***Learn Bible Doctrine

RV61-01***

We are studying the letter to Laodicea, section number six, in Revelation 3:14-22. We have been looking at the introductory remarks concerning this church in Laodicea. We have found that it is basically a church that has some deep spiritual problems because it has moved into a condition of carnality and of reversionism.

At the very dawn of human history, when mankind was not yet burdened with a sin nature, the Creator God placed in highest priority the learning of divine viewpoint truth. Divine viewpoint truth is the doctrines recorded in the Word of God. We are treading on some very hallowed ground now. The letter to Laodicea is the one which is extremely apropos to the day in which we live. I can guarantee you that I've already received the signals in both directions. Some people are extremely positive; enthusiastic; and, even relieved by what they've learned the last few sessions concerning what in the world the Bible is all about, and what in the world all of this stuff recorded in the Bible is all about relative to them personally day-by-day. Other people are sensing that this is a threat to a different style of Christianity ... , and that, therefore, they're holding in reserve and drawing back because this undermines a little area that their hidden sin nature prefers to indulge.

**Adam and Eve**

But at the very dawn of human history, a Creator God stressed to Adam and Eve that nothing was more important to them than the knowledge of doctrine which He, the living, God had to teach them day-by-day because they were not created with this knowledge – they had to learn it just like you and I do.

In Genesis 3:8, we have the statement made, after Adam and Eve had fallen into sin, that: "They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden." This remark (this observation), that "God was walking in the garden in the cool of the day," is a statement that suggests that this was a regular pattern, and that this was something that the Lord God did on a daily basis before they had fallen into sin. On a daily basis, the Lord came, and He met with them, and He sat down, and He talked with the man and woman, and He instructed them in the ways of divine viewpoint thinking. At that point in their meeting with God (at that point in their history), they were completely positive to everything they heard. The purpose, in part, of such a daily meeting was to prepare them to be able to cope with a temptation that was just over the horizon. These first human beings needed divine viewpoint.

I want to remind you that these first human beings had an IQ to an enormous degree compared to what we have today. I dare say that with us, 100 is considered normal IQ. If Adam and Eve took an IQ test such as we have today, they would have to expand the norm to a scale of something like 1,500 as the norm, because these people had a mind that was computer-like in its abilities. This was easily demonstrated by the fact that Adam could look at all the animals, and his mind clicked like a computer, and he could classify the various significant features of the animals. He knew what categories to put them into, and quickly knew how to name them and classify them, and everything that was involved.

Yet with all that IQ capacity, they were zero in divine viewpoint. At the very dawn of human history, we have indicated to us that God stressed to these people the daily learning of His Word. It was absolutely necessary for man to know God's thinking in order to function as a normal human being. Without it, he couldn't make it.

So, until man rebelled against God's instructions, he experienced maximum happiness and total fulfillment from everything that God taught him, because the man and the woman said, "Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord, Yes, Lord," and they clicked on everything that God taught them as to what was reality, and how they were to function, and how they were made, and what it meant to be in the image and likeness of God.

For an unknown period of time, Adam and Eve learned doctrine then, and they were positive to it. But once they doubted the veracity of God's words, they fell into a status of reversionism, and into a nightmare of suffering and of evil conduct which has been transferred to the human race, since then, in their progeny.

To begin with, they knew God. To begin with, they knew the Word of God. To begin with, they knew maximum happiness and maximum fulfillment. Once they turned against the truth of what God was saying, and once they turned against doctrine, they fell into great evil, and they fell into great turmoil, suffering, and unhappiness.

**Israel**

We move down through the pages of human history, and we come to the time of the eve of Israel's entrance into the Promised Land. They've been wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. At that point in time, Moses makes a final declaration to the people. He, because of his negative volition toward an element of doctrinal instruction (an element of divine guidance) at the rock, will not go into the land. But he warns them of something that they must never forget, from this point on, if they are to enjoy all that God has in mind for them. Remember, that that's the problem that you and I face. God has enormous blessings; enormous provisions; enormous prosperity; and, enormous well-being in every way: physical; social; sexual; economical; and, in every way you can imagine, that He is eager and ready to give to you individually – not to us as a group, but to you personally. Right from the first, He was trying to set up individual human beings in a position that they could receive that kind of grandiose, glamorous blessing from him. Adam and Eve had it for a while.

