

Session Two: What Does a Disciple Believe?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how important do you think doctrine is?

To the Church: 1—2— 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

To the Christian: 1—2— 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

How would you define doctrine?

What does doctrine mean?

The word *doctrine* appears eleven times in the English Standard Version of the Bible.¹ It comes from the Greek word διδασκω, meaning

- “to provide instruction in a formal or informal setting”²
- “active: instruction, act of teaching; passive: what is taught, teaching, doctrine”³
- “teaching, instruction”⁴

Doctrine in the English Standard Version

Job 11:4, “For you say, ‘My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in God’s eyes.’”⁵

¹ *Doctrine* appears five times in the New International Version (1 Timothy 1:10; 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9; and 2:1). *Doctrine* appears fifty-one times in the King James Version. *Doctrine* appears ten times in the New American Standard Bible (Ephesians 4:14; 1 Timothy 4:6; 6:1, 3; 2 Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1, 7, and 10).

² Johannes E. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains 2nd Ed.* (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1989), no. 33.224 διδασκω.

³ Barbara Friberg, Timothy Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010), no. 6561 διδασκαλια.

⁴ Grimm’s Wilke’s *Clavis Novi Testamenti*, translated by Joseph Henry Thayer (Stockholm, S: International Bible Translators, 2000), no. 1389 διδασκαλια.

⁵ Job is written in Hebrew. The word translated *doctrine* is the Hebrew word דָּבָר and is one of the parallel words for the Greek word διδασκω. It has the same definition.

Romans 16:17-18, “I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. ¹⁸ For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.”

Ephesians 4:14, “so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.”

1 Timothy 1:3-7, “As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, ⁴ nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. ⁵ The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. ⁶ Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, ⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.”

1 Timothy 1:10, “the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,”

1 Timothy 4:6, “If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.”

1 Timothy 6:3-10, “If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, ⁴ he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, ⁵ and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. ⁶ Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, ⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.”

Initial objections:

Does Matthew 7:21-23 teach that you can do right things without believing right?

Can't we all push aside “doctrinal differences” and just worship God?

Doctrine and Life

Doctrine informs life. Without doctrine, we have no idea how to live. J. I. Packer opens his book *Knowing God* with this statement, “ignorance of God—ignorance of both his ways and of the practice of communion with him—lies at the root of much of the church’s weakness today.”⁶

Doctrine Disciples Believe

Below are doctrines that disciples believe. Mentally acknowledging them does not bring salvation. However, disciples grow in their understanding of God by following their rabbi.

- I. Disciples believe in _____
 - A. Disciples believe the Bible is God’s _____ - Romans 16:25; Luke 2:32; John 21:25
 - B. Disciples believe the Bible is _____ - 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Timothy 5:18; 2 Peter 3:16; 1:21
 - C. Disciples believe the Bible is _____ - 2 Timothy 3:16-17; John 17:17; 2 Peter 3:16; Matthew 4:4
- II. Disciples believe in _____

“Ultimately, the goal of reading and teaching Scripture is to love God and our neighbor better. And the way to love God more is to know God more. It’s true that a person can learn theological facts about God without loving him. At the same time, you cannot love God without knowing him. And to know God, you have to know things *about* him....That’s why sound doctrine is an important goal of Bible reading. Sound doctrine summarizes and synthesizes the Bible’s teaching into a coherent whole.”⁷

Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 4:

Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 4 Answer: “God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.”⁸

⁶ J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 12.

⁷ Bobby Jamieson, *Sound Doctrine: How a Church Grows In The Love and Holiness of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 30.

⁸ Robert B. Balsinger, ed., *Westminster Shorter Catechism: With Proof Texts (ESV)* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 20.

Supporting Scripture: Deuteronomy 4:15-19; Luke 24:39; John 1:18; John 4:24; Acts 17:29; 1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 139:7; 145:3; 147:5; Jeremiah 23:24; Romans 11:33-36; Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 90:2; 102:12, 24-27; Revelation 1:4; Psalm 33:11; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 1:12; 6:17-18; 13:8; James 1:17; Exodus 3:14; Psalm 115:2; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:15-16; Psalm 104:24; Hebrews 4:13; 1 John 3:20; Genesis 17:1; Psalm 62:11; Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 19:26; Revelation 1:8; Hebrews 1:13; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 1 John 3:3; Revelation 15:4; Genesis 18:25; Exodus 34:6-7; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 96:13; Romans 3:5, 26; Psalm 103:5; 107:8; Matthew 19:7; Romans 2:4; Exodus 34:6; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 86:15; 117:2; and Hebrews 6:18.

