

BUILDING SOUND DOCTRINE

Lesson 1

Teaching vs. Preaching

- **And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.** Matthew 4:23, 9:35
- **Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.** Acts 15:35
- **Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.** Acts 28:31

These verses clearly reveal there is a difference between preaching and teaching. The previous verses from Matthew's gospel indicate the pattern of Jesus' ministry: teaching, preaching, and healing. The Greek word for teaching means *to hold instructive discourses for the purpose of instilling doctrine*. Preaching does not do this.

Preaching is different from teaching. Preaching means *to herald, publish, and proclaim*. Biblical preaching delivers short concise bursts of God's simple unadulterated truth. For example:

- **And (John) preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose (Mark 1:7).** John (the Baptist) preached the simple message that Jesus Christ was coming.
- **And they went out, and preached that men should repent (Mark 6:12).** The twelve disciples preached the simple message of repentance.
- **Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them (Acts 8:5).** The simple Gospel message of salvation through Christ was preached.
- **And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God (Acts 9:20).** Paul preached the simple message that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
- **... after the baptism that John preached (Acts 10:37).** John preached the simple message of repentance and baptism.

- **Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: (Acts 13:38).** Here, Paul preached the simple message of forgiveness of sins.
- **He seemeth to be a setter for of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection (Acts 17:18).** Here, Paul preached the simple message of Jesus and the resurrection.
- Paul's sermon at Mars' Hill (**Acts 17:22-31**) is recorded as being only 10 verses long with the simple subject of: REPENT.

In essence, the tool of preaching is used to quickly and powerfully convey the Lord's burning but simple message of the moment. Preaching delivers the burning message with fervor, and often fury; motivating the listener, building their faith to a trembling fervor in their heart until some action must be taken, e.g., water baptism, repentance, salvation, healing, burning pagan relics, etc.

Compare that with teaching. The original Greek word means *to hold instructive discourses for the purpose of instilling doctrine*.

- **And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues,**
Matthew 4:23a

Of critical note is the fact that Jesus Christ "taught" in the synagogues. Synagogues are where you find those who are already faithful to God. This indicates that the faithful believers often need something in addition to preaching.

- **And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?**
Matthew 21:23

This verse proves that teaching is just as authoritative as preaching. Too often the minister feels like he must yell to be heard. Solomon's wisdom rebuffs this notion:

- **The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.**
Ecclesiastes 9:17

Teaching has the power to stir people up:

- **And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout al Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.**
Luke 23:5

Often Jesus Christ would preach to the multitudes then teach the disciples in great depth in private (**Mark 4:34**).

- **And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:27**

Jesus did not preach the gospel to His own disciples, He taught them more deeply, or expounded upon all the scriptures that concerned Himself. A modern preacher would probably have just yelled at the disciples for 45 minutes.

Paul understood the difference between preaching and teaching and told us what they can do:

- **Whom we preach [Jesus], warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Colossians 1:28**

Preaching is effective at warning. Teaching is used to impart wisdom. Combined they work to perfect the saints.

PASTORS ARE TEACHER-FEEDERS

In His post-resurrection discourse to Peter, Jesus ties loving God with feeding His sheep (**John 21:15-17**):

- **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Feed my sheep.**

The word for “feed” in these three verses is *poimaino*, or to pastor. Pastors are feeders. Jeremiah prophesied about a pastor’s job description:

- **And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge [of God and His law] and understanding [prudence and prosperity]. Jeremiah 3:15**

The God-sent pastor will feed the sheep with knowledge and understanding. Any pastor who is not feeding the people knowledge and understanding is not fulfilling God’s assignment.

The New Testament commands pastors to do the same thing:

- **Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (*episkopos*), to feed (*poimen*) the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Acts 20:28**

- **Feed (*poimen*) the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight (*episkopos*) thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind [eagerly].**
1 Peter 5:2

Episkopos means *to oversee or superintend*. ***Poimen*** means *to feed/teach*. The New Testament pastor has a two-fold commission from Jesus Christ: teach and oversee.

