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you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, 'I am of Paul,' or 'I am of Apollos,' or 'I am of Cephas,' or 'I am of Christ.' Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" He added, in 1 Corinthians 3:3, "For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?"

True unity is based on harmony of true doctrine. To teach something other than that which is found in the Bible is condemned and the person advocating that false doctrine is damned (Galatians 1:6-9).

### **Conclusion**

If the idea that doctrine is unimportant were true, it would have serious repercussions. We could teach that God has several wives or that Jesus said we may commit adultery, etc. Who can believe those things? Yet, what is the difference whether they are true or not if doctrine is unimportant?

What do you believe? A better question is, "What should you believe?" You must give an answer. But be careful—your soul is on the line.

Why not investigate the word of God to find what is true? Why not accept and obey the truth once you find it? Nothing but the truth of God will save your soul (John 8:31-32).

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"But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine." (Titus 2:1)

# Is Doctrine Important?



Gene Taylor

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# Is Doctrine Important?

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Have you ever heard someone say something like, "I don't think it makes any difference what you believe just as long as you believe Jesus is your Savior and you are sincere?" This is a very popular concept among those who are religious. It is taught by a number of different denominations.

In a booklet titled *The Fascinating Doctrine of Predestination*, Dick McEuen, a clergyman for the First Presbyterian Church, said, "The doctrine of predestination is without a doubt the least understood and most maligned doctrine of the Christian faith...The blessed thing about Christian Doctrine is that there are no right or wrong answers. There is no winning an argument or losing an argument. It is not a 'yes' or 'no' situation...So any study begins with a realization that there is no absolute proof of any doctrine. Scripture seems to substantiate both sides of any arguments" (Jasper, Florida, April 27, 1988).

## **Does It Make No Difference What You Believe?**

Do the Scriptures really teach that it makes no difference what doctrine you believe? Not really. Consider 1 Timothy 4:16, "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you." What this verse states is a far cry from the idea that doctrine is without value.

Matthew 15:7-9 states, "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying, 'These

people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'" In this passage, Jesus is showing that the people of His day were not interested in doctrine from God but in doctrines that had their origins with men thus making their religion vain. If our doctrine is anything other than that which God has revealed in His word, our worship is also vain. Doctrines which originate from the minds of men and not the mind of God are to be avoided (Matthew 21:23-27).

Proper doctrine is essential to salvation. The apostle Paul told the Ephesian elders when he met them in the city of Miletus that they were to feed the church for which they had the oversight (Acts 20:28). What were they to feed them? What spiritual nourishment could build them up? Acts 20:32 gives the answer. It is the word of God.

2 Timothy 4:2 teaches that the word of God is that which is to be taught. The doctrine of God is that which saves. Many passages attest to that fact. They include Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19; Matthew 7:21-23; and 1 Timothy 4:1-3.

## **Can We Believe Contradictory Doctrines and Still Be Alright?**

If doctrine is unimportant, if one person can believe one thing and another person can believe something else, then we can believe

contradictory doctrines and still be pleasing in the sight of God. Is that what the Bible teaches?

1 Corinthians 14:33 states that God is not the author of confusion. The confusion of the denominational world that believes that doctrine is unimportant and which teaches and practices contradictory doctrines testifies to the erroneous nature of the position that doctrine is unimportant and that it does not matter what you believe.

Instead of being denominational, or divided, by contradictory doctrines, all believers are to be one in Jesus with that unity based upon the doctrine of Christ. 2 John 9 states, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son." To be in fellowship with God, one must abide in the doctrine of Christ, that body of teaching revealed by Jesus in the New Testament (cf. Hebrews 1:1-2).

Jesus prayed for such unity in John 17:20-21. He said, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."

The apostle Paul, by inspiration, condemned division and divisive teachings. In 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 he wrote, "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning