

1.1.0 Meaning, Need and a System of Doctrine

Sections:

1. The Meaning of Doctrine
2. The Need for Doctrine
3. A System of Doctrine

1. The Meaning of Doctrine

A Definition of Doctrine

The principles, beliefs, or dogma of any church, sect, or party.

The word “doctrine” literally means “teaching” or “instruction” and may be defined as *the fundamental truths of the Bible arranged in systematic form*. This study is also commonly called theology, which means literally *a reasoned discourse about God*. Theology or doctrine may be defined as *a science which deals with our knowledge of God and His relations with man*

Why do we describe theology or doctrine as a “science”?

Science is the systematic and logical arrangement of certified facts. We describe theology/doctrine as a science because it consists of facts relating to God and Divine things arranged in a systematic and logical order.

What is the connection between theology and religion?

Theology is knowledge of God, but religion is the practice of what is known. (John 13:17; James 1:27) You can be a theologian and not at all religious — i.e., not having any genuine spiritual experience.

What is the difference between a doctrine and a dogma?

Dogma is man's statement of the truth set forth in a creed; while, doctrine is the fundamental truths of the Bible arranged in a systematic form. EXAMPLE: The Roman Catholic Church instructs men to call the pope *Holy Father* (dogma), whereas the Bible says in Matthew 23:9 “*call no man your father*”. (doctrine). The very context of Christ's command is addressing the pride and arrogance of men that usurp honor and recognition that is not their own to claim. “Our source is not in man, but is in God” is the principle Christ is emphasizing. The false doctrine that prefaces this particular dogma is that the pope is literally Christ on the earth. Pope Pius X (1903-1914) is quoted in a sermon on the authority of the pope:

The Pope is not simply the representative of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, he is Jesus Christ Himself, under the veil of the flesh, and who by means of a being common to humanity continues His ministry amongst men ... Does the Pope speak? It is Jesus Christ Who is speaking. Does he teach? It is Jesus Christ Who teaches. Does he confer grace or pronounce an anathema? It is Jesus Christ Himself Who is pronouncing the anathema and conferring the grace. — Pope Pius X (1903-1914)

The *dogma* of the Roman Catholic church is based on *false doctrine* and therefore it is false. Doctrine could be understood as “simply what the Bible says” and dogma is man's conclusions drawn from the text of the Scripture. Dogma *can be* true, but is not necessarily true.

2. The Need for Doctrine

a. Doctrinal knowledge supplies the need for an authoritative and systematic statement of truth. John 17:17

Authoritative statements are so important that we may be able to *convince the gainsayers* (Titus 1:9). Doctrinal knowledge also helps the Believer understand at least three things:

1. Who we are (sinners/saints/loved/judged, etc.),
2. where we came from (dust, image of God, etc.) and
3. where we are headed (heaven, hell, blessings, curses, etc.).

b. Correct doctrinal knowledge is essential to salvation.

I Timothy 4:16—*Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*

Every experience we enjoy with God is dependent on faith. (Faith is not a shot in the dark, but is securely founded on the WORD OF GOD. Romans 10:17) Paul asks a significant question that establishes our point in verse 14 of Romans 10, “*how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?*” CORRECT doctrinal knowledge is essential, because it is not sufficient to just believe in *something*, but we must possess that which is TRUTH. God does not respond to *hope-so's*, or *I've been told that...*, but God does respond to **faith** in His Word.

EXAMPLE: Acts 17:22-34. The people of Athens had erected an altar with the inscription “To the Unknown God.” Paul declared on Mars Hill that this Unknown God whom they ignorantly worshipped was the God who made Heaven and earth. The people of Athens had not known SALVATION through ignorant worship, but those that came to the knowledge of Jesus Christ and him crucified and resurrected from the dead did absolutely experience salvation! I Timothy 4:16 infers that the if we do not *take heed unto the doctrine* than we will be lost

c. Doctrinal knowledge is essential to the full development of Christian character, and contributes to our instruction in righteousness. II Tim. 3:16, 17

II Timothy 3:17 —*That the man of God may be perfect...*

Perfect, that is, *full development*. There is progressive development in the spiritual life as there is in the physical life. There are stages of perfection. Is a baby perfect? As a baby, yes! But growth must take place or we would say something is wrong. I Peter 2:2 says, “*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*”

It is more important to live right than to know doctrine, but you will **not** live right without right Christian doctrine. Correctness of opinion is second to correctness of living, but correctness of opinion is a necessity to living right. (Gal. 2:17; Titus 1:16; I Peter 1:22; Eph. 2:5,8-10; Phil. 2:12,13; Heb. 12:14; I Peter 1:16)

Can you truly love Jesus without knowledge of God's Word? An understanding of doctrine is essential to growth in Christian character. It has been well said that “Christian character is a fruit that grows only on the tree of Christian doctrine.” Correct doctrine is to a Christian what a

man's backbone is to his body. He does not wear it on his chest, but without it he would be a hump-backed or jellyfish Christian. A lasting relationship with Christ requires a commitment to truth. We need a strong backbone—Doctrine.