*****Teaching is the number one way pastors feed and grow their sheep.*****

Can you imagine school children learning history or mathematics at the feet of an evangelist? Can you learn philosophy or a second language with the instructor yelling at you for 45 minutes?

Part of the bishops/elders/servants requirement list is the ability and eagerness to teach:

- **A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;** 1 Tim. 3:2, 2 Tim. 2:24

Paul told young Pastor Timothy to command, exhort, and teach (**1 Timothy 4:11, 6:2**). Paul also expected every believer to grow up and become a teacher (**Hebrews 5:12**). Disciples are reproduced by teaching those who can then go and teach others:

- **And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.**
2 Timothy 2:2

Even grace is a teacher:

- **For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;**
Titus 2:11,12

Finally, teaching sound doctrine is the only way to combat false doctrine. The Bible warns of false teachers, not false evangelists. It is very difficult to disarm false doctrine with fiery preaching. You must combat it with sound teaching—line upon line, precept upon precept teaching (**Isa. 28:10,13**).

BUILDING SOUND DOCTRINE

Lesson 2

What is Doctrine?

- **For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.**

Proverbs 4:2

Doctrine is a system of teaching whereby the learner is educated and benefited. Doctrine is just as much how you live as it is what you believe. It can be said, “How you live is what you really believe.” A preacher’s number one job is to teach, preach, and live sound doctrine.

- **Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.**

1 Timothy 4:16

The Gospel minister must take care of himself and his doctrine. To neglect either is to damn the listener. You can either be a Gospel preacher or you can become a false teacher (**2 Peter 2:1**), but you can’t be both.

The Gospel preacher must build doctrine from God’s Word. Any outside source will only contribute impurities and corruption to the doctrines of Jesus Christ. Dangerous sources of doctrinal impurities include:

- Secular reasoning and philosophies
- Cultures and traditions
- Opinion
- Experiences (all experiences must be judged by the Word of God).
- Other religions or “holy” books
- Commandments of men

All sound doctrine is built from the Bible. If you want your doctrine to “sound” like the Bible, build it from the Bible’s 31,102 verses.

- **All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**

2 Timothy 3:16,17

The New Testament mentions doctrine 45 times. Here are many truths concerning sound Bible doctrine:

- Men can pass their commandments off as doctrine (**Matthew 15:9**).
- The Bible doctrine is called “the apostles’ doctrine” (**Acts 2:42**).

- Bible doctrine is contagious and should fill our cities (**Acts 5:28**).
- The Bible doctrine is called “the Lord’s doctrine” (**Acts 13:12**).
- The Gospel doctrine must be obeyed (**Romans 6:17**).
- Sound doctrine will cause divisions and offenses; therefore don’t change it to make friends (**Romans 16:17**).
- Every Christian should be studying the Bible and developing doctrine (**1 Cor. 14:26**).
- There are many winds of doctrine in the earth. They blow through and move the weak Christians off course (**Ephesians 4:14**). The fivefold minister is established in order to anchor the Body of Christ with sound doctrine.
- Sound doctrine teaches us how to live holy (**1 Timothy 1:10**).
- There are doctrines of devils (**1 Timothy 4:1**).
- Good doctrine requires a labor (**1 Timothy 6:1**).
- Sound doctrine will produce godliness in the people (**1 Timothy 6:3**).
- The minister’s reputation reveals his real doctrine (**2 Timothy 3:10**). It’s not what you say you believe that matters; it’s what you believe enough to live.
- Sound doctrine is built from the Scriptures (**2 Timothy 3:16**).
- Sound doctrine reproves, rebukes, and exhorts (**2 Timothy 4:2**).
- Sound doctrine is weighty and produces a burden of responsibility (**2 Timothy 4:3**).
- Sound doctrine must be publicly spoken, not privately believed (**Titus 2:1**).
- Sound doctrine can be corrupted (**Titus 2:7**).
- Sound doctrine is serious and genuine, not silly and gimmick-oriented (**Titus 2:7**).
- There are six principles to the doctrine of Christ (**Hebrews 6:1**). Most preachers don’t know or teach any of them:
 - 1) Repentance from dead works
 - 2) Faith(fullness) toward God
 - 3) Doctrine of baptisms (4 New Testament baptisms)
 - 4) Laying on of hands
 - 5) Resurrection of the dead
 - 6) Eternal judgment
- There are divers and strange doctrines (**Hebrews 13:9**). They must be avoided.
- We must abide in the doctrine of Christ and teach others to do so as well (**2 John 1:9**). This proves we are born again.
- We cannot fellowship with those lacking the doctrine of Christ (**2 John 1:10**).
- Sin has a doctrine such as Balaam’s doctrine and Nicolaitan doctrine (**Revelation 2:15, 24**).