The Jews are on the border of the Promised Land. Now, they are humans with a sin nature. But again, God comes through in grace and makes a provision that will open the door to free Him to do for them what He is so eager to do for them in the way of blessing. In Deuteronomy 11:18, Moses makes some very important statements. He reviews in this chapter the miraculous evidences of God's care upon them in their past history. Then He commands the Jews to protect their favored position with God, and his potential blessings upon them, by learning and obeying God's revelation of doctrinal truth. Moses says, "Therefore, you shall lay up these My words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets before your eyes."

This is God speaking through Moses: "And you shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house; when you walk in the way; when you lie down; and, when you rise up." What's he talking about? He's talking about the doctrines of Scripture: "And you shall write them upon the door posts of your house and upon your gates, that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth. For if you shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you to do them: to love the Lord, your God; to walk in all His ways; and, to cleave to Him, then the Lord will drive out all these nations from before you, and you shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves."

This was the promise that declared that Israel was now a client nation of God, and that Israel was the channel of all divine viewpoint to the world. That is the role which they lost with their ultimate negative volition attitudes toward the doctrines of Scripture. It is the role which has been in our day (in modern times) placed upon the United States of America, and which we are prostituting now just as Israel did in her day. We are the client nation today. We are the primary source of divine viewpoint enlightenment for all the world. We have the money; we have the technology; we have the means; we have the knowledge; we have the capacity; and, we have the background. God has prepared this nation 200 years ago for this very purpose. We were raised up to be in that position, replacing other nations who held that honored post and, in time, fell.

Verse 24: "Every place wherein the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours from the wilderness in Lebanon, from the river (the river Euphrates), even unto the uttermost sea shall your borders be." God says, "No nation will be a threat to you while you are my client nation. You will be under my protection. Every place you go, you will know nothing but prosperity: as long as you don't double-cross Me in terms of the Word of God; as long as you don't pull the same stunt that Adam and Eve did; and, as long as you obey the doctrines that you know. Now, if you don't know the doctrines, you're in bad way. Then there's no hope for you. But if you know them, then there's hope for you."

Verse 25: "There shall no man be able to stand before you, for the Lord your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that you shall tread upon, as He has said unto you. Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: a blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you this day; and, a curse if you will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day to go after other gods, which you have not known." ... This was the promise of great blessing to Israel on the eve of their entry into that land, if they would just have the good sense to be true to the Word of God. In some respects, that generation did it pretty well. It was their children that fouled the deal later. It was the kids who, for one reason or another, could not understand; could not grasp; and, could not rise to the privileged position that they held as part of that nation.

That is so often true today. That's what we're fighting today. That's what Berean Christian Academy is all about – to help Christian parents fight back against the inroads of the secular world; against the attacks of secular humanism; and, against the positions of Scripture, which are the only positions upon which a nation can prosper and a nation can be blessed.

I recently read an issue of "Faith" magazine published by Bob Jones University. There was an interview with a pastor of a Baptist church in California. I recognized his picture immediately because he was one of the two pastors that Mrs. Danish and I and their wives fell in together with on our Israeli tour last summer. We ended up spending a lot of time together, and riding on the trains together, and had a lot of discussion. This pastor's church and property has been taken away from them by the state of California, because they run a Christian school. The state of California has declared that all Christian schools are part of the state welfare department, and that, therefore, they had come under governing ordinances, and must fill out forms which tell all kinds of information about how the school functions, and all of the details that the bureaucrats want to know: how much you're paying people; how much your income is; and, where you're getting it from. The state of California has taken the position that when money is given to the welfare agency, the dispensing of that money comes under the authority of the state. The state has the right to declare what you will do with money that is given to a welfare agency.

