combat sin and Satan and it’s our authority to be ambassadors of Jesus to this world.

“I want to know one thing, the way to heaven – how to land safely on that happy shore. God Himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end He came from Heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of the book.” – John Wesley

*“O Word of God Incarnate, O wisdom from on high,
O truth unchanged, O light of our dark sky:
We praise Thee for the radiance that from the hallowed page,
A lantern to our footsteps,
Shines from age to age.” – William Howe*

Additional Notes

Session 4: Theology Proper

Theology is defined as the study of God. Theology proper focuses on God in general. It examines who God is along with His many attributes.

In your own words, how would you describe God? _____

WHO IS GOD?

I. God is ONE

God is one God revealed to us in three distinct Beings: The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit.

The idea of God being revealed in three distinct Beings is what we refer to as the *Trinity*.

What are some things you have been taught about the Trinity? _____

A. Things to understand about the Trinity.

1. The Trinity is not a succession of how God has appeared in history.
2. The Trinity is not comprised of three gods.
3. Jesus did not become a part of the Trinity at some point in His life, He has always been a part of the Trinity.

B. An explanation for the Trinity.

The word 'trinity' cannot be found in the Bible, however, the Christian belief in the Trinity is a way to understand what the Bible teaches about God. The Trinity is first seen in Genesis 1. In the work of creation all three persons of the Trinity were present. In Matthew 3:13-17, Romans 8:9, and Ephesians 1:17 all three persons of the Trinity are mentioned.

The only doctrine of the Trinity that will stand Biblical tests is the view that God is One and has revealed Himself as three eternal persons.

II. God is SPIRIT

God is a spirit; however, He has revealed Himself to us in the flesh (John 4:24).

The Old Testament refers to God in anthropomorphic terms.

Anthropomorphic = In the form of man.

Examples: God's Finger (Exodus 31:18), Footstool (1 Chronicles 28:2), Arm (Numbers 11:23), Face (Numbers 6:25), Eyes (2 Chronicles 16:9), Hand (Psalm 37:24)

III. God is PERSON

The Bible presents God as a person. He is conscious of Himself, He exercises feeling and thought, He makes decisions, He is free, He relates to us in a personal way, and He acts in history. All of these shows that God is person.

God uses distinctive names for Himself:

El Shaddai = God Almighty

El Elyon = God most high

El Olam = Everlasting God

El Roi = God who sees me

Because God is person, He relates to us in a personal way.

Why is it important to understand God as person? _____

In what ways has God related to you personally? _____

IV. God is INFINITE

INFINITE = UNLIMITED

The fact that God is infinite is described in five basic terms:

- A. Eternal = Always existed and always will
- B. Immutable = Unchanging
- C. Omnipresent = Everywhere at all times
- D. Omniscient = All-knowing
- E. Omnipotent = All-powerful

V. God is PERFECT

God is perfect in every way: He is holy, righteous, truth, and love.

VI. God is CREATOR

- A. Creator of all
- B. Created all out of nothing
- C. Separate from His creation
- D. Reason for His creation (He desires to give Fatherly love)
- E. Sustains His creation (Colossians 1:17)

How do you feel when you think of yourself as being created by God? _____

VII. God is SOVERIGN

God is in control. This does not mean that God is controlling and that we are just puppets on a string. However, it does mean that God is in control no matter what choices we make.

As a believer, how does the sovereignty of God bring you comfort? _____

Additional Notes

Session 5: Christology

Pliny, a Roman writer, once wrote: “Oh, God, won’t you show us what you intended the world to be? Won’t you show us some way, what purpose you had for us? Could you not give us a perfect example?”

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets. Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds. Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” – Hebrews 1:1-4

How would you describe Jesus? _____

I. The Incarnation of God

Incarnation = God in the flesh (Philippians 2:5-7)

II. Born of a virgin (Matthew 1:18)

Why is it important that Jesus was born of a virgin? _____

III. The Supreme Revelation (Colossians 2:9 ; Hebrews 1:3)

IV. Divine and Human (John 14:9 ; John 10:30)

Jesus is 100% God and 100% man.

