

Course Title: DOCTRINE – Lesson 1

Goal of This Lesson: The purpose of this course is to present the beautiful truth of God in Christ and to have a working knowledge of the Oneness doctrine in order to lead others to this foundational truth.

Note: This lesson contains important principles, especially for those who really want to understand biblical doctrine. These lessons go hand-in-hand with prayer and revelation.

INTRODUCTION

DOCTRINE may be defined as “a body of principles in a system of beliefs.” That definition may seem to be a bit stiff—most dictionary definitions are. But the defining of our “body of principles” and “system of beliefs” is found in an unstiffen book—the Bible. There they are plainly laid out and narrowly defined.

We go to the Word of God for the discovery of doctrinal truths because no other source contains absolute truth. It is the Bible which reveals God and our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “I am the truth” (John 14:6).

The word doctrine comes from the Greek word *didaskalia* which means *teaching*. It refers both to the act of teaching and to what is being taught (the teaching). The word *Torah* or *law* in Hebrew also means *teaching*. Therefore, the “law of the Lord” means basically the “teaching of the Lord.” The suffix *-ology* means a branch or body of learning. For example, *biology* refers to learning or teaching about organic life.

Anthropology refers to the study of man. *Theology* refers to learning or teaching about God. *Theology* and *doctrine* mean basically the same thing.

Among biblical scholars, there are two branches of theology. One is known as biblical theology and the other as systematic theology. Both must be based on the Bible and both are essential to a solid understanding of the scriptures.

Biblical theology emphasizes history. It deals with how the historical frameworks of the Old and New Testaments influence their teachings. Every teaching of the Bible came into a particular historical situation.

Biblical theologians try to see how each doctrine was influenced by its historical situation and how the message from God was specifically suited to the needs of people in that situation. Biblical theology could more properly be called the historical theology of the Old Testament and the historical theology of the New Testament.

Systematic theology emphasizes systems of thought. Systematic theologians try to take all the teachings on a particular subject and put them together to give a full picture of that subject.

DOCTRINE ESSENTIALS

Both branches of theology are essential. If we consider theological teachings only in terms of historical backgrounds, we may have a history-centered theology with no relevance for today. If we look at teachings only in terms of a logical system of thought, we may end up with a human idea-centered theology rather than a biblical one. The study of doctrine, particularly any specific emphasis on it, has its detractors. Some hold the following concepts:

- Doctrine involves the useless practice of arguing about non-essentials matters, like "how many angels can dance on the head of a pin," or "could God create an object so heavy even He could not lift it?" Of course, we know that true doctrine has nothing to do with dancing angels or weighty objects. Doctrine is the systematic gathering and presentation of facts concerning a body of truth determined from the revelations of Scripture. It is just that simple.
- Doctrine divides; whereas love unites. True doctrine does divide! It divides light from darkness, truth from error, right from wrong, and life from death. But doctrine also unites. It unites true believers in Christian fellowship around the world.
- Doctrine and soul winning won't mix. They not only can be but must be mixed if salvation and true Christian living are to be discovered! The apostle Paul was perhaps the greatest theologian, who ever lived, but he was also the most prolific soul winner! The man who went into the Macedonian cities, sowing truth with tears and founding churches, was the writer of the doctrinal treatises we know as Romans and Galatians.
- Doctrine is dull and impractical. Doctrine will put a fire and a song in the hearts of those who read and heed. "And they said one to another, did not our heart bum within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures" (Luke 24:32)?
- Doctrine is over the heads of most people. Jesus refuted this notion Himself: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes...Come unto me, all [ye] that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest...Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls...For my yoke [is] easy...my burden is light" (Matthew 11:25, 28-30).

Doctrine is not difficult if one applies himself to learn. One can easily learn mechanics—computer technology, cooking, welding, or whatever he wants to—if he develops the desire to do so.

Why learn doctrine when we don't live out all that we already know? This is twisted logic. We are required to obey all of God's Word. Perhaps if we went a little deeper into it, we would understand how to better conform to what we already know.

The goal is to let the Bible master us; not spend our time trying to master the Bible. This amounts to pious non-sense. One cannot be influenced by what he knows nothing about, much less mastered by it!