This church and this congregation says, "We will not fill out those forms. We will not pay the taxes. That's an irrelevant issue. You cannot bring us under a licensing. You cannot bring us under control. We are an extension of the church." Of course, the attorney general of the state of California was smart enough to realize that the argument could be brought against them, as we have done in this state, that a Sunday school is an agency of the church that is a teaching agency. The state of California says, "The Sunday school is part of the welfare department. But we are nice enough to permit you to operate without a license for your Sunday school," because how much money comes in the Sunday school?

Now, this a crucial battle, and California is going to have to fight it. Through Lester Roloff, we have fought it in this state. Our state legislature has now taken schools like Berean Christian Academy out from under the licensing law. We have been able to fight them back on this. What is the reason for this? It's because secular humanism has so perverted the mentality of children in the state of California that parents are fleeing to the Christian schools. So, the secular state is trying to stop the Christian school movement. And the only way they can stop it is by getting control of it, and, therefore, imposing upon it the same kind of patterns and programs that has brought the public school into such a disreputable condition.

Don't think that we are not fighting some life-and-death battles. It just hasn't gotten that close to us yet. We are going to face things in our generation, as believers. Some of us are going to meet the crises, because we have a spiritual maturity structure that's capable of doing it. And some of us are going to crumble like the weaklings that we are.

This is a very important passage of Scripture that we're studying. I'm trying to dignify to you, that when somebody comes along and sneers, and says that there's something more than doctrine, that you will know that God does not share that opinion. On the eve of human history, God stressed to Adam and Eve that what He had to teach them was the thing that was going to make it for them, and to enable Him (God) to pour out all He had in blessing prepared for them.

On the eve of going into the Promised Land, Moses understood this so well, and he tried to stress that to the Jews again. Today, the Jews are a tragic example of a people who treated the Word of God as a nice thing, but a minor element in their lives. They did not see that the Bible says there is nothing more than doctrine. That is it. Everything else that's of value (that's of any merit to us as believers): in fellowship; in service; or, in concern, everything flows from this. If it does not flow from this base, it's tainted with the disorientation of the sin nature.

When was the last time you did something that shocked you? When was the last time you did something such that you said, "What on earth is wrong with me? I'm acting like an animal." That was the time, if you can analyze yourself, when you were out of touch with the Word of God. You were out of touch with the principles of doctrine. You can probably think back and say, "Yeah, I knew. I knew that this is what the Word of God said I should do in this case, and I didn't do it. I deliberately ignored it. I deliberately treated the Bible as a nice thing because I got out of touch with it on a feeding basis – on a day-by-day, feeding-upon-it basis."

The Jews are a pathetic example today. As the Scripture says, "They're the dog's tail." They're under everybody's heel, and they're under everyone's attack. The subsequent history of the Jews fluctuated between times of obedience to doctrine and consequent great blessing; to times of negative volition and consequent failure and sufferings. Just read the book of Judges, and you'll see how this cycle characterized them, and it characterized them throughout their history.

**Solomon**

Let's go to a smart man. Maybe these characters were dummies. They really weren't, but let's go to one that we know was smart: Solomon. Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes, which records how, after all of his attempts to find satisfaction and purpose in life through a variety of human viewpoint projects, he finally returns to the Bible doctrine that he once learned, and that he once obeyed so carefully. Here was the man who, at the moment of his entering into his authority as king over Israel (at the moment of his coronation), he said, "God, make me the man who has the most enormous amount of divine viewpoint judgment of any man that ever lived." God said, "You've got it." Immediately, everything this man did was awesome. Everybody who came in touch with him was awestruck. Two women each claimed that a particular child belonged to them. One of them was lying. She had killed her own baby accidentally, and she was trying to claim the other one. Along came Solomon, and he knew exactly what to do. He came right to the decision, and he exposed the falsehood.

The Bible gives us that example to let us know what went on in the court of Solomon all the time, day-in and day-out. The Queen of Sheba, who was no mean little gal in her own right, came down to visit Solomon. She said, "Man, I've heard big things about you, big boy. You are really something in our world." Solomon said, "Oh, that's just stuff you hear." Then he put on a big social program for her, and he wined and dined her, and showed her around as to what he was doing: his building projects. And she sat in court, listening to this fella operate – the judgments he was exercising. Finally, when the time came for her to leave, he gave her some magnificent presents. And she said, "What I heard about you was only half the story. You're a lot more than what I even heard."

