

Our Daily Bread Christian University
This course was developed by
Christian University &
Our Daily Bread Ministries.



Doctrine:

“Bible truths that are taught, believed, and practiced”

Introduction

The word *doctrine* can be a bit intimidating to many Bible students. Yet an accurate understanding of the term can be both encouraging and empowering. Doctrine may be defined as “Bible truths that are taught, believed, and practiced.”

Biblical doctrines are not spiritual theories but vital truths to be lived out with integrity and good works. When this occurs, we “adorn the doctrine of God” (Titus 2:10). “Adorn” is the Greek word *kosmeō* from which we get the word *cosmetics*. It means “to put in order, arrange, to ornament, decorate.” As we allow doctrine to flow through our lives, others are attracted to the positive life change they see, and God is glorified.

Practical doctrine helps us explore the Bible in order to answer questions like:

- Who is God and what is He like?
- Does the Bible teach that Christ is both divine and human?
- How can the Holy Spirit affect the believer’s life?
- What are the central themes of the Bible?
- How did God provide salvation for those who believe?
- How should the local church function as a caring community?
- What does the Bible teach about angels and demons?
- What does the Bible say about future events?

The answers to these and many other questions are rooted in biblical doctrine. And Bible truth is so important that it should be at the center of teaching and study. In an inspired letter





He is Creator and Savior

He gives life

He is in control

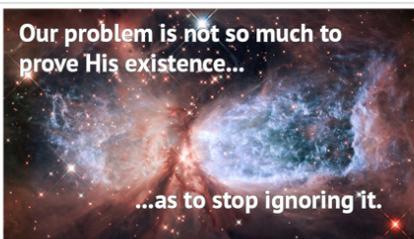
He is eternal

He is Lord of lords



Our problem is not so much to
prove His existence...

...as to stop ignoring it.



Paul wrote to a young pastor named Timothy, here is how he underscored its importance: “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Tim. 4:2-4).

Our generation is facing the danger Paul wrote about. The spirit of the age encourages us to receive Christ without bringing us under the lordship of the doctrines of Christ.

For these reasons, we need foundations of doctrine based on Scripture.

CENTRAL DOCTRINES AND THEIR IMPORTANCE

The Doctrine of God

1. Q. Who is God?

A. God is Yahweh, the one (Dt. 6:4), ultimate (Ps. 97:9; Isa. 40:12-31), eternal Being (Ps. 90:2), who created (Gen. 1:1), rules (Ps. 115:3), and sustains all that exists (Job 38; Acts 17:24-28).

Countless religious substitutes divert worship to themselves. But there is only one Creator and Savior. Because He alone gives life, He deserves our gratitude. Because every heartbeat and circumstance is under His control, He alone deserves the trust that we habitually place in ourselves, our family, or our finances. Because He is eternal, no one will outlive Him. Because He is the Lord of lords, He is the only one in the universe to whom we must finally answer.

2. Q. How do we know there is a God?

A. The wonders of nature witness to His existence as Creator (Ps. 19:1-4). The inner voice of our conscience testifies to His existence as Lawgiver and Judge (Rom. 1:18-32; 2:12-16). And the love of Christ reveals His existence as Savior and Friend (Jn. 1:1-18; 15:15).



Because God has made Himself self-evident, our problem is not so much to prove His existence as to stop ignoring it (Jn. 3:17-21).

3. Q. How can we define or describe God?

A. God is the one and only (Isa. 44:6), unchangeable (Jas. 1:17), invisible (Col. 1:15), infinite (1 Ki. 8:27), and perfect (Mt. 5:48) Spirit Being (Jn. 4:24). He is holy (1 Pet. 1:15-16), loving (1 Jn. 4:8-16), and truthful in all that He does (Jn. 3:33). He has lived from all eternity as one God in three distinct persons (Mt. 28:19), and in the course of time He visited us as God in the flesh (Jn. 1:1-14).

He exists with or without our understanding. He can be described truthfully and adequately, but never exhaustively. He is infinitely more, and never less, than we have yet known Him to be.

4. Q. Where do we get the idea that God is one God in three persons?

A. The Bible emphasizes the unity of God (Dt. 6:4; Gal. 3:20; 1 Tim. 2:5; Jas. 2:19), but it also describes Him as three distinct persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—all of whom are fully and equally God (Mt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 1:8; 1 Pet. 1:2).

5. Q. What do we mean when we say that God is infinite?

A. God is infinite in that He is unlimited (Lk. 1:37). He is unrestricted by time, space, or circumstance. He is eternally timeless (Ps. 90:2; Rev. 22:13), all-powerful (Mt. 19:26), all-knowing (Job 37:16), and everywhere-present (Ps. 139:7-12; Mt. 28:20). Yet He always remains distinct from His creation (Isa. 40:18-26). He is limited only in the sense that He cannot do anything inconsistent with His own goodness (Ti. 1:2; Jas. 1:13).

