

## Importance of Doctrine/Assurance

“Bible Doctrine.”

Does that make you cringe? Are you afraid of that term?

When confronted with someone teaching “Bible Doctrine” a believer might pose the question, “Why should I learn Bible Doctrine?”

That is an important question for a believer in Jesus Christ. The believer’s response to that question determines how that person’s life progresses. It is existential.

Mankind has been asking existential questions for a long time. Questions like, “Who are we (mankind)?” “Where did we come from” “What is our purpose?” “What happens when we die?” All these questions have answers written down within the pages of the Bible.

“Doctrine” is a Biblical word.

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

**2 Timothy 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**

**2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB 1995) All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;**

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**2 Timothy 3:17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.**

The King James version of 2 Timothy 3:16 uses “doctrine” whereas the New American Standard Version of 1995 uses “teaching.” That is what doctrine is. “Teaching.” Often it is presented categorically point by point as an easy way to communicate pertinent information.

It is interesting to note that the apostle Paul uses this word repeatedly in the epistles to Timothy and Titus. They were pastors whose job was to teach doctrine or “teaching.”

Before approaching the subject of Bible “teaching” ask yourself the question, “Why are children sent to school for years?” What is the purpose of school? In years gone by, the answer would have been the “three R’s: readin’, ‘ritin’ and ‘rithmetic.” What that actually meant is children need to be taught basic skills in order to function in society. We do not allow children to remain babies in diapers. Besides learning basic communication skills, schools teach children how to interact with authority and other children. What is appropriate and what is not.

When going to a foreign country, adults need to school themselves on how to act in a different society. In some societies it is considered rude to cross the legs such that the soles of the shoes point at another person. In another society, it is a crime to point the palm of the hand at someone. The list goes on for different countries. How do you know what is appropriate? Schooling. Teaching. Doctrine.

In the movie, Avatar, one of the characters tells another one, “You are like a baby. You make noises and do not know what to do.”

So it is in the Christian life. Once you understand the gospel and believe in Jesus Christ for your salvation, don’t you want to know what that means? What is your purpose in the Christian life? Do you even know you have a

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purpose different from unbelievers. Do you really know who God is? Did you know that you can barge into the throne room of God, day or night, at anytime and ask God for help? That can lead us to Paul's question to the Corinthians in the "thundering diction of the King James version, "What! Know ye not?" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

As a baby Christian you make noises and do not know what to do. Six times in 1 Corinthians, Paul asks the Corinthians, "Do you not know...?"

**1 Corinthians 6:1 Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints?**

**1 Corinthians 6:2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?**

**1 Corinthians 6:3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?**

**1 Corinthians 6:4 So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church?**

**1 Corinthians 6:5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren,**

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**1 Corinthians 6:6 but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?**

**1 Corinthians 6:7 Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?**

**1 Corinthians 6:8 On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren.**

**1 Corinthians 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,**

**1 Corinthians 6:10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.**

**1 Corinthians 6:11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.**

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### Some Reasons for Learning Doctrine

1. Doctrine answers questions about life.  
Who am I as a Christian?  
What is my purpose as a Christian?  
What happens to me as a Christian when I die?
2. Doctrine orients the believer to his status on earth and in heaven. You are now a citizen of heaven. You need a “civics” lesson on what that means and your responsibilities as a Christian.
3. Doctrine explains who God is and His relationship to man. Who is God anyhow? Besides being the Creator, He has a plan for mankind. How do we fit into that plan?
4. Doctrine provides instruction on assets the believer can use to defend himself in the Angelic Conflict. You mean I have new technology in my soul? Yes you have a spiritual technology in your soul. What spiritual assets do you have? Previously you only had the sin nature as your operating system. Now you have a new operating system powered by the Holy Spirit.
5. Doctrine is acquired through understanding of teaching and then application of that doctrine. This is how the believer advances to maturity. What does it mean to be mature as a Christian? How do I get there? Why can't I languish as a baby Christian? Why should I progress, understanding various doctrines and using promises in good times and under suffering?

It pains me to hear of a Christian teenager who has committed suicide. Knowing who God is and our relationship to Him solves many of life's problems. God listens to the prayer of a believer who is trusting Him. The answers are not always what we want but they are always what we need.

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Where does Bible Doctrine come from? That is easy. It comes from God. It started in the Garden of Eden.

**Genesis 2:15 Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.**

**Genesis 2:16 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;**

**Genesis 2:17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”**

God provided revelation about the trees in the Garden. There was a prohibition. There was a warning about what would happen if the man violated that prohibition. It was instruction in righteousness. Sin resulted because Adam violated God’s will. As a result, the warning became real. Throughout history God has revealed the rules for different administrations in His plan. These administrations are called dispensations. The Greek is *ekonomia*. That is literally, “house rule.” The teaching of these rules is doctrine.