HOW TO BUILD SOUND DOCTRINE

Building sound doctrine will require the minister to study, study, study:

- **Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15**

If you don’t study you’ll be ashamed before God and His people.

DOCTRINES: MULTI-FACETED GEMS

Every biblical doctrine is a beautiful, multi-faceted gem. Each facet (scripture) of the gem (doctrine) is critical to defining the gem and producing the radiance that reflects God's glory. To completely understand a biblical subject and build sound doctrine, you must evaluate as many verses as possible pertaining to that subject.

- **At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. Deuteronomy 19:15b**

This can also be called the "law of witnesses." This verse is quoted again in **Numbers 35:30; Matthew 18:16; John 8:17; 2 Corinthians 13:1; 1 Timothy 5:19, and Hebrews 10:28**. These verses teach us that we can't base doctrine on only one verse. We must have the witness of at least two or three verses to establish any word or doctrine. We are to build doctrinal premises based upon text. Too often, however, many doctrines can be described as "a premise in search of a text." **Examples of doctrine building:**

- **Communion**- 7 New Testament passages totaling 35 verses. Numerous Old Testament allusions (see **Genesis 14:18**).
- **Water baptism**- 7 New Testament passages totaling 16 verses. No Old Testament examples.
- **Tongues**- 1 Old Testament passage with 2 verses and 14 New Testament passages totaling 108 verses.

Occasionally you will encounter what theologians call "scriptural tensions," that is, verses that seem to contradict. Sound doctrine will seek to explain these tensions. We know the Bible does not contradict itself so these tensions can be likened to opposite facets of the same gemstone. Examples of doctrinal tensions:

- Judge not (**Matt. 7:1**) vs. Judge all things (**John 7:24; 1 Cor. 2:15**)
- Love (**Luke 6:27**) vs. Hate (**Psalms 139:21,22**)
- Goodness (**Rom. 11:22**) vs. Severity (**Rom. 11:22**)
- Mercy (**Heb. 8:12**) vs. Judgment (**Rom. 2:2**)
- Covet not (**Ex. 20:17**) vs. Covet earnestly (**1 Cor. 12:31**)
- The Trinity: The God of the Bible has declared, "**Thou shalt have no other gods before me**" (**Exodus 20:3**). The Lord God Himself said, "**Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any**" (**Isaiah 44:8**). The Bible clearly describes God as one God: **Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: (Deut. 6:4)**. A tension arises because the Bible also clearly ascribes deity to three persons: the Father (**Matt. 6:26-30**), the Son (**Matthew 3:17, 17:5; John 1:1**), and the Spirit (**Acts 5:1-4**). This seeming contradiction demands an answer to the following question: How can God be one, yet three?

The minister of the Gospel must know the Word of God and know it for themselves.

- **But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.**
2 Corinthians 4:2

Ignorance of the Scriptures and Bible doctrine will lend itself to deceitful use of the Word and deceitful misuse by false teachers. The only cure for false doctrine is sound doctrine.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Sound doctrine will afford balanced feeding for God's sheep. You can't only emphasize one doctrine. Too many ministers have a "pet" doctrine they over-emphasize. Avoid this hurtful habit. God's people need a balanced diet.

You can have what you preach and you will. Adjust your messages and discourses to fix current problems, deficiencies, sins, and to steer the church in the direction they must go as a ministry.