The truth is that the devil will tempt us to ignore doctrine to keep us away from the Word. He will use every excuse imaginable to keep us from learning the truth.

Reading Assignments: I Timothy 4:1,13-16; II Timothy 4:1-4

There are many advantages to studying doctrine. Among them:

- Doctrine will keep us from spiritual error
- Doctrine will help settle us as Christians. It will keep us steady, seeing clearly the path we should walk, and keep us mindful of the goal.

Reading Assignment: Ephesians 4:14-16

Doctrine reveals God's eternal plan. For example, I Corinthians 10:1 acquaints us with the history of Israel; Romans 11:25 reveals the restoration of Israel; I Corinthians 12:1 informs us of God's spiritual gifts; I Thessalonians provides the details of the coming Rapture of the church; II Peter 3:8,10 gives us insight concerning the destruction of the world. Doctrinal study helps to bring God's approval to us.

Reading Assignment: II Timothy 2:15

A strong doctrinal foundation will help us stand during the challenges of the end-time. See Matthew 24; II Timothy 4:1-3. There will be many false prophets, cults, and philosophies vying for our attention. Knowing the truth will enable us to withstand the onslaught of error.

Hosea 4:6 expresses the lamentation of God Himself, "My people, are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Now, as then, ignorance of God's Word is a major cause of spiritual shipwreck. Instruction in righteousness is the only means of insuring safety and security for the soul. The message of the Oneness of God is a foundational truth.

All other teachings must be established on this truth or they are built on a lie. Neutrality is not an option in this matter.

The doctrine of the Godhead affects many other important doctrines, such as the formula for water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. By properly understanding Matthew 28:19 in the light of the Oneness of God, one can easily see the importance of Jesus Name baptism. The Oneness message reveals that receiving Christ into our lives is the receiving of the Holy Ghost as evidenced in Acts 2:1-4. In John 4:20-24, Jesus Himself indicated the importance of knowing the God that one worships.

ONENESS DOCTRINE

Perhaps we should admit that understanding God cannot be compared to understanding the multiplication table or a rule of grammar. We can know and understand God without knowing and understanding all about Him. In other words, our knowledge of God is progressive in nature. The key to this distinction lies in the revelation of Jesus Christ. That which has been revealed not only may be known, it must be known.

The progressive aspect of our knowledge of God is indicated in the admonitions of the apostle: “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...” (I Peter 3:18). After becoming personally acquainted with Jesus Christ (Acts 9), Paul counted things that were formally considered “gain” to be “loss,” in order “...that I may know him...” (Philippians 2:7,10). So, after coming to know God, there are many dimensions of Deity which become clear to us as we “grow in grace, and the knowledge....”

The revealed aspects of God are for all to know. They are no longer hidden. These points are within reach of all. Such matters as the existence, the essence, and the identity of God are among these essential elements available to us. It is within these areas that this division deals.

GOD IS

Reading Assignment: Read the Following Passages

- John 4:24 - “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
- Hebrews 11:6 - “But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

This foundation is essential to our relationship with God and our involvement in the redemption process.

Philosophical arguments for the existence of God.

- Universal belief. All mankind holds some idea of a divine, supreme Being. The concepts may differ, but virtually every culture has a god to whom they are morally responsible.
- Cosmological - The argument from cause. Every effect must have an adequate cause. Man exists, but he owes his existence to some cause.
- Teleological - The argument from design. The structure of nature proves that there is not only a maker but a designer—a Creator and Architect.
- Anthropological - The moral argument. Our intellect,
moral nature, conscience, emotional nature must have an anti-type: A creator who is intellectual, moral, etc.
- Scriptural - Scripture does not attempt to prove the existence of God; it assumes, asserts and declares it. Romans 1:19-21; Psalms 14:1; Hebrews 11:6; II Timothy 2:13.

The evidence of revelation and experience: the real case is made in the inner court of the believer's heart and mind. Our knowledge of God is both theoretical and experiential. The experience substantiates the revelation.

THE NATURE OF GOD (OF WHAT ESSENCE IS GOD?)