Jesus is our foremost example and He had *Doctrine*:

Matthew 7:28,29—...*the people were astonished at his doctrine: 29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*
(Mark 1:22; Luke 4:32; John 7:16)

d. Doctrinal knowledge is a safeguard against error. (Matt. 22:29; Gal. 1:6-9; II Tim. 4:2-4)

Why is doctrine so important?

Eph 4:14—*That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

We need sound doctrine and conviction for those truths. We need to know what we believe and why we believe it. An ignorant Christian does not scare the devil. Many people compromise and fall into error because not only do they lack doctrine, but they lack *conviction* for the truths they do know. Most Christians are filled with *preferences* instead of *conviction* towards doctrinal truth. Preferences can be changed with no apparent loss, but convictions cannot be changed without great loss.

CONVICTION: You SEE it as God's Word, BELIEVE it to be truth, and LIVE by it (and possibly die for it!). *UNNEGOTIABLE*

PREFERENCE: You've HEARD about it, been TOLD or even TAUGHT, but don't believe in the absoluteness and authority of the doctrine. *NEGOTIABLE* (Only your *opinion*.)

Clear cut beliefs make for clear cut convictions

BEWARE OF FALSE DOCTRINE

I Timothy 4:1—*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*

Always follow the Word. We need to approach every problem with the question, “*What saith the Scripture?*” (Romans 4:3). If the whole world would unite in an agreement contrary to the Word of God, then the whole world is absolutely wrong! Keep it simple: Stick to the Word. How do we know that which is truth from that which is false? (John 8:31,32) *Continue in His Word.*

Because of the ugly fact that not all preaching is truth (Matthew 16:12), every Christian must thoroughly involve themselves with the Word of God. Truth is greatly needed! (Colossians 2:8; Hebrews 13:9) **There is a need to study the Word of God.**

2 Timothy 2:15—*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

The Bible student must be earnest, diligent, and careful. In our study of the Word of God, we compare Scripture with Scripture for *no prophecy of the Scripture is of private interpretation* (2 Peter 1:20). So much error happens because men grab a Scripture out of context and just run with it. Interpret Scripture by Scripture.

EXAMPLE: What does being “*born-again*” mean in John 3:3? Is Jesus meaning to enter the mother's womb a second time? No. The answer is not *No* just because of logic or reasoning, but because Jesus Himself qualifies the term in verses 6-8—*born of water and of the Spirit...* See also: John 1:13; James 1:18; I Peter 1:23; Eph. 4:26.

In our study and search for truth it is imperative to remind ourselves to be *wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil* (Romans 6:19). We do not need a complete knowledge of the wrong, but we do need a complete understanding of that which is right.

e. Doctrinal knowledge comes in obedience to the will of God.

John 7:17—*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

We need to test the Word of God. Put God to the test and see if He will not be faithful. David said, “*O taste and see that the Lord is good.*” (Psalm 34:8) As we walk in the will of God we will experience and witness the truth and reality of the words Christ spoke. God does not just command us to believe an unopened book, but he opens the pages of Scripture to our understanding and invites us to *experience* every word. It is in this experience that a deeper knowledge of doctrine comes. Until then, all we have is *hear-say*.

3. A System of Doctrine Haina ya Mafundisho.

There are almost an infinite number of ways to classify doctrine. The list given is not exhaustive but are mere examples of how we can organize Biblical doctrines.

Some Common Classifications of Bible Doctrines:

- **Exegetical Theology— Exegestical Theology —**

Explanatory, exposition, hermeneutics, drawing out the truth, seeks to know the true meaning of Scripture, and requires a knowledge of the original languages. Kupata kweli, imetafutisha kufahamu maana ya mandiko, na tena imetoza ufahamu wa marihuga halisi.

