

Why should I Care about Doctrine?

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Because I want to be an elder one day

Elders must be concerned about doctrine because they must be able to exhort with sound doctrine and convict a gainsayer using sound doctrine (Tit. 1:7-9). Overseers have the God-given charge of tending to the flock among them (1 Pet. 5:2), and they must feed the local church body (Acts 20:28). An elder knows that some types of doctrines are vanities (Jer. 10:8); he knows that some doctrine leads down a destructive and corrosive path (Matt. 16:2, 2 Tim. 2:17); and he knows that a little leaven can ruin a congregation (1 Cor. 5:6). An elder must protect, encourage, strengthen, and care for the flock using doctrine.

Because I am a minister/preacher/evangelist/missionary

Those who labor in the Word under various descriptive titles must care about doctrine because being a good minister is directly tied to good doctrine (1 Tim. 4:6). Like Timothy, all ministers must give special attention to teaching or doctrine (1 Tim. 4:13, 16). I can clearly see in the life of the apostle Paul that he taught publicly and privately with great consistency (Acts 20:20). I can clearly see that he did not deviate from any portion of holy Writ (Acts 20:27). It is no wonder then that others could fully know and follow the doctrine he taught (2 Tim. 3:10).

Because I am a Bible class teacher

Many Christians would characterize themselves as a teacher even though some might never describe them as a preacher. Teachers must care about doctrine because we live in a time when people “will not endure sound doctrine” but, to satisfy their itching ears, will gather “teachers after their own lusts,” (2 Tim. 4:3). As a Bible class teacher, I look to the Master Teacher. While I will never be the teacher our Lord was on this earth, the Bible says that multitudes heard him and were “astonished at his teaching” or “doctrine” (Matt. 7:28; 22:33). When I look at the word “teaching,” I notice that it is a noun. According to the Scripture, people were not amazed by Jesus style, eye contact, intonation, cadence, alliteration, or body language. They were amazed by the content of His teaching, His doctrine. While Bible class teachers today can compliment their classes by working on style, they must focus on substance, on content, on doctrine. What an empowering thought: the doctrine that amazed people when Jesus taught during His earthly ministry is the same doctrine that I can and must teach today.

Because I am a parent

As I look at my children and others who are “children in the faith,” I remember that children are known for innocence and humility (cf. Matt. 19:14), and they are also foolish (Prov. 22:15) and in need of regular correction (Prov. 23:13). Children can be easily deceived, fooled, and manipulated. The Bible uses this fact to paint a picture of Christians who are acting childish: “that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine...” (Eph. 4:14). I am accountable for the teaching they receive! As a parent I must be aware of this and not allow my “amen” to be assumed or heard behind false doctrine (2 John 10). In order to raise them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4), I must feed them spiritually with words of “faith and good doctrine which nourish the soul,” 1 Tim. 4:6.

Because I am a Christian

Every Christian must care about doctrine. It is fundamentally important to my soul’s salvation. I must abide or live in doctrine if I want to have a relationship with God the Father or God the Son (2 John 9-11). I must grow in my doctrine (Heb. 6:1-2) by maturing in faith (Heb. 5:12-14) and growing in knowledge of God’s Word (2 Pet. 3:18). Jesus reprimanded individual Christians and

entire congregations for holding false doctrine (Rev. 2:14-15). When brethren walk “contrary to doctrine” causing division, they are to be marked (Rom. 16:17). I must care about the doctrine I hold, teach, and practice.

Because I want people to go to heaven

“Take heed to yourself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou will save both thyself and them that hear thee,” (1 Tim. 4:6). Doctrine was personally important to Timothy’s salvation, and it was through the doctrine that he taught whereby others might be saved. Doctrine is necessary to every soul’s salvation!