The New City Catechism asks,

To which is answered, “There are three persons in the one true and living God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are the same in substance, equal in power and glory.”⁹ 2 Corinthians 13:14; Matthew 28:19-20.

- III. Disciples believe in _____ - Genesis 3:17 (Genesis 2:17); Romans 3:9-17; Ephesians 2:1-3

“He who wishes to attain right views about Christian *holiness*—must begin by examining the vast and solemn subject of *sin*. He must dig down very *low*—if he would build *high*. A mistake here is most mischievous. Wrong views about *holiness*—are generally traceable to wrong views about *human corruption*....The plain truth is, that a right understanding of SIN lies at the root of all saving Christianity.”¹⁰

Define Total Depravity:

- IV. Disciples believe in _____ and _____ - Matthew 11:23; 23:15, 33; 25:41, 46; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Revelation 21:1-22:5

Discussing hell, Edwards writes, “Just like one holding a dirty spider by the web over a fire, God holds you over the pit of hell. He abhors you; His anger is provoked; and His wrath burns against you like fire. He looks at you as worthy of nothing but to be cast into the lake of fire. His eyes are too pure to have you in His sight. You are ten thousand times more detestable to Him than the most hated venomous snake is in ours. You have offended Him infinitely more than any criminal has offended a judge, and yet it is nothing but His hand that keeps you from falling.

⁹ Collin Hansen, general editor, *The New City Catechism Devotional* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 25.

¹⁰ J. C. Ryle, *Holiness!* (Memphis, TN: Bottom of the Hill Publishing, 2012), 17.

There is no other reason that you were allowed to wake up this morning and did not go to hell last night after you closed your eyes to sleep. There is also no other reason that you have not dropped into hell today, but that God's hand has help you up. There is no other reason why you have not gone to hell since you have walked into church today when His eyes saw the wicked way you have attended His worship.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in. It is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit full of the fire of wrath. You are held over that pit in the hand of God. His anger is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell."¹¹

- A. Whose wrath it is? It is the wrath of the infinite God.
- B. It is the fierceness of His wrath to which you are exposed.
- C. God is standing right now ready to pity you. Today is a day of mercy.
- D. It is an everlasting anger.¹²

On heaven, Edwards writes, "O how infinitely great will the privilege and happiness of such be, who at that time shall go to be with Christ in his glory. [It is] the privilege of being with Christ in heaven, where he sits on the right hand of God, in the glory of the King and God of angels, and of the whole universe, shining forth as the great light, the bright sun of that world of glory, there to dwell in the full, constant, and everlasting view of his beauty and brightness, there most freely and intimately to converse with him, and fully to enjoy his love, as his friends and spouse, there to have fellowship with him in the infinite pleasure and joy he has in the enjoyment of his Father, there to sit with him on his throne, and reign with him in the possession of all things, and partake with him in the joy and glory of his victory over his enemies, and the advancement of his in the world, and to join with him in joyful songs praise, to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God, forever and ever."¹³

- V. Disciples believe in _____ - Ephesians 2:20-22; 4:11-16; 5:25-33
 - A. A Church is a _____, not a _____ - Ephesians 5:25¹⁴

¹¹ Jonathan Edwards, *Sinners In the Hands of An Angry God: And Other Great Sermons by Jonathan Edwards* (Alachua, FL: Bridge Logos Foundation, 2003), 47-48.

¹² Edwards, *Sinners In the Hands of An Angry God*, 48-52.

¹³ Dane Ortlund, *Edwards On the Christian Life: Alive to the Beauty of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 169.

¹⁴ Mark Dever, *What Is A Healthy Church?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 34.

B. A Church is a _____, not an _____ - The New Testament

VI. Disciples believe in _____ - 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Ephesians 2:1-9

What do disciples believe: _____

“I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.”¹⁵

¹⁵ Taken from Christian Reformed Church, <https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/creeds/apostles-creed>, accessed 18 July 2018.

Recommended Resources:

Books

Collin Hansen, general editor, *The New City Catechism Devotional* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017)

Westminster Shorter Catechism (available for free online)

Westminster Confession of Faith (available for free online)

Randy Alcorn, *Heaven* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004)

James Bannerman, *The Church of Christ: A Treatise On the Nature, Powers, Ordinances, Discipline, and Government of the Christian Church* (Edinburgh, SCT: T&T Clark, 1923)

Mark Dever, *What Is A Healthy Church?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007)

Sermons

Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners In the Hands of An Angry God" (available for free online)