- John 4:24 - "God is a Spirit."
- Deuteronomy 6:4; Ephesians 4:4-6 - One Spirit.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

- Eternal - Deut. 33:27; Psalm 90:2; John 8:58; I Timothy 1:17
- Self-existent - There never was a time when He was not. Revelation 1:8
- Self-sufficient - Psalms 50:10-12
- Infinite - no limitations. I Kings 8:22, 23, 27; Jeremiah 23:24; Psalm 147:5.
- Omni-present - everywhere present at once. Psalms 139:7-12.
- Omni-potent - all powerful. Revelation 19:6; Genesis 18:14.
- Omniscient - all knowing. Psalm 147:5; Acts 15:18; Hebrews 4:13.
- Immutable - unchanging. Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; Hebrews 13:8.
- Holy - Leviticus 19:2; Psalm 99:9; I Peter 1:15-16.
- Just - Deut. 32:4.

- Good - Psalm 107:8; Romans 2:4; Matthew 19:17.
- Love - 1 John 4:16.
- Sovereign - Isaiah 46:9-11.
- Faithful - Deut. 7:9; Psalm 119:90; I Timothy 2:13.
- Gracious - Psalm 86:15.

THE IDENTITY OF GOD

Of equal importance with the questions of the existence and the essence of God is one which asks, “Who is God?” This is true because the identity of God reveals details regarding His essence. To recognize God as to His identity is to learn more of His essence.

- Essence - that in which the real character of a thing consists. Its essential nature.

It was Egypt’s Pharaoh who asked, “Who is God?” Nebuchadnezzar of ancient Babylon queried, “Who is that God?” The citizens of Jerusalem wondered, “Who is this...?” Paul the persecutor, struck down on the road to Damascus, asked, “Who art thou, Lord?” People of all ages have believed in God or gods, but which one is the true God? Where is He? What is His name? Is He divisible? These are questions we must settle in our own minds!

CONCLUSION

This study, therefore, takes us into the doctrine of monotheism—the belief that there is but one God. This is the very opposite of polytheism—the belief that there is more than one God. Paul explained the distinction like this: “...For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many,) [polytheism], but to us there is but one God...” [monotheism] (I Corinthians 8:5, 6a).

As you go through these lessons, it is our prayer that you will have a divine and personal revelation, not just of doctrine and oneness theology, but that you would have a better understanding of relationship knowing how wide, how long, how high, and how deep the love of Christ is so that you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. (Eph 3:18-19 NLT).

**Assignment
WORKSHEET****Student Name:** _____
Print Full First Name Middle Initial Print Full Last Name**Church Name:** _____ **Pastor:** _____**Date:** _____

Take your time to review each verse before you provide your answers.

1. According to the lesson, the word doctrine means teaching. It refers to what two things?

2. According to the lesson, systematic theology emphasizes systems of thought which gives what?

3. According to the lesson, the truth is that the devil will tempt us to ignore doctrine to accomplish what?

4. According to the lesson, the doctrine of the Godhead affects what two things?

5. According to the lesson, our knowledge of God is what two things? These will lead us to revelation.

6. According to the lesson, the true identity of God reveals two things. What are they?
1. _____
2. _____
7. According to the lesson, doctrine may be defined as a body of principles in a _____ of beliefs.
8. According to the lesson, there are two branches of theology. Both branches are _____. Please select the best answer below:
- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| A. Relevant | C. Logical |
| B. Essential | D. Practical |
9. According to the lesson, doctrine will keep us from spiritual _____ and _____ us as Christians.
10. According to the lesson, the revealed aspects of God are for all to _____ and are no longer _____. Please select the best answer below:
- | |
|--------------|
| A. Revealed |
| B. Private |
| C. Hidden |
| D. Secretive |
11. According to the lesson, fifteen (15) attributes of God are listed. Which one is NOT one of the listed attributes?
- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| A. Holy | E. Good |
| B. Infinite | F. Love |
| C. Just | G. Faithful |
| D. Spirit | H. Gracious |
12. According to the lesson, you will find that these courses are not just to teach doctrine and theology, but that you would establish a relationship _____ with the love of Christ and be made _____ in Him.

Congratulations on completing this lesson. While some lessons may seem harder than others, you must always study to show yourself approved unto God, and reveal to others, what God has given you.
