

Sound Doctrine

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Today I am writing about a topic that troubles me. It's been hard for me to put a name on it, but I have sensed it more than I have recognized it. Whenever I hear it, there is a grieving in my spirit. Many times I am not sure why. At other times it angers me. I struggle with it myself and at times I have difficulty expressing it in a way that conveys its importance. Sometimes it's just not as clear as it should be or clear how to share it. The topic is doctrine—good doctrine, bad doctrine, false doctrine, and error.

When I was in prayer this morning, Paul's instructions to Timothy came to mind and I grabbed my Bible and turned to 1st Timothy to read. The first thing I discovered about doctrine is that most people just don't know what they are talking about. Paul tears right into this in the first chapter when he says, *"They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm."* (1st Timothy 1:7, NIV.) This is so true. I have found that even if a person does not know what they are talking about it doesn't prevent them from talking about it. Too much of our philosophies in life are made up as we go, rather than taught to us by sound doctrine.

So, for the first time, I see that many people are going through life guided by a hodgepodge of doctrines and opinions that are totally unsound. They are not tried and true teachings from the Bible or other reliable sources. Their teachings are a mixture of hearsay and experiences that fashion their worldview in them. They do not understand where these teachings come from, but they influence their every thought and deed.

I am convinced that we, as Christians, ought to know what we believe and why we believe it. Further, we ought to know from whom we have learned it. Paul told Timothy, *"¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."* (2nd Timothy 3:14, 15, NIV.) There is a twofold statement here. One, who did you learn your doctrine from? Who are the people who hold to what you believe? What kind of people are they? It is important to know who and what you are supporting with your doctrines. Two, do you really know what the Scriptures teach about your view? Can you, yourself, prove it with Scripture? How can you teach a doctrine to others that you can't prove from the Bible yourself? Isn't that just an opinion that you have exalted to truth?

Like Paul said, everyone wants to be a teacher, but nobody wants to learn. As a teacher in the Body of Christ myself, I wrestle with doctrine all the time. I struggle to understand its truth and its application. However, it greatly disturbs me that others can so confidently proclaim their unfounded, dogmatic beliefs with little or no knowledge of the teachings of the Bible. My spirit shutters as I hear the mouths of so many people say, "Well, this is what I believe." Yet, they have no idea why they believe it, who taught it to them, or how it compares with biblical truth. This is just wrong.

"Lord, raise up teachers in the body of Christ that can properly teach your Word and build us up in the truth."

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