
Doctrine, and Behavior

Paul devotes 1 Corinthians 15 to teaching correct doctrine to the ecclesia. Some had been teaching that Christ had not truly risen ... but Paul notes the many witnesses who saw Christ after His resurrection. Some were teaching that there would be no resurrection of the dead at all ... but Paul points out how hopeless would be our life and our faith if this were so, and he adds that as in Adam all are dying, so also in Christ will all be vivified. Some were asking how the dead could possibly be roused, and what kind of body could they have ... but Paul proclaims that God will provide a body according as He wills.

There are many within the church today that stress behavior ... social action to address the injustice found within the world ... but they are not concerned with doctrine. But obviously to Paul, doctrine was very important. Despite a life of good works, Paul saw the importance of correcting doctrine when it was taught falsely.

We also see this in Acts 18:24 when Apollos had been teaching concerning Jesus. Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and "expounded the way of God to him more accurately." Correct doctrine is important! But today most within the church seem more concerned with a Bible translation that is easy to read and understand ... one that "tickles the ears," despite the fact that much truth is lost as we lose important distinctions that were made in the original manuscripts.

BUT ... the ecclesia is also called to be a people of action! In the final verse of 1 Corinthians 15, after Paul has addressed the very important doctrine of the resurrection, he concludes with, "become settled, unmovable, **superabounding in the work of the Lord** always."

In 1 Corinthians 16 Paul promotes a collection for the saints in Jerusalem who are in need. And in 1 Corinthians 16:14 we read, "Let all your **actions** occur in love." Paul charges that the one who is involved in prostitution must be expelled from their midst (1 Corinthians 5:2,13).

So just as correct doctrine is important, so also is correct behavior. Paul stresses both in his writings, as does Scripture in all other places. If we exclude either, we fall short as Ambassadors for Christ.

Some focus exclusively on doctrine, studying to gain an increased knowledge of God while being absent in works or behavior. This is as wrong as those who focus exclusively on works and behavior, caring nothing about their doctrine being correct.

Consider 2 Timothy 2:15

"Endeavor to present yourself to God qualified, an unashamed worker, correctly cutting the word of truth."

Here we see the need to study the Scriptures carefully. It is a call to correct doctrine.

Now consider Galatians 6:10

“Consequently, then, as we have occasion, we are working for the good of all, yet specially for the family of faith.”

This is a call to correct behavior, and to action. And note the two-fold nature of our good works ... toward the family of faith (those within the Body of Christ), but also toward **all!**

Let us consider the importance of both correct doctrine and correct behavior, as we live life in this present age as Christ’s ambassadors!

False Witnesses

We read in 1 Corinthians 15:15

“Now we are being found false witnesses also of God, seeing that we testify by God that He rouses Christ, Whom, consequently, He rouses not, if so be that the dead are not being roused ...”

In other words, if we proclaim that God raised Christ from the dead, but if God did not really do so, then we are false witnesses of God!

Remember that as the Body of Christ, we are Christ’s ambassadors, as if God were entreating through us (2 Corinthians 5:20). We need to be sure that which we proclaim as ambassadors is correct!

This is why correct doctrine is so important! If God has announced in His Word that He will one day save ALL, if we proclaim that there is an endless hell to torment some of God’s creation, we are false witnesses of God.

So it is very important that we do not simply proclaim that which we were taught by men, no matter how much we trust them. Men disagree, and are often wrong ... even Bible scholars, preachers, teachers, those who write Bible commentaries, and even Bible translators.

Use a Bible translation that is as true to the original source as possible. I personally believe there is none better than the Concordant Literal translation, as it not only strives to preserve the meaning of every minute word and thought in the originals ... but it also allows the reader to check the translation. Search for yourself every place the same Greek word was used in the originals, and see for yourself if the correct English translation was used.

Most importantly, strive to seek the truth from the Word of God, and as Christ’s ambassador speak that truth. Do not be a false witness of God, even if all others around you are bearing false witness!

- Bob Evely -