

IMPORTANCE OF SOUND DOCTRINE

TEXT: I TIMOTHY 1:1-11

INTRODUCTION:

1. Note "doctrine" in verses 3 and 10.
2. The word "doctrine" is found 17 times in the Pastoral Epistles (I Tim. 1:3, 10; 4:1, 6, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1, 3; II Tim. 3:10, 16; 4:2, 3; Titus 1:9; 2:1, 7, 10).
3. Furthermore, if you add in similar words, such as "wholesome words" and "sound words," etc. there are 59 references to doctrine in Paul's three Pastoral Epistles.
4. "Doctrine" means "teaching." "Sound doctrine" (1:10) refers to the right kind of Bible teaching (cf. 1:3).
5. The term "sound doctrine" is found four times in the Bible, all in the Pastoral Epistles (I Tim. 1:10; II Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1).
6. The word "sound" means "to be in good health."
7. Luke 15:27 (Parable of the Prodigal Son) says, "Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound."
8. In II Timothy 1:13, the apostle Paul told Timothy, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me."
9. Titus 1:13 says, "Wherefore rebuke them (false teachers) sharply, that they may be sound in the faith."
10. Titus 2:2 says, "That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience."
11. The same Greek word translated "doctrine" is also translated "teaching" in Romans 12:7, and "learning" in Romans 15:4.
12. These words, translated "doctrine" or "teaching" are found more than 140 times in the New Testament. This indicates the importance of Bible doctrine.

I. WE MUST OPPOSE FALSE DOCTRINE

1. Paul wrote two epistles to Timothy, his "own son in the faith" (I Tim. 1:2; II Tim. 1:2).
2. Older preachers should teach younger preachers to take a stand against false doctrine (1:3, 4).
3. Timothy was told to suppress the strange teachings being propagated by the false teachers. Gnosticism was a big error in the apostolic era. Gnosticism comes from the Greek word gnosis which means "to

- know.” Gnostics claim to possess an elevated knowledge, a “higher truth” that is known only to a certain few.
4. Gnostics see themselves as a privileged class elevated above everybody else by their supposed higher, deeper knowledge of God.
 5. Also, Jewish "fables and endless genealogies" were being taught by men who claimed to be "teachers of the law" (1:4-7; cf. 4:7; Titus 1:14).
 6. Paul referred to their teachings as "endless" (1:4) because it went nowhere. It was very speculative and confusing. It put doubts in peoples' minds, "rather than godly edifying which is in faith" (1:4).
 7. We should avoid people who like to argue over teachings that are not clearly taught in Scripture. We should try and avoid people who get off track ("having swerved"-- vs. 6) with strange doctrines -- hyper-Calvinism, weird teachings on prophecy, extreme views on the Bible translation debate, Pentecostalism, etc.
 8. John Phillips said, "Such quibbling is not edifying and does not promote godliness; it does not produce the orderly living that stems from true faith in the Lord. Christian doctrine has no place for silly arguments put forth by carnal, worldly-minded people. So Paul told Timothy to put a stop to pointless speculations" (*Exploring the Pastoral Epistles*).

II. WE MUST AVOID FALSE TEACHERS

1. False teachers are referred to in verse 6 as vain janglers. "Vain jangling" means "empty talk."
2. Malachi told his backslidden countrymen, "Ye have wearied the LORD with your words."
3. The "commandment" referred to in verse 5 is the "charge" given in verse 3 (cf. vs. 18).
4. The same word is used in Acts 16:24, "Who (the Philippian jailor), having received such a charge, thrust them (Paul and Silas) into the inner prison."
5. *Thayer's Lexicon* says the word means, "proclaiming a message; a charge or a command," and it is "used of the Christian doctrine relative to right living."
6. Right doctrine leads to right living; and the wrong doctrine leads to wrong living. For example, the Pharisees taught false doctrine, and the Bible says they were hypocritical, covetous, and dishonest, etc.
7. A.C. Gaebelein said, "Sound doctrine means also practical godliness. (See I Timothy 6:3, "The doctrine which is according to godliness.")"

