

Week 4: "Sound Doctrine"

Memory Verse: *Paul's Charge To Timothy*

"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Day One

Sunday, November 10, 2002

Read: Timothy 3:10-17 (p. 1406) and Commentary (p. 1407)

Reflect: In the "last days" (2 Timothy 3:1) there will be terrible times. And people will reject truth. Do you think we are in the last days? What evidence is there in our culture and the world to lead us to believe we might be in the last times?

Dig: Turn to the concordance (p. 1560-if you have never used a concordance, read the introduction on p. 1560) and then to p. 1600 of the concordance. Look up and study all the entries listed under "doctrine." What do you learn about how important doctrine (teaching) is and how it should be used in the church?

How did Jesus treat the Bible? (see Matt. 5:17-20 p. 1082)

Is the phrase "crap detector" a good synonym for "sound doctrine"? Why or why not?

Apply: In every age when the church has lost its respect for the absolute authority of the Word of God, it has drifted from power and vitality. Do some soul-searching before God today about whether you are falling more in love with the truth.

In prayer, ask God for a craving for the pure spiritual milk.

Ask God for at least two instances today where your "crap detector" will sound off.

Day Two
Monday, November 11, 2002
"Justification"

Read: Romans 3 (p. 1281) and Commentary (p. 1282)

Reflect: : Why can't a business just "overlook" its accounts receivable (what people owe them) and delete or cancel their debts?

Why might God require blood to be shed (sacrifices in the Old Testament, Jesus blood in new) for sins to be forgiven and so "purchase" justification?

How is the issue of the way a business handles debt and the way God handles sin similar?

Dig: According to this verse, did Christ first of all die to uphold God's justice and glory or did he die first of all to forgive our sins?

The word "justice" occurs twice in this text and then verse 26 says "he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus." Since God has to uphold justice and his glory and the beauty of what is right, Jesus had to die. Can you list each occurrence of the word "justice" and "just" in this text and tell what it means?

Apply: Take a moment to think about what God has done for you in the death of Christ and then thank Him that.

- He declared you justified (free from the penalty or "debt" of sin) vs. 23
- God repaired the injury to his own sense of justice and glory (vs. 25)
- He gave us this as a gift of grace (vs. 23)
- He made us righteous (vs. 22)

Day Three
Tuesday, November 12, 2002
"Sanctification"

Read: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 (p. 1385) and Commentary (p. 1386)

Reflect: Would you say that you are growing in being a deeply spiritual person? Why or why not?

Can you plateau in your walk with God?

Do you agree that if you are not growing you are dying (spiritually speaking)?

Dig: What are the three areas of practical living that Paul writes about when he urges the people to grow in living a God-honoring life? (hint: there is one in vss. 3-8, another in vss. 9-10 and another in vss. 11-12).

The commentary makes a distinction between "positional sanctification" and "progressive sanctification." Which kind does this passage emphasize? Where are there "hints" of the other kind?

According to the commentary, how is "justification" related to "sanctification"?

Apply: God promises to give us the power to grow in holiness. How did he put his finger on something in your life that he wants to change...a way for you to grow in holiness? Ask him now to give you the power to make changes.

Day Four
Wednesday, November 13, 2002
"Positional Sanctification"

Read: Read: Acts 26:18 (p. 1272) and Commentary (p. 1273)

Reflect: Pop psychologists teach us about "positive self-talk" to help us live our ideals. How much negative self-talk do you do (e.g. "you're stupid, "you always screw up")? How might your thought life change if you used biblical self-talk instead?

Dig: What four basic (positional) changes does Paul mention in Acts 26:18?

What does it mean to be "sanctified by faith"? Look up 2 Corinthians 5:17 for an answer.

How is our position in Christ related to our progress in becoming holy? How does 2 Peter 1:3-4 answer that question?

How do these truths bring you freedom?

Apply: Use positive, biblical self-talk to establish today, once again, that you are God's child. Sue the affirmations on page 41. Say them out loud and announce to the whole spiritual world your position in Christ.

Day Five
Thursday, November 14, 2002
"Progressive Sanctification"

Read: 1 Peter 1 (p. 1450) and Commentary (p. 1450)

Reflect: In which ways do you see progress spiritually in the past few months? How is suffering related to this growth?

Dig: Read again through the chapter and list all phrases that point to positional (past-tense) sanctification in one column and all phrases that point to progressive (present-tense) sanctification.

"Reverent fear" (vs. 17) is supposed to characterize our motivation to live a holy life. How is this "fear" described in the following verses? How is this kind of "fear" different than other kinds of fear?

Apply: In what ways is God progressively making you more holy? How is this like "refining fire" (vs. 7) in your life?

Conclude with a prayer of surrender to God's progressive work in your life.