



God's purpose is to raise up in this generation a people who know and live what they believe. In tumultuous times they not only stand solidly in the truth but are beacons of light to others. What manner of men and women are they to be?

*"Men mighty in the scriptures, their lives dominated by a sense of the greatness, the majesty and holiness of God, and their minds and hearts aglow with the great truths of the doctrines of grace. They will be men who have learned what it is to die to self, to human aims and personal ambition; men who are willing to be fools for Christ's sake, who will bear reproach and falsehood, who will labor and suffer, to win the Master's approbation when they appear before His awesome judgment seat."*¹—Arnold A. Dallimore

They must be a people of heat and light with a commitment of both the heart and the head. *"Jesus Christ calls His followers to a disciplined life – morally and intellectually. Lord of our minds as well as our hearts, He challenges us to grow, not in grace only, but also in knowledge."*²

There is an old Chinese proverb which gives some wise advice. *"There is a man who knows not and he knows not that he knows not. He is simple, teach him. There is a man who knows not and he knows that he knows not and he could not care less. He is a fool, avoid him. There is a man who knows and he knows not that he knows. He is asleep, wake him. There is a man who knows and he knows that he knows. He is wise, follow him."* The knowing and applying of God's thoughts through the study of doctrine will give a firm foundation on which to stand. These studies have been developed to the end that we may know, and that in our knowing we may be a light to the harbor of God's truth for others.

I. DOCTRINE DEFINED

A. TEACHING

*"The word doctrine is a perfectly good word that simply means 'teaching'. Everyone has a basis of authority which becomes a base of operations for his thinking and doing. The principal plank in the platform of the atheist is simply that God does not exist. Agnosticism softens the blow by affirming merely that one cannot know if God exists. The authority of liberalism resides in man himself and especially in his reasoning processes. The evangelical Christian's basis of authority is to be found within the framework of the revelation of God."*³—Charles Ryrie



Doctrine

► **In verse 2 of 2 Timothy 4:2-4 what must Timothy do to give the people a basis of sound doctrine?**

► **What causes people to not continue in "sound doctrine"—2 Timothy 4:3?**

► **What is the result of not continuing in "sound doctrine"—2 Timothy 4:4?**

B. CATEGORIZING

Bible doctrine is the categorizing or systematizing of the truth of God as found in the Bible. It has been observed that the Bible, as it is written, may be compared to "*the profusion of nature in which the various plants and flowers are scattered with a bountiful hand.*"⁴ The Bible is a field full of scattered, beautiful truths. The study of doctrine is similar to "*...the botanical garden where plants and flowers are gathered and arranged according to species. The former [the Bible as it is written] is pleasing to the eye, the latter is suited for that closer study which opens to us the secrets of nature... it is our privilege to classify and arrange, and thus to make more intelligible the unifying purpose that governs the whole.*"⁵

► **What is required of the one who is to discover the knowledge of God—**

Proverbs 2:1-5? (*Ezra 7:10; 2 Timothy 2:15*)

(Verses in parenthesis and italics throughout the chapter are for further study, but not necessary to answer the question.)

To study the teaching (doctrine) of the Bible on an area like salvation for example, there is first a need to categorize or organize various key verses related to salvation. This is because the truths about salvation are like scattered flowers throughout the Bible. The studies which follow collect truths under nine major categories.

II. DOCTRINE DEBATED

(See the chart on page 20.)

Even to talk about "the truth of God" raises three critical issues which have been challenged from the earliest of times. Is God really there? Is there absolute truth and can we know it? As Biblical believers we positively affirm these three things.

A. THE GOD OF TRUTH

► The Bible begins with the assumption or presupposition of the existence of God (*Genesis 1:1*).