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Doctrine can answers questions that Christians have. It answers questions unbelievers have. Some of the existential questions that are sometimes posed by movies, literature and art are: Where did we come from? What is our purpose? What happens when we die.

In short, God created the heavens and the earth. God made man's body and created the soul and human spirit. Our purpose is to glorify God in the Angelic Conflict. When we die we either go to heaven if we have believed in Jesus Christ as Savior. Or, we go to the Lake of Fire via Torments to suffer for all eternity. Perhaps a bit simplistic, but those answers are found in the Bible as Bible Doctrine.

Christians have many questions about who they are and how are they to live. One question deals with "assurance." How do we know we are saved? If I believed in Jesus Christ as savior, is that all I have to do? In this church, like many other Bible Churches, we often say, "Faith alone in Christ alone." That is followed by "Once saved, always saved." The first sentence expresses that faith is all that someone needs to be saved. The second expresses the concept of eternal security. This latter subject, eternal security, has previously been dealt with. To review that you can go to the [springvalleybiblechurch.org](http://springvalleybiblechurch.org) website. Go to the "guests" page and find "eternal security."

The first question will be dealt with briefly here. How do you know you are saved? What assurance do you have?

There are a variety of attacks on the "faith alone in Christ alone." One of those is answered by the doctrine of eternal security. There are those who we encountered in the lesson two weeks ago that believe that if you believed in Jesus Christ, you must now produce good works. They may say that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone, but they would not want the believer to have assurance of his or her salvation without the visible production of good works.

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These belong to “Reformed Theology.” We differ greatly on this subject. For instance, Wayne Grudem had a critique of our position which he calls the “Free Grace Theology” or “FGT.” It is included in his book, “Free Grace” Theology: Five Ways It Diminishes the Gospel.” The following quote is from a review of this book:

In the third of five points it says,

“Third, FGT weakens the gospel by giving many professing Christians a false assurance of salvation. It’s not hard to see why this would happen. If repentance, good works, and continuing in belief don’t necessarily follow saving faith, then the lack of them can’t serve as evidence that our faith is dead, and the answer to James question “Can that faith save him?” would seem to be “yes” (James 2:14-17).<sup>1</sup>”

There are a number of passages that clearly indicate that salvation is by faith alone. One of my favorites is an answer to the Corinthian jailer in Acts.

**Acts 16:29 And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas,**

**Acts 16:30 and after he brought them out, he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”**

**Acts 16:31 They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”**

There is no requirement to demonstrate you are saved by good works.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/free-grace-theology/>



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What follows is an extended quote from Robby Dean on this topic. He says it better than I can.

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“Before we get much further, let me explain my strategy tonight. We are going to go through a lot of John's writings because John is particularly concerned with expressing what a person needs to do in order to be saved. We see that in John 20:30 and 31 he says "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples." Now the sign that has just occurred in John 20 is the sign of the resurrection and he is talking to Thomas. Thomas has said 'well, I'm not going to believe He rose from the dead until I can put my hand in his side and I can feel the nail prints in His hands', so Jesus appears to him and he immediately says "my Lord and my God", and then John says "and truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book." In verse 30 he is talking about signs. He did many other signs. "But these" he says in verse 31, the 'these' refers to what? "But these signs", that is, the seven signs of the Gospel of John plus the sign of resurrection, "these are written for a purpose, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." So the very way he structures the 31st verse is to tell us 'there is a reason that I have written this, so that you can believe that Jesus is the Messiah, He is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies and promises related to the salvation of the Jews and salvation of mankind, and that by "believing, you may have life." ' That is the condition, it is simply belief. It is not faith plus works, it is not believing and then living a good life afterwards, believing and avoiding certain sins afterwards, believing and engaging in ritual. It is simply that act of believing, of trusting in Jesus Christ. The Greek word for faith is the verb *pisteuo* and it means simply to believe something, to trust something, and that is all that is involved in salvation. It is simply trusting. And that is what John hits, again and again and again, as we go through his Gospel.

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Let's look at some of those statements that John makes. He says in verse 18 of John, Chapter 3, "He who believes in Him is not condemned, but he who does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." He starts this verse off saying, "He who believes." That is a pretty good translation of a Greek present active participle. The thing about the present active participle is that some people, on seeing that present tense marker, want to translate that as if it's an ongoing action. You'll find some folks, every now and then, who want to say 'See, it's the person who continues to believe in Him, it's not just a one shot decision.' That is a real indication that the person doesn't understand anything about Greek grammar and certainly doesn't understand anything about English grammar either. The phrase "he who believes" accurately translates a Greek present participle that has an article with it. And whenever you have an article with a participle it can function either as an adjective or it can function as a noun. And in John's writing he consistently uses these kinds of participles as nouns. It doesn't have a verbal idea at all. This week I am going out to California and I go out every year, the first week of October to teach at a conference called the WHW conference. For those of you who do not know what that refers to, it is the initials of the three men who founded this conference. It was founded in the early 90's to provide a week long training conference for pastors and laymen in studying the Word of God, giving them a vision for doing more in depth study in the Word. I got involved about 8 years ago and my role is to teach these pastors rudimentary elements of grammar and exegesis. One thing I always emphasize is- participles. We have to understand the role of a participle, and if it has an article it functions like an adjective. If it does not have an article, it functions like a verb. It's adverbial. So you have these two options. Whenever you have that article it just functions like a noun. In other words, you could translate this "the believer" and you would be completely accurate. "The believer in Him" "The one who believes in Him", it's just talking about that act of belief. "The one who believes in