- A. Jesus as God (John 1:1)
- B. Jesus in His humanity (Matthew 4:1-11)

How does it make you feel that Jesus is one of us (part of mankind)? _____

V. The Promised Messiah

Messiah = Anointed One

God spoke through the prophets, telling people about the coming Messiah. The Messiah was prophesied to be two things: A great king for Israel and a suffering servant.

VI. The High Priest (Hebrews 10:11-23)

VII. Lord and King (Philippians 2:9-11)

The study of Christology must not only consider who Jesus is, but also, what Jesus did. The cross is the center point of all that Christ did.

The Doctrine of Atonement = Bringing the person who is estranged from God into a reconciled relationship with God. This is what Jesus did on the cross.

I. Substitution

(Mark 10:45) – Jesus died in our place.

(2 Corinthians 5:21) – Christ took our sins upon Himself. He substituted our sins with Himself.

(Galatians 3:13) – He took away our curse and became cursed for us.

How does it make you feel knowing that Jesus gave His life as a substitute for your sins? _____

II. Covenant

There is a difference between promises and covenants. The Bible is full of promises both unconditional and conditional, however, there are only a few covenants.

A. The Noahaic Covenant (Genesis 9:9-10, 12, 15-17)

God will never destroy the earth again with a flood.

B. The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-13)

God gives Abraham a land, seed, and a blessing.

C. Sinai Covenant (Exodus 24:1-8)

This shaped the Hebrews into a recognized people with a king. This set up the way for the New Covenant when Jesus comes to be king.

D. The New Covenant

This is the new covenant God makes with us. All who believe in the resurrected Christ will be saved.

III. Sacrifice

(Hebrews 7:26-27) – Jesus made the final sacrifice to take away our sin.

IV. Redemption

(Galatians 5:1) – Jesus has bought us out of slavery.

V. Reconciliation

(Romans 5:10) – We once were an enemy with God, but now we are a friend of God.

VI. Propitiation

(Romans 3:25 ; 1 John 2:2 ; 1 John 4:10) – Jesus satisfied God’s righteous demands.

VII. Justification

(Romans 5:1) – Jesus is God’s stamp of pardon on our lives.

Which accomplishment that Jesus made on the cross stands out to you the most and why? _____

Additional Notes

Session 6: Pneumatology

The word 'pneumatology' comes from two Greek words meaning: wind, air, and spirit.

Pneumatology is the study of the Holy Spirit. We have already established who the Holy Spirit when we looked at the Trinity. This session will deal with the work of the Holy Spirit.

What comes to your mind when you think of the work of the Holy Spirit? _____

I. The Holy Spirit in relation to the world

The Holy Spirit is very much involved in our world today.

- A. In Creation and Preservation (Genesis 1:2 ; Job 33:4 ; Psalm 104:30)
- B. In the affairs of non-believers
 - 1. Through individuals to accomplish God's purpose
 - 2. Convicts the world of sin and the need for salvation (John 15:26)
 - 3. Restraints and controls the direction of evil (2 Thessalonians 2:6-8)

II. The Holy Spirit in relation to the Scriptures

(2 Peter 1:21 ; John 16:13) – The Holy Spirit is both the author and interpreter of Scripture.

III. The Holy Spirit in relation to Jesus

(Luke 1:35) – Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit.

(Matthew 4:1) – The Spirit directed Jesus.

IV. The Holy Spirit in relation to the believer

A. The work of the Holy Spirit at Salvation

- 1. He regenerates (John 3:3-8 ; John 6:63)
- 2. He indwells (John 14:17 ; Romans 8:9)
- 3. He baptizes (Acts 1:5)
- 4. He seals us (2 Corinthians 1:22 ; Ephesians 1:13-14)

Session 7: Anthropology

“And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” – Genesis 1:26

I. Man is the goal of creation

The main purpose for God creating the world was for His glory. However, the creation of man was the ultimate goal of creation in bringing glory to God. The world was created for man, his enjoyment, and for his opportunity to return love to God which brings God greater glory.