- A holy life is produced by sound doctrine, and sound doctrine must lead to a holy life. Unsound doctrines, profane and vain babblings, all the unscriptural teachings, the destructive criticism, and the cults 'will increase unto more ungodliness' (II Tim. 2:17) and eat like a canker."
8. "Canker" (II Tim. 2:17) is gangrene, a disease that spreads through the body.
 9. On the other hand, sound doctrine is healthy. "The end (the purpose) of the commandment (the charge to teach the right doctrine in verse 3) is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (1:5).
 10. "Desiring to be teachers of the law" (1:7) indicates these false teachers were "legalists," that is, those who teach salvation by keeping the law.
 11. Oftentimes, worldly Christians accuse strict Christians of being "legalists." But being obedient or holy is not legalism!
 12. Paul says in verse 8, "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully." And in Romans 7:12, Paul says, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."
 13. The law says, "Honour thy father and thy mother; Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not bear false witness" (Exodus 20:12-16).
 14. Certainly, the law is good, and the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good (I Tim. 1:8; Rom. 7:12).
 15. Paul said in Romans 13:9, "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."
 16. In Matthew 19, our Lord told the rich, young ruler, "Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. 19:18, 19).
 17. But legalists add to the Word of God. Our Lord said to the scribes and Pharisees, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:7).
 18. Acts 15, as well as the entire book of Galatians deals with problems caused by the Judaizers. The false teachers referred to here in I Timothy were different, but there were some similarities. Like the Judaizers they failed to understand the significance of the law in its relations to the Gospel (1:7).

19. Paul says in Galatians 3:24-26, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."
20. Using the law "lawfully" (1:8) means using it "according to its original spirit and intention" (D. Edmond Hiebert).
21. Our society has become increasingly lawless. There are many reasons for this -- no fear of God, lack of strong Bible teaching and preaching, and the fact that lawbreakers know they can break the law with little or no consequences.
22. "The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient" (1:9). The law condemns sinners and shows him his need of a Saviour. Once a person receives Christ, he is saved from the penalty of sin, and the power of sin.
23. J.P. Lilley said the Christian is "occupied with (the law) as a revelation of the divine holiness, and finds in its spiritual breadth a means of humbling his heart, and so leading him to fall back on the saving power of that righteousness of God which is revealed in the Gospel."

III. WE MUST WARN THE WICKED (1:9, 10).

1. We see similar lists in other of Paul's epistles (I Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-5).
2. "The lawless and disobedient" -- those who will not do right.
3. "The ungodly" -- those who hate or ignore God.
4. "Sinners -- those who break God's commandments.
5. "Unholy" -- worldly, irreligious, impure, and immoral.
6. "Profane" -- Hiebert quotes R. C. H. Lenski, who says the profane are those "who walk over everything and make it as common as dirt."
7. "Murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers" -- so wicked they would even kill their own parents. A young man who attended services here a couple of times did that and is in jail now. Fifth commandment: "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Ex. 20:12).
8. "Manslayers" -- murderers. Sixth commandment: "Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. 20:13).
9. "Whoremongers" (1:10) -- adulterers and fornicators. Seventh commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14).
10. "Them that defile themselves with mankind" -- sodomites.

11. "Menstealers" -- kidnappers. Three young ladies went kidnapped in Ohio ten years ago and were rescued yesterday. Eighth commandment: "Thou shalt not steal" (Ex. 20:15).
12. "Liars" and "perjured persons." Ninth commandment: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" (Ex. 20:16).
13. "And if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine..." - - this summarizes all of God's commandments.
14. "Sound doctrine" is healthy. In contrast, the false teachers taught diseased and unhealthy doctrine.

CONCLUSION:

1. Gospel preaching is healthy and produces strong and vibrant believers (1:11).
2. The Gospel manifests the glory of God -- "the glorious gospel of the blessed God" (1:11).
3. Albert Barnes said, "The gospel is a system of Divine revelation. It makes known the will of God...There is no contradiction between the law and the gospel. They forbid the same things, and in regard to morals and true piety, the clearer revelations of the gospel are but carrying out the principles stated in the law."