► **How does the Bible describe the person who rejects God's existence?**

(Psalm 10:4; Psalm 53:1; Romans 1:19-20)

► **What is the danger of not acknowledging the truth of God**

—Romans 1:24-25? (*Romans 1:18-32*)

► **How is God described in John 3:33?**

(Psalm 45:4; Isaiah 65:16; John 1:9; 8:26; 14:6; 18:23; 1 John 5:20; Revelation 19:11)

B. TRUTH TRANSMITTED

*"Ultimately, people hold one of two opinions regarding truth. Some people believe that all truth is relative, that the line between right and wrong is different for everyone. They believe that people may define truth in contradictory ways and still be correct. . . . Other people believe in absolute truth. That is, they believe that certain things are right for all people, for all times, for all places."*⁶—Josh McDowell

► **Which of the two views above do you think best described Pontius Pilate in John 18:37-38?**

► **What is said about God's character in Psalm 119:142 that insures that His Word (law) is true? (Titus 1:2)**

► **What does Jesus claim to be the standard of truth in John 17:17?**
(Psalm 33:4-5; 119:142, 151, 160)

C. TRUTH RECEIVED

Even if we affirm that God exists as a God of truth and that we have a source of absolute revealed truth in the Bible there is one more issue. Do we have the ability to know it?

*"We must make an important distinction between the objective nature of truth and the subjective perception of it. The tension between these two ideas is old as the pre-Christian Greek philosophers. One school of thought represented by the thinker Parmenides (c.500 B.C.) affirmed that whatever is—is, indicating that truth is objective apart from perception. On the other hand a second school, represented by the thinker, Heraclitus (c.500 B.C.) declared that whatever is—is changing, suggesting that truth is ultimately unknowable, because our subjective perception is unreliable."*⁷—Craig Parker

► **What is God's desire for all people—1 Timothy 2:3-4?**
(John 17:3; Romans 1:18-21)

► **What does Jesus promise believers in John 8:31-32? (John 1:14, 18)**

► **What further help is promised in John 16:13-15? (1 Corinthians 2:10-16)**

► **Put the three ideas from the chart on page 20 in your own words.**

III. DOCTRINE DEMANDED

A. FOR PROTECTION

► How is the society that is lacking truth described in Isaiah 59:9-16?
(*Jeremiah 7:28; 9:4-6*)

► Why is it important from each of the following passages that we study God's truth (teaching or doctrine)?

1 Timothy 4:1-2

Jeremiah 17:9

Colossians 2:8

This is a perilous situation. A battle is raging over the control of the mind, our minds. If we are not committed to an urgent, organized, diligent study of the word of God for the purpose of resisting this onslaught of destructive input welling up from within and without, then we will be deceived (*Ephesians. 6:11, 17*).

► How does Deuteronomy 32:46-47 express the seriousness of knowing what God has revealed?

B. FOR PROGRESS

There are at least four positive reasons for studying doctrinal truth:

1. REFLECT: To know the living God and his truth, (*2 Peter 1:2*).
2. APPLY: To transform our thoughts, actions, habits, character, and destiny through the knowledge of God, (*2 Peter 1:3-4*).
3. ERROR: To avoid and dismantle error with the truth, (*Titus 1:9*).
4. SHARE: To carefully entrust precious truths to others, (*Ezra 7:10*).

► The chart on page 21 illustrates three defensive and four positive reasons for studying doctrine. Which one of these do you find most motivating to you personally?

IV. THE DEMAND OF DOCTRINE

The demand of doctrine is obedience. Truth must be applied! If we know truth we are only benefited if we act upon that truth (*John 13:17*). It is familiar but true that, "Light received brings more light. Light rejected brings the night." To acquire the truths of God and not seek conformity to those truths is to learn nothing truly of God.

INTRODUCTION

I. Doctrine defined
II. Doctrine debated
III. Doctrine demanded
IV. Demand of doctrine

Because we are going from our own finite understanding to the infinite person of God, we will never have all of our questions answered in regard to this awesome Being, lest we become God ourselves. However, we may learn enough of Him to live transformed, dynamic lives (2 Peter 1:2-4). Applying truth in our lives and not just in our imaginations is the ultimate goal of learning doctrine. Throughout these studies there is the opportunity to consider the practical implications of great truths.