- **Historical Theology — Historical Theology —**

Involves the study of Church History and traces the development of doctrinal interpretation. Imeambatana na mafunze ya hadithi yak anis na tena imetoa maendeleo ya ufasiriyo wa mafundisho

- **Dogmatic Theology—Dogmatic Theology —**

The study of the fundamentals of the faith as set forth in church creeds. Mafunzo ya mila za imomi kama vile imeonyeshwa katika masadikio ya kamba

- **Biblical Theology—Biblical Theology —**

Traces the progress of truth through the books of the Bible. Imetoa maendeleo ya “kweli kwa njia ya vitabu vya biblia.

- **Systematic Theology— Systematic Theology —**

Biblical truth arranged in topics according to a definite and coherent system. Ukweli wa biblia wenye kutungwa katika manukta kutokana na fioni.

The Systematic Theology Used in this Course Mbino ya mafundisho

Below is an outline of the Systematic Theology that we will use in this study.

- **Anthropology—The Doctrine of Man Anthropology — Mafundisho Kuhusu Mtu**

- **Harmartiology**—The Doctrine of Sin **Harmartiology** — Mafundisho Kuhusu Dhambi Kumbu Kumbuz

Deuteronomy 29:19; Isaiah 1:18; Matthew 12:31; Romans 3:23; James 1:14,15Torati 29:19; Isaya 1:18; Mathayo 12:31; warumi 3:23, yakobo 1:14,15

- **Soteriology**—The Doctrine of Salvation C. **Soteriology** — Mafundisho Kuhusu Wokovu

Numbers 21:2-9 (John 3:14,15); Psalm 18:2; John 6:37; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 2:8Hesabu 21: 2-9 (Jahana 3:14,15); Zaburi 18:2; yahana 6:37 warumi 1:16; waefeso 2:8

- **Bibliology**—The Doctrine of the Scriptures **Bibliology** — Mafundisho Kuhusu Maandiko

Exodus 17:14; Jeremiah 30:2; John 7:32; II Timothy 3:16; Revelation 1:11 Kutoka 17:14; yeremia 30:2; yahana 7:34; II Timotheo 3:16; Ufunuo 1:11

- **Angelology**—The Doctrine of Angels **Angelology** — Mafundisho Kuhusu Wamalaika

Isaiah 6:2; Matthew 1:20,24; I Thessalonians 4:16; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7Isaya 6:2; Mathayo 1:20,24; I watheslonikia 4:16; Yuda 9; Ufunuo 12:7

- **Theology**—The Doctrine of God **Theology** — Mafundisho Kuhusu Mungu

Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 135:5; John 1:1; Ephesians 4:5 Mwanzo 1:1; Kumbu kumbu za torati 6:4; Zaburi 135:5; yohana 1:1; Wuefeso 4:5

- **Christology**—The Doctrine of Christ **Christology** — Mafundisho Kuhusu Kristo

Matthew 16:16; 19:3-12; Mark 1:21-28; Luke 2:1-7; John 2:1-12; 6:1-5; Hebrews 13:8Mathayo 16:16; 19:3-12; Marko 1:21-28; Luka 2:1-7; Yohana 2:1-12; 6:1-5; Waebrania 13:8

- **Expiatology**—The Doctrine of Atonement **Expiatology** — Mafundisho kuhusu Utuhio

Exodus 12:21; Leviticus 4:5,6,17; 17:11;Matthew 20:28; Hebrews 9:6-22-28; 11:28Kutoka 12:21; Walawi :.5,6,17; 17:11; Mathayo 20-28; Waebrania 9:6-22-28;11:28.

- **Pneumatology**—The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit **Pneumatology** — Mafundisho kuhusu Rohomtakakifu

I Thessalonians 1:5; John 14:16; 16:13; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; Romans 5:5; 8:16I Wathesalonika 1:5; Yohana 14:16;16:13; Matendo ya Mitume 1:8; 2:1-4; Warumi 5:5;8:16

- **Ecclesiology**—The Doctrine of the Church **Ecclesiology** -Mafundisho kuhusu Kanisa

Matthew 16:18; Eph 1:22,23; Col 1:24; Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 1:20Mathayo 16:18; waefeso 1:22-23; wakolosori 1:24; waebrania 12:23; Ufunuo 1:20

- **Eschatology**—The Doctrine of Last Things **Eschatology** - Mafundisho kuhusu Mambo ya Mwisho

Isaiah 2:2; Daniel 12:9; Micah 4:1; Matthew 24; Acts 2:17; 2 Timothy 3:1; 2 Peter 3:3Isaya 2:2; Danieli 12:9; Mika 4:1; Mathayo 24; Matendo 2:17; 2 Timotheo 3:1; 2 Petro 3:3.