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Him is not condemned", again, you have a present, passive verb there, he has not received condemnation because he doesn't believe. It is very clear in the text that the only issue for condemnation or salvation is this issue of belief. The one who believes is not condemned, the one who does not believe is already condemned. We are born condemned because of Adams original sin. Not because of your sin, but because of Adams original sin. You sin because you are born a sinner, with a sin nature, under condemnation. There is nothing you can do that is going to have any value for God, that is going to impress God. The only thing that impresses God is what Jesus Christ did on the cross. If you trust in Christ, there is salvation. It is simply a matter of what you are trusting in. "He who believes in Him (that is Jesus Christ) is not condemned, but he who does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." The one who believes is not condemned. This is reinforced in Romans 8:1. Paul says "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." If you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, the scripture says that at that instant you are identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3). That is what is also referred to as the baptism by means of the Holy Spirit. So if you are in Christ, there is no condemnation. No matter what you do, no matter what sin you commit, there is no condemnation. Because condemnation has been paid for by Jesus Christ on the cross. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature." From top to bottom, inside and out you are a new creature in Christ, "old things have passed away, behold all things are new." A radical transformation has taken place, and this is seen in our next verse, John 5:24. "Most assuredly I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life." Again we have a present participle and it does not mean perpetual action. There are numerous examples in the new testament where present participles refer to just a singular incident of doing something. For example, drinking water in John 4:13. The birth of Christ

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is referred to with a present participle in John 6:33, and John 6:41, 42, that whole section. Present participles often refer to just a singular action in a moment in time. So what John is saying here is the one who believes in Him has a certainty, it is his possession. The Greek verb *echo* indicates holding on to something. "He has everlasting life and shall not (that's the promise) come into judgment (he's not condemned) but has passed from death to life" (a completed action). This is the foundation for life we are studying in this series. The only prerequisite to avoid condemnation is trust in Christ. Furthermore, Jesus says in John 6:37 "All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me (that is, anyone who believes (John 3:16 'whosoever will') I will by no means cast out." If you come to Him, no matter what you do after that, He will not cast you out. Salvation is a permanent reality. We know from other passages in Scripture that the instant you believe in Christ you become a part of God's family, you are adopted into the royal family of God. You are not going to be kicked out, you are not going to be disadopted, you are going to remain in the family. John 6:39 and 40, Jesus goes on to say, "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me, I should lose nothing."<sup>2</sup>

In order to understand a passage, sometimes we must delve into Greek grammar. Herman has many times mentioned the nuance of an aorist participle. The action of the aorist participle comes before the action of the main verb. I taught not too long ago of the Greek 1<sup>st</sup> class condition. It does not mean something is true. It means, "for the sake of argument, assume something to be true."

Daniel Wallace has a marvelous book on Greek titled "Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics." He explains that Greek participles are difficult to grasp. In a sentence he says, "In short the participle is difficult to master because it is so versatile."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup><https://deanbible.org/doctrines-topics-menuitem/foun-life-menuitem/message/2005-foundation-for-life-010/read>

<sup>3</sup>Wallace, D.B. (1996). *Greek grammar beyond the basics an exegetical syntax of the New Testament ; with scripture, subject and Greek word indexes*. Grand Rapids, Mich. Zondervan [20]08. Page 613.

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“The *context* has more influence on participles than on any other area of Greek grammar. In other words, for most participles, one cannot simply look at the structure (the presence or absence of the article is, of course, the most vital structural (feature) to determine what kind of participle it is.<sup>4</sup>”

“First, of course, if the participle has the article it must be either adjectival (proper) or substantival. Second, if it is articular and is not related in a dependent fashion to any substantive in the sentence, then it is substantival. The translation is often *the one who/the thing* which with the participle then translated as a finite verb (e.g. *ο ποιων* is translated *the one who does*.<sup>5</sup>”

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<sup>4</sup>Wallace, D.B. (1996). *Greek grammar beyond the basics an exegetical syntax of the New Testament ; with scripture, subject and Greek word indexes*. Grand Rapids, Mich. Zondervan [20]08. Page 613.

<sup>5</sup>Wallace, D.B. (1996). *Greek grammar beyond the basics an exegetical syntax of the New Testament ; with scripture, subject and Greek word indexes*. Grand Rapids, Mich. Zondervan [20]08. Page 619.