► **God has kept some things hidden which we can not know. What is God's purpose in what He has revealed—Deuteronomy 29:29?**

V. PROCEDURE

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of these studies is to provide a tool for developing through personal study and application a *broad and basic foundation* in Bible doctrine.

B. PREPARATION

1. Prayer and time are the most important factors in accomplishing this purpose. Each time you sit down to prepare begin with prayer. Ask God to help you understand His truth and apply it to your life. Continue to pray for insight while you study. Ask God to help you remember, apply and share key truths as you finish each chapter.
2. The studies will take from two to three hours preparation (without doing the sections for further study). For continuity you should work through one a week for nine weeks.
3. A good modern translation, such as the New International Version, or the New American Standard Bible will be of more help in this kind of study than a paraphrase.
4. You might break your study time up over the week by working through one section (roman numeral) of the study a day.
5. It will be very helpful if you meet with a small group or with at least one other to interact on your findings.

C. FOR FURTHER STUDY

Due to the broad nature of these studies, there are many details of doctrine which have been bypassed. However, there are some aids to fill in the gaps:

1. There are charts and illustrations throughout the studies.
2. There are quotes and readings from numerous doctrinal works.
3. There is a bibliography with each chapter indicating sources for further reading.
4. There are questions for further study in each chapter for those who are able to invest more time.
5. Extra verses are in parentheses and italics under most questions. These are not needed to answer the questions, but are for further insight if needed.

D. HINTS & GUIDES

1. **Outline form.** The studies are laid out in outline form to enable you to navigate through major doctrinal categories.
2. **Extended outline.** The extended outline on pages 5–12 gives you an overview of where each study is going. In the future you can also use it as a reference tool to easily find information or key verses on doctrinal topics.

INTRODUCTION

- I. Doctrine defined
- II. Doctrine debated
- III. Doctrine demanded
- IV. Demand of doctrine
- V. Procedure

3. Menus on each page. At the top of each page is a menu to show where you are in the outline. Pay attention to these so that you know to which topics the questions refer.

INTRODUCTION

- I. Knowing the future
- II. Doctrine debated
 - A. The God of truth
 - B. Truth transmitted

4. Margins. The pages have wide margins for you to write extra notes, questions and applications.



5. Definitions. This symbol is in the margin when key phrases and ideas are defined. Use these if you need to refer back to a definition.



6. Reflect. This symbol indicates questions that are designed for deeper thought or reflection. Use these as reminders to ask God to reveal Himself as you take time to reflect on truth.



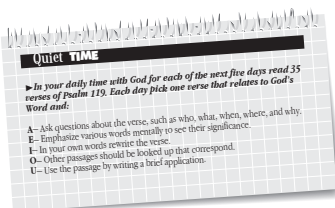
7. Error. Through the centuries there have been many attacks on Biblical truth. Nothing is new under the sun. False ideas that have been promoted in the past continue to show up dressed in a new fashion. This symbol relates to questions that deal with false teaching or ideas that are contrary to the Scripture. Becoming familiar with errors of the past will equip you to deal with present falsehood.



8. Applications. This symbol reminds you to take time to consider how to apply what you are learning.



9. Praise and prayer. There are songs, prayers and opportunities sprinkled throughout the studies to turn your mind and heart in praise to God. These symbols remind you to do so.



10. Quiet Time. Spending time daily with God in the Word and prayer (Quiet Time) is one of the most significant habits that a Christian can develop. At the end of each study are suggestions for how to spend daily time with God for the next week. You will spend time looking at passages related to the topic just studied. Also, different methods of Quiet Time are presented.



11. Share. Truth is never meant to stop with us. God wants us to become conduits to others. As you work through the studies be conscious of what might be the one or two main things that God is impressing on you. At the end of each chapter there will be the opportunity to identify at least one thing on which to focus and share with another.