It should humble us to know that all we see around us was created with man in mind.

Man is the crown jewel of creation.

II. Man is persons, like God

Just like God, we have a personality. We can think, feel, and show emotions

III. Persons are a unity

Man is a trichotomy. This means that man has three parts: body, soul, and spirit.

The body is our earthly house, our flesh, and will one day die.

The spirit is our personality and our conscience.

The soul is our being, it is the breathe of God within us that lives forever.

IV. Mankind is related

No matter how you look at it, all human beings are related. No race is better than the another. No person is better than another. We are all descendants of sinful Adam.

V. Every person has potential

(Genesis 1:28) – We all have a job to do.

(Matthew 5:48) – We have the potential of being perfect as God is perfect.

VI. Man is created free

By the sovereignty of God, we have been given freedom. We have the freedom to choose to love God or to reject Him.

What intrigues you the most about being created in God’s image and why? _____

The greatest tragedy of man is our sin. God created us to be perfect and holy, yet, we ruined it all by our disobedience.

I. The origin of sin

The misuse of freedom led to sin. Adam fell because of his own choice.

The origin of sin in humans lies within humans themselves.

II. The nature of sin

Sin is universal. Everyone born has inherited a sin nature.

(Psalm 14:1-3)- We are all dirty, rotten sinners deserving of hell.

III. The description of sin

A. Iniquity

Iniquity means 'twisted' or 'crooked'.

B. Willful Rebellion

Willful rebellion is not ignorance of the law, but rebellion in spite of knowing it.

C. Transgression

Transgression means unlawfulness. It is a violation of the boundaries that God has set up.

D. Missing the Mark

Missing the Mark is to fall short of God's glory.

E. Unbelief

The attitude of unbelief is the underlining cause of all sin.

F. Breach of Covenant

This refers to ignoring God as Father.

G. Ungodliness

Ungodliness is irreverence toward God.

H. Debauchery

Debauchery is sensuality. It is blatant evil.

I. Depravity

Depravity refers to a person's character. It is who we are, not just what we do. Man is totally depraved, we are complete sinners.

IV. The Results of Sin

(Romans 6:23) – Death is the result of sin.

Additional Notes

Soteriology is the doctrine of salvation. This doctrine is most essential. This is one doctrine that we must get right. We are all sinners and we are all in need of salvation. The simple truth is that faith in the Lord Jesus is the only way in which we can be saved from the condemnation of sin and be reconciled to God.

I. The Means of Salvation

(Ephesians 2:8-9) – It must be understood that salvation is a work of God. There is nothing that we can do to earn or merit salvation. It is a free gift, given to us by the grace of God. The only way for this gift to become ours is by faith in the Lord Jesus.

(John 14:6) – Jesus is the only way to salvation. You cannot be saved by any other means. Salvation is found only in Jesus.

II. The Steps of Salvation

A. Conviction (John 6:44)

Conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit in drawing us to Christ. The Holy Spirit works to convict and convince sinners of their need for the Savior. You cannot be saved apart from such conviction.

B. Repentance (Acts 3:19)

There are two types of repentance: (1) Repentance unto salvation. (2) Repentance from sin.

The unbeliever is *not* called to repent from sin in order to be saved. If so, salvation would no longer be by grace and not of works. Believers are, however, called to repent from sin in order to live a sanctified and holy life. Such repentance from sin in the life of the believer serves as proof that repentance unto salvation has occurred.

In order to receive God's gift of salvation, there must be a repentance unto salvation. This refers to changing your mind concerning Jesus. It is essentially making a u-turn. It is turning away from self and turning to Jesus.

C. Acceptance (John 1:12)

To accept Christ is to receive His gift of salvation by faith. It is acknowledging Jesus as Lord. It is totally surrendering to Jesus and depending upon Him for your salvation. When someone gives you a gift, you must accept it in order to possess it. God has given us a gift; however, we must accept it in order to possess it.

D. Confession (Romans 10:9-10 ;13)

To confess is to surrender. It is to declare: "I am guilty and I am trusting in Jesus to save me."

Describe how you came to know Jesus as your Savior. _____

III. The Nature of Salvation

- A. Saving faith is intellectual (Faith in Jesus is not a blind faith)
- B. Saving faith is emotional (Salvation involves the whole person)
- C. Saving faith is volitional (Salvation involves the human will. A choice must be made)

IV. The Security of Salvation

(Ephesians 4:30 ; John 10:27-29 ; I John 5:11-13) – Once you have trusted in Jesus for your salvation, you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and your salvation is secured.

Eternal security is not based on anything we do. We are kept saved by the Holy Spirit.

Additional Notes

How would you define 'church'? _____

What has been your overall experience with the church? Has it been good or bad? _____

The church is defined as the 'called-out ones.' It is those who are born-again, the body of Christ, the bride of Christ.

I. The Universal Church

The universal church is all born-again believers united as the body of Christ. The universal church has no denominational barriers. It is strictly in reference to all believers in Christ.

II. The Local Church

The local church is a group of baptized believers who are actively worshipping Christ, walking with Christ, and working for Christ together.

It is in the local church where we are instructed to use our spiritual gifts for the edifying of the body.

God is carrying out His mission in the world today through local churches.

Every born-again believer should be actively involved in a local church.

III. A Believer's Church

You cannot be a part of the church unless you are born-again.

IV. A Biblical Picture of the Church (Acts 2:41-47)

- A. Doctrine
- B. Prayers
- C. Fellowship
- D. Communion
- E. Unity

V. Ordinances of the Church

- A. Baptism (Matthew 28:18-20 ; Acts 2:41)

Baptism is the first act of obedience for the believer. It is an outward sign of an inward change.

- B. Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-29)

The Lord's Supper is reserved for baptized believer's in order to worship God and to remember what Jesus did for us on the cross.

VI. Officers and Ministers of the Church (Ephesians 4:11-16 ; 1 Timothy 3:1-13)

VII. Purposes of the Church

- A. Worship
- B. Discipleship
- C. Evangelism
- D. Fellowship
- E. Serving

Additional Notes

Eschatology is the study of the 'end times'. The purpose of this session is to give a brief overview of various Eschatological views and to provide encouragement for believers in light of the soon return of Jesus.

What have you been taught concerning the 'end times'? _____

I. Various Eschatological Views

The various views of eschatology are primarily based on how one may interpret scripture. Those who hold to a literal and historical view of scripture will differ in their eschatology from those who hold to a more allegorical and spiritualized approach to Biblical interpretation.

A. Premillennialism

Those who interpret scripture from a literal and historical view typically hold to this view. Premillennialism teaches that there are a series of events that will occur before Christ returns to rule on the earth. Those events include the rapture of the church, a seven-year tribulation period, and the second coming of Christ.

There are several differing views within premillennialism:

1. Pre-tribulation (the rapture of the church before the tribulation period)
2. Mid-tribulation (the rapture of the church in the middle of the tribulation period)
3. Post-tribulation (the church goes through the tribulation)

B. Postmillennialism

This view comes from an allegorical approach to scripture. Postmillennialism teaches that Christ will return after the church 'Christianizes' the world, thus, ushering in the Kingdom of God.

C. Amillennialism

This view does not believe in a millennial kingdom. Amillennialism teaches that what is described in Revelation is events that occur during the church age. It also teaches that Christ will return, not to establish a Kingdom, but to bring us into our eternal state.

NOTE: It is the position of most Baptist churches, including First Baptist Church of Decherd, that premillennialism and a pretribulation rapture is the view that is most consistent with scripture.