This means He is vastly different from the gods of Eastern mystics or Western materialists. Their gods are either so small and self-contradictory or so secular and inclusive that they cannot be distinguished from cows, rats, scorpions, statues, or human thought.

God ≠





6. Q. What is the comfort of believing that this triune God is the Creator and Sustainer of everything?

A. This assurance enables us to be patient in trouble (Rom. 5:3-4; Jas. 1:2-4), thankful in prosperity (Phil. 4:10-13), and joyful even in the face of death (Rom. 8:28-39; 2 Cor. 4:7-5:9).

God is ultimately all that we need. While our tendency is to seek satisfaction and significance in lesser persons or pursuits, God alone offers us lasting hope and life.

The Doctrine of Christ

1. Q. Who is Jesus Christ?

A. Jesus Christ is the God-man who appeared on our planet to reveal God (Jn. 1:1-14), to show us how to live (1 Jn. 2:6), and to rescue us from the guilt and power of sin (Rom. 6:1-14). He is Savior (Acts 4:12), Life (Jn. 14:6), and Lord (Rom. 10:9,13) to all who put their trust in Him.

Because of who He is and what He has done for us, Jesus deserves our genuine appreciation, our deepest affection, our complete obedience, and our unconditional loyalty.

2. Q. How does the New Testament affirm that Jesus Christ was genuinely human?

A. The Lord Jesus was born of a woman (Gal. 4:4). He had a human body that developed mentally and physically in the same way that other children do (Lk. 2:40,52). He became tired (Jn. 4:6-8), hungry (Mt. 4:2), and thirsty (Jn. 19:28). He slept (Mt. 8:24). He wept (Jn. 11:35). He was tested (Mt. 4:1-11; Heb. 2:18; 4:15). He felt anger and grief (Mk. 3:5), compassion (Mt. 9:36), and agony (Lk. 22:44).

Because He endured not only what we endure but far more, He understands and feels what we are going through. Because He lived as a real man, He showed us how to depend on the Holy Spirit for our every need. He modeled the way all of us can depend on God.

3. Q. How does the Bible show that Jesus was not only man but also God?



A. The Bible explicitly states that Jesus is God (Jn. 1:1; Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 3:16; Ti. 2:13; Heb. 1:8). Jesus possesses attributes that only God could have: eternity (Jn. 8:58), omnipresence (Mt. 18:20), omniscience (Jn. 16:30), omnipotence (Rev. 1:8), and immutability (Heb. 1:12). Jesus does what only God can do: forgives sin (Mk. 2:1-12), gives life (Jn. 5:21), raises the dead (Jn. 6:39-40,54; 11:38-44), and executes judgment (Jn. 5:22,27). Jesus was given names and titles of deity: Immanuel, meaning “God with us” (Mt. 1:23); King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16); and Son of God (Mt. 26:63-65). Jesus Himself claimed to be God (Jn. 10:30; cp. v.33).

In saying that Jesus is God, the Scriptures state more than we could ever understand. What remains is for us to show by our actions that we believe in One whom we can worship and serve, even though we can't fully understand Him.

4. Q. Why did Jesus die a criminal's death on a Roman cross?

A. Since hanging was a token of supreme humiliation, the triune God decreed that Jesus Christ should die in this manner to portray the fact that He bore God's wrath against the sin of the whole human race (1 Jn. 2:2). Through this humiliating death, infinite in value because of Christ's deity, our Lord provided an atoning sacrifice (Isa. 53:4-5; Heb. 9:26), satisfied God's justice (Rom. 3:25), and bought our forgiveness (Col. 1:14).

How can we repay Him? We cannot! We are eternally indebted to Him. All we can do is show our love and gratitude by offering ourselves and our service as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2).

5. Q. How important is Christ's resurrection?

A. Through our Lord's resurrection, God confirmed Jesus as His Son (Rom. 1:4), showed His satisfaction with Christ's sacrifice on our behalf (Rom. 4:25), affirmed Christ's power to give life to those who trust Him (Rom. 8:11), and assured us who believe in Him that someday we too will receive resurrection bodies (1 Cor. 15:20-21).

6. Q. Where is Jesus now and what is He doing?



A. Jesus Christ ascended to heaven 40 days after His resurrection where He has taken a place of honor (Acts 1:9; 2:33). He will remain there until He returns to “catch up” the church (1 Th. 4:13-18) and then later return to the earth as King to judge the world (Mt. 25:31-46) and rule for 1,000 years (Rev. 19:11–20:6).

In the meantime, He is preparing a place for us (Jn. 14:3), interceding for us as our Advocate (Rom. 8:34; 1 Jn. 2:1), sympathetically responding to our needs (Heb. 4:14-16), and functioning as the Head of the church (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18).

While one person can say to another, “What have you done for me lately?” such a question would reflect mindless ignorance or ingratitude if expressed to Christ. He constantly and effectively works in our behalf.