BUILDING SOUND DOCTRINE

Lesson 3

Hermeneutics (Interpreting the Bible)

Hermeneutics is the theory or science of text interpretation. In our case, it's the interpretation of biblical texts. Hermeneutics comes from the Greek word *hermeneuo*, meaning *to translate or interpret*. The term is often used synonymously with exegesis or biblical exegesis. Exegesis is limited to a critical interpretation or explanation of texts, whereas hermeneutics includes the interpretation of all forms of communication.

There are five major analyses that can be used in biblical hermeneutics:

- **Lexical-syntactical analysis:** Simple interpretation looks at the words used (lexical) in the verse and how they are used (syntax). This can be an advanced technique usually left to the Bible linguist. A simpler study can be done with a lexicon to determine the full definition of a particular word.
 - **Examples:**
 - Word study on Greek words for love: *agape, philos, eros, etc.*
 - Word study on Greek words for judge: *krino, diakrino, katakrino, anakrino, krisis, etc.*
 - Word study on the triune nature of man: *pnuema, psuche, soma*; then a further word study on the difference between *soma* and *sarx*.
- **Contextual analysis:** You must evaluate a verse in its context to fully interpret its intention. This method will study everything before and after the verse in question, and even look at the overall theme of the chapter and book. Taking a scripture out of context can be very dangerous, e.g., "What you must do, do quickly."
 - **Examples:**
 - Critical for short passages: "And Jesus wept," "Remember Lot's wife," "Go and do likewise," etc.
 - Critical for building accurate doctrine: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me," "But if he [thief] be found, he shall restore sevenfold," "... and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold."
- **Theological analysis:** To completely understand a biblical subject and thereby build doctrine, you must evaluate all of the verses pertaining to it.
- **At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.**

Deuteronomy 19:15b

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verse. We must have the witness of at least two or three to establish any word or doctrine. We are to build doctrinal premises based upon text. Too often, however, many doctrines can be described as a premise in search of a text.

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- **Historical/cultural analysis:** Often the historical or cultural setting must be understood and accounted for to fully understand what the Bible is trying to communicate. If misunderstood, cultures, customs, and social settings can invariably produce erroneous doctrines.
 - **Examples:**
 - Understanding the first century Corinthian culture can help to interpret Paul's insistence that women pray with their heads covered.
 - Understanding the social status of a publican or Roman soldier can help reveal the heart behind what Jesus said to them.
 - Understanding the Levitical code can help reveal the significance of David walking into the Holy of Holies to eat the showbread; while understanding the regional culture of Canaan can help one to appreciate the Levitical call for no shaved heads, growing out one's hair at the sides, and not clipping the corners of one's beard.
- **Literary analysis:** The Scriptures are written in several different literary styles. These styles must be kept in mind when seeking to interpret the text. These styles include: histories, prophecies, narratives, poetry, psalms, and letters. Furthermore, these literary styles themselves incorporate allegory (parables), metaphors (*under his wings thou shalt trust*), similes (*your neck is like an ivory tower*), figurative language (*the young lions and the adders*), and literal language (*In my name they shall cast out devils*).

See Henry A. Virkler's *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation* (1981) for a deeper study on Biblical Hermeneutics.

Trajectory Hermeneutics (WARNING**)** **(AKA: Redemptive-movement hermeneutics)**

Trajectory hermeneutics is an exegetical approach that seeks to interpret the Bible voice as a progressive trajectory that, in the end, requires the Scriptures to be interpreted in light of

modern culture. In essence, this approach endeavors to calculate the trajectory (direction and velocity) the Bible narrative and doctrines were headed (read: evolving) when the cannon was closed and then extrapolates its landing site and presumed target. The current end result is the approval of modern sin-fads.

In its interpretive method, Trajectory Hermeneutics is the opposite of the historical interpretive device known as *modernism*, but produces the same result. Modernism erroneously endeavors to interpret historical events and people through the filter and understanding of the current cultural climate. Modernism assumes man's heart stays the same. Trajectory Hermeneutics assumes God's heart changes. In the end, both work to promote and justify modern perversion. They are both promoted by the spirit of the world.

