

Cults and false teachers frequently condemn “doctrine,” and far too many people fall for this. It is often used as an insult, as in “*They follow doctrine, but we love Jesus.*”

That idea is nonsense! What are these people thinking doctrine is?

“Doctrine” is simply “something that is taught, a principle or position, a set of ideas or beliefs that are taught or believed to be true.” Every group that has **any** beliefs has doctrine. We are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ. A “disciple” is “one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another.” Being a follower of Jesus is all about doctrine. If your doctrine is false, your Jesus is false.

The question is: where does the doctrine you follow come from? Does your doctrine come from God through the Bible, or from people? If your heart leads you to follow doctrines (teachings) contrary to God, you are being led away from God.

When the Holy Spirit is guiding His people, He will **never** teach anything contrary to what He has already taught through Scripture. So the Bible is the way we can test what others claim is coming from God. In fact, the **only** way to know if what we are being taught is from the Holy Spirit and not trick of men or demons is to compare it with what is in the Bible. False signs and wonders can be touted as fruit. Feelings can fool us because we have a fallen nature. We can be deceived.

Sound doctrine (true teaching) is very important to God. He loves us. He doesn’t want us to be fooled. He gave us Scripture so we can know the difference between the true and the false. (btw, false is usually mixed in with truth, otherwise it is obviously false)

**God warns us** about those who oppose sound doctrine:

*For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. (2 Timothy 4:3)*

**God tells us** to be diligent and to exert ourselves to correctly understand His truth:

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15) The Greek word “spoudazo” that the NIV translates as “Do your best” means “hasten, exert one’s self, endeavor, give diligence.” The KJV translates it “Study.”*

**God tells us** to live in obedience to His truth:

*Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4:16)*

**God tells us** that what we teach should agree with sound doctrine:

*You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. (Titus 2:1)*

**God tells us** to encourage others with His teaching:

*He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and to refute false teachers: and refute those who oppose it. (Titus 1:9)*

**God tells us** to command those teaching false doctrine to stop:

*As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer (1 Timothy 1:3)*

Underlying these passages is the assumption that we as followers of Jesus Christ are eager to learn what Jesus taught. We are not dependent on vague feelings and ideas, but we are diligent to learn the doctrine that Jesus taught to his disciples, who then taught it to others and wrote it down for us in the Bible. This is the “sound doctrine” that we are told to be diligent to understand, to persevere in, and to teach to others. We are told to refute those who oppose it, and to tell them to stop teaching falsely.

Since “sound doctrine” is so important to the God we so passionately love, shouldn’t we desperately **want** to know the sound doctrine He teaches us through the Bible?