INTRODUCTION

Quiet TIME

Over the next five days spend your daily time with God in: Psalm 1; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:17-24; Colossians 3:16-17; James 1:21-25. Each day take one passage and record:

- ▶ One observation (a thought that stands out to you).
- ▶ How that thought impresses you or what you would like to do as a result.



▶ What is one truth (it may be a verse or a thought) you want to share with another this week from this study?



*F*ather, You are truth and light.
May Your precious Spirit of truth lead me through these studies
to grow in the grace and knowledge of Your Son and my savior, Jesus Christ.
Strengthen me to set my heart to study Your word,
to practice what I learn and to share what I learn with others.
For Your glory enable me to build life foundations
from the teachings of Your Word.



For Further READING

- ▶ McCallum, Dennis, ed. **The Death of Truth**. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1996.
- ▶ McDowell, Josh, **Out of the Moral Maze**. Nashville: World Bridge Press, 1995.
- ▶ Schaeffer, Francis A., **He Is There and He Is Not Silent**. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1981.



1
THE GOD OF TRUTH EXISTS

John 3:33
Hebrews 11:6

2
GOD HAS REVEALED TRUTH

Hebrew 1:1-2

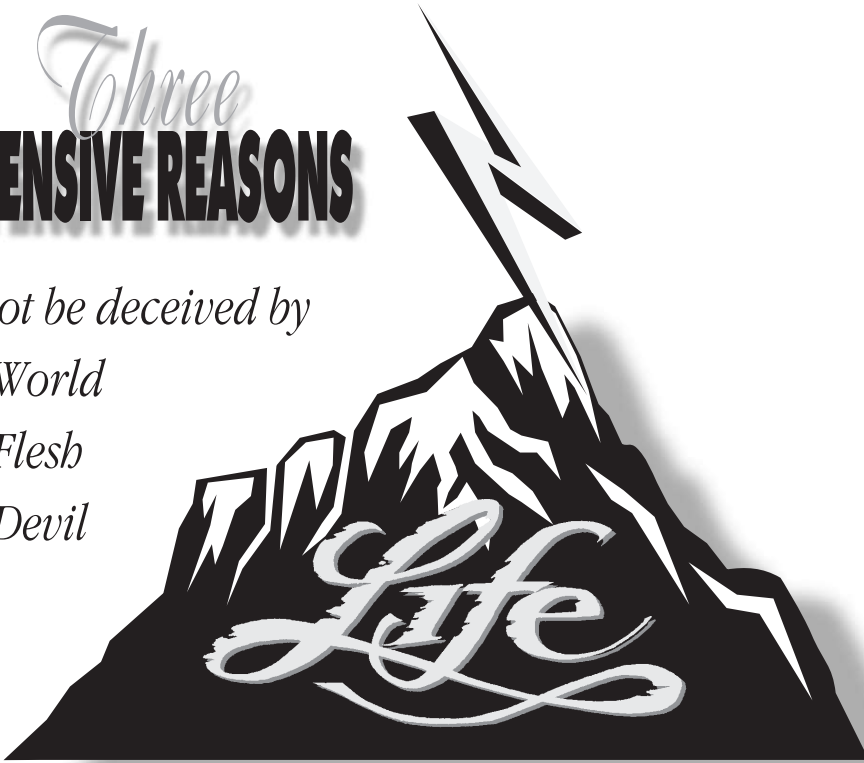
3
WE CAN KNOW TRUTH

Romans 1:19-20



Three
DEFENSIVE REASONS

*To not be deceived by
The World
The Flesh
The Devil*



FOUNDATIONS

Four
POSITIVE REASONS



To know God and truth



To apply truth

To refute error

To share with others



NOTES

1 Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2 vols., 1:16.

2 Gordon R. Lewis, *Decide for Yourself: A Theological Workbook*, p. 10.

3 Charles C. Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, p. 5.

4 T. C. Hammond, *In Understanding be Men*, p. 13.

5 Hammond, p. 13.

6 Josh McDowell, *Out of the Moral Maze*, p. 36.

7 Craig Parker, *Truth*, p. 1.