Trajectory hermeneutics, or "redemptive-movement hermeneutics" as it is sometimes called, is the predominant framework used by those who would argue that we should not obey all New Testament instructions, since God's "ultimate ethic" is beyond what the text actually says. In essence, "we should wait to see where this thing shall land."

Stick with the Bible and study it to know God!!

BUILDING SOUND DOCTRINE

Lesson 4 The Nitty Gritty

First and foremost, our primary motive for studying the Bible must be to know God.

- **Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15**

Do not be intimidated by the Bible. Often the size of its sheer volume can be overwhelming. Questions like “Where do I begin?,” “Will I be able to understand it?,” or “Will I ever know as much as the preacher?” often hinder believers.

Be encouraged! The author of the Bible—GOD—lives in you and He has promised to lead you and guide you into all truth. The Word is truth, so you can expect Him to lead and guide you through the Bible and speak to you through it.

The Bible is God speaking to us. Let us study what He is speaking. Study for no other reason, but to know God.

Studying is different from reading. Just because you have read the Bible does not mean you have actually studied any of it.

- Reading passes time. Reading makes you well-read.
- Studying takes time. Studying makes you a workman.

THREE NEEDFUL INGREDIENTS

Effective Bible study takes three elements:

1. **Mental Assertion**- You can't just “mindlessly” read the words on the page. You must be actively engaging your mind into what you are reading. No dozing off.
2. **Self-discipline**- Only you can discipline yourself. Improvement and advancement comes one day at a time. Here a little, there a little. Let your Bible study be as important to you as eating, sleeping, bathing, etc.
3. **Time**- Bible study takes time. You must make time for it. If you do not make time for Bible study, the world will make sure you are always too busy for it.

STUDY TECHNIQUES

There are three main ways in which you can study the Bible:

1. **Topically** - This may be the easiest way to study the Bible. To study the Bible topically means that you research a particular topic in the Bible such as:
 - Doctrinal topics like salvation, forgiveness, healing, demons, etc.
 - Characters like King David, Samson, Rahab, Paul, etc.
 - Events like the Exodus, the Flood, the construction of the Temple, etc.

This method of Bible study can have you searching the entire Bible for different scriptures related to your topic of interest. This will require the use of the extra-biblical tools covered in Lesson 3. This style of study can make you a veritable expert on any given topic. As you study multiple topics, you'll begin to build your knowledge database of the heart of God concerning the things of life and godliness.

2. **Exegetically** - This is a fancy word that simply means the student studies a passage of scripture and interprets it. The passage could be:
 - three or four verses in a row
 - a whole chapter
 - a whole book of the Bible

When you're done with an exegetical study, you'll have a good understanding of that particular passage of scriptures, its context, its meaning, its setting, etc. New Testament epistles or portions of the epistles make for good exegetical studies.

3. **Textual** - This type of study means that the Bible student only focuses on one verse. Perhaps a certain verse really has you stumped, or you perceive there's more to it than what you currently understand. You may want to stop and thoroughly study that one verse. You may have to dissect the words used with the help of a lexicon, or you may be able to find a similar verse and compare the two. This type of Bible study is often incorporated into the other two types.

WHAT IS THE GOAL?

The goal of any and all Bible study is to get to know our God better and to have Him reveal Himself to us by His Holy Spirit through the Bible. When God supernaturally reveals something to us during our Bible study, we call that "revelation." Personal revelation is the act of God revealing to someone something they have never seen before. We may have read a particular verse 50 times before and had never "seen it." But on that 51st reading, a light came on within us, and we saw something we had never seen before. Revelation is part of the reward of seeking God and studying His Word.

NOTES, NOTES, and more NOTES

Make sure you write things down. Take notes. Write down your questions when you study. "Who is Tychicus?" "Why did Saul send the ark back?" Great biblical insight comes from asking God questions. Good Bible study produces lots and lots of notes.

WHERE TO BEGIN?

The Gospel of John, Ephesians, or 1 John are good starting places for the new students. After that, what topics interest you? What characters? Let God lead you.