Solomon, this great man, had all of this wisdom, but, in time, he compromised it. We know he compromised it, because he married 1,000 women. Some of them he officially married. A few hundred of them were just concubines (common-law wives). And anybody who marries 1,000 women is not too bright. That's self-evident. Then it was trouble from then on. Boy, the trouble he had! And just trying to maintain those kinds of relationships ran Solomon to a frazzle. There was no way for him to function on any kind of divine viewpoint orientation, whatever he had in the past.

So, the book of Ecclesiastes is a book which is a human viewpoint expression. It gives the history of Solomon's human viewpoint endeavors – his conflicts with doctrine. Finally, you get to Ecclesiastes 12:8, and Solomon comes to the end of the line here: "'Vanity of vanities,' said the preacher. 'All is vanity (nothing, nothing – everything is empty).' Moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge. Yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher (Solomon) sought to find out acceptable words, and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are like goads and like nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given by one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admonished, of making many books, there is no end. And much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

This is the whole duty of man – to learn doctrine and keep it. All else that you desire will flow from that, if you do it. For God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil. God is going to analyze the consequences of your thinking, and the actions that come from your thinking.

Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs as well. The Proverbs is right on target. The Proverbs is not the human viewpoint that you find in Ecclesiastes. Solomon, here at the end of his life, said, "It wasn't worth it." His true wisdom was recorded in Proverbs. Solomon taught that Bible doctrine knowledge was the supreme element for finding satisfaction and purpose in life, and he found it out by personal experience. He is a sad example of a man who started off with a masterful spiritual maturity structure at the super grace level, and who reverted all the way to spiritual infancy. Solomon finally realized that all of the books in the world, containing the wisdom of fallen man, could never resolve his alienation from a holy God, and bring him back to happiness. He said, "Studying all those books just makes me weary."

But there's the one book that makes all the difference – all the truth that God has recorded in Scripture. All the confident human viewpoint opinions of man, and his human good works, will be exposed for the pitiful failures that they are. They are garbage instead of pearls of divine viewpoint through doctrine in the soul.

So, you and I have to make our choice. For years, Solomon wallowed in garbage of human viewpoint, through all the books and philosophies that he studied. Finally, he said, "That's enough." He went back to the gems and the pearls of the Word of God, and his life turned around.

**The Lord Jesus Christ**

We come to the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. You can step back and ask yourself, "What was the ministry of Jesus Christ all about?" You will find that, at the heart of everything Jesus Christ did, was to reiterate the principle that God set forth since the Garden of Eden: that man needs doctrine in the soul, or he will degenerate into an animal existence. The Lord summarized this in Matthew 4:4, when he said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." The ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, was one of teaching Bible doctrine in order to bring the Jews back to blessing. It's important that you understand that. That seems like a simple statement, but there are a lot of people that have not really grasped that that's all Jesus Christ did. He was a teacher. He healed some people, and He did a few other things, but the thing that occupied His time and His ministry was teaching people doctrine. That's a very important clue to us as to what God expects of us, and what He thinks our needs are. Why would the Lord do that unless that was crucial to people to whom he was ministering?

Notice in John 17:8, Jesus said, "For I've given up to them the words which You, the Father, gave Me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from You, and they have believed that You did send Me. He said, "I have given them the words that you have given Me, and they believed it. Notice verse 14: "I have given them Your Word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Verse 17: "Sanctify them through Your truth. Your Word is truth." How are they going to be set aside? In the only way they can be: sanctified. That's what "sanctified" means: "to set aside through the truth." What is truth? It is the Word of God. The Lord Jesus Christ spent his life trying to remove the human viewpoint deceits of religion from the minds of people. Because He did this, He enraged the religious leaders to the extent that they murdered him.

Mark 7:5: "Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, 'Why don't your disciples walk according to the traditions of the elders?'" They were saying, "Why don't they walk according to human viewpoint religious ideas?" "'But they eat bread with unwashed hands.' He answered and said unto them, 'Isaiah has well prophesied of you hypocrites as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.''" I want you to notice that the Lord Jesus Christ is using some strong language. He's calling religious leaders in public a bunch of hypocrites: "However, in vain they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

Never forget that doctrine is going to be taught. It's taught all the time. Satan's in the doctrine-teaching business. He knows that's a supreme thing. He knows it's the mind that's the important thing that we are trying to capture in Christian education, and we will be a failure unless we capture that mind with doctrine, because that's what's going to make the difference. But Satan is teaching his human viewpoint doctrines – "'Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, for laying aside the commandments of God, you behold the tradition of men as the washing of pots and cups and many other things you do.' He said unto them, 'Full well, you reject the commandment of God that you may keep your own tradition.'"

That summarizes the ministry of Jesus Christ. He kept telling people, "You're tied into human viewpoint. You're functioning on religion. You're out of touch with God. Here's the reality." And He kept teaching them true doctrine. Some of them believed; a lot of them did not.

After His resurrection, the Lord Jesus again stressed the supreme importance of Bible doctrine to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus – that terrifically exciting passage of Scripture which relates this incident in the life of the resurrected Christ. Luke 24:25: After they expressed their disappointment as to what had taken place in Jerusalem with His death, and the discovery that the tomb was empty: "Then said He unto them, 'Oh, foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe. All of the prophets have spoken.'" Slow of heart to believe what? Doctrine: "'Ought not Christ have suffered these things to enter into His glory?' And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all Scripture the things concerning Himself."

Here is Jesus Christ: post-resurrection. What is He batting away again? Doctrine: "And they drew near unto the village to which they went. He made as though He would have gone further, and they constrained Him saying, 'Abide with us for it is toward evening and the day is far spent.' And He went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as He sat eating with them, He took bread and blessed it and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him, and He vanished out of their sight. They said one to another, 'Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us along the way, and while he opened to us the Scripture?'" Isn't that tremendous? "Our hearts burned within us, while He opened to us the Scriptures."

If you want some real excitement, and you want some real thrills, it comes from the grasp of the reality of doctrine in your soul – that doctrine which will prevent you from becoming a reversionistic believer, and from going back down from acting as a prince and princess in the royal family of God, to being a common gutter-type knave who has lost all of his royal characteristics. We've got a lot of Christian royalty who are down in the gutter. Some of them never had a chance to get out of it. Some of them had a chance, and they have chosen to follow the pattern of the dog, that the proverb speaks of: the dog who likes to return to his own vomit.

It's interesting how God has centered on that particular term and analogy for human viewpoint ideas. So, all this human viewpoint stuff you like – remember what God calls it. And if you're a dog, that's what you'll do. I think you must be a very low dog to have to go for human viewpoint regurgitation, because I've had several dogs and I haven't yet seen any of them throw up and eat it. There must be some dogs that are low enough to do that. I've heard of them doing it. Mine have generally been of a higher category in class, but I'm sure there are some that do. And because it doesn't seem to be so common, you must really to be a dog of a dog. So, the Bible uses really strong language. Let's not kid ourselves. Jesus Christ, at this moment, brought the exhilaration to their hearts that only doctrine can bring. Suddenly they realized that they were like God. Their minds were God's mind. They were thinking as if they were God himself, because for that moment, they had the mind of Christ, and they were positive to it. What they have, we have as well.

**The Apostle Paul**

We move quickly into the era of the New Testament church. We come to the ministry of the apostle Paul. Here was the man upon whose shoulders was based all of the responsibility for establishing the age of the church in the era of grace. What did his ministry consist of? As you follow through the life of the apostle Paul, you'll find, again, that he zeroed in on teaching doctrine for the explicit purpose of enabling Christians to build a spiritual maturity structure in their souls.

On the occasion that he was leaving the believers to go to Jerusalem, he had called the pastor-teachers from the various house churches in Ephesus to come to meet Him. They met at the seashore, and we have recorded in Acts 20:26 what he had to say about what his ministry was all about; how he spent his time; what it was he was doing for people; what he kept stressing to people; and, now, what he stressed to these pastor-teachers that they must make the supreme activity of their lives: "Wherefore I testify unto you this day that I am pure of the blood of all men; that is, whatever consequences anyone suffers with God, his blood is not on my hands, because I have informed him." If you're a pastor-teacher, you must remember that. Your job is to inform. I hear all the guff. I hear all the negative stuff. I hear all of the nonsense, and all of the antagonism toward the exaltation of the Word of God, which God Himself says, "I have exalted above My name." And it makes no difference: People are going to deal with God, not with me. The only thing the Lord is going to hold me accountable for is the fact that people were informed when they took the trouble to come out to listen.

Paul says, "When they came out to listen, I gave them the truth. For I've not shown to declare unto you all the counsel of God." They got the full gamut, from the gospel to the rapture. They got the full gamut of doctrine: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the church of God." "To feed the church of God" means teaching them the Word of God: "Which He has purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing, grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves men shall arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore, watch, and remember that for the space of three years, I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. Now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace (to doctrine) which is able to build you up."

Do you see what was in his mind? A spiritual maturity structure. That's what he wanted to see in believers: "To build you up; to edify you; and, to give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified."

When Paul comes to young Timothy, we won't take time to read all these verses. I really should because they make an impact when you read them one after another. Here he is writing to Timothy. What is the main thrust of his letters to Timothy? It comes back again and again: "Timothy, teach people the Word of God. Give them doctrine." You might want to look these up on your own. In 1 Timothy 4:1-2, he tells him how he must inform qualified men. He must prepare teachers of the Word so that they, in turn, can teach others: "Now the spirits speak expressly, that in latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons; speaking lies and hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." He tells Timothy, "You are going to be faced with people who are going to be teaching false doctrine. That's what you're going to have to fight."

Verse 6: "If you put the brethren in remembrance of these things, you shall be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine unto which you have attained" (if he warns people about this false doctrine).

Verse 16: "Take heed unto yourself and unto the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this, you shall save both yourself and them that hear you."

Then we come to 2 Timothy 1:13-14. Remember that this is the last letter that the apostle Paul wrote. When the apostle Paul wrote 2 Timothy, he knew that this time Nero was going to take his head off. He knew that this time he was not going to be released as he was after the letter of 1 Timothy. This time he is going to die. This is the end of the line. This is the last thing he has to say. So, what does he say at this moment, on the threshold of death, to prepare Timothy and the other leaders to carry on? "Hold fast the form of sound words, which you have heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you – keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us."

2 Timothy 2:1-2: "You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things that you have heard from me (the doctrinal things) among many witnesses, the same commit to faithful man who shall be able to teach others also."

Verses 15-16: "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness."

Verse 24: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, able to teach, patient, in meekness, instructing those that oppose them, if God perhaps will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil who are taken captive by him at will." It takes a lot of patience to teach people who are negative, and it is tempting to be strong-handed with them. But you have to be careful. You have to realize that these people are in a status of complete disorientation. If they don't listen to you, and the true Word of God, the consequences are going to be enormously tragic for them. So, pity them.

2 Timothy 3:14: "But continue in the things which you have learned, and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them. And that from a child, you have known the holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. 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 4:1-4: "I charge you, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at the appearing in His kingdom. Preach the word. Be diligent in season and out of season." Do you know what that means? Be diligent in season and out of season? That's old Elizabethan English that says, "Be faithful and proclaim doctrinal truths when people are open to them, and nice about it, and receptive; and, when they are outright negative." You are to do this when the season of teaching is good, and when the season of teaching is bad. Your job is to keep cranking out the truth: "Reprove, review, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts, they shall heap to themselves teachers having itching years. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

People come into a church that teaches the Word of God, and they want their ears scratched. They come in with some kind of an itch; something that's bothering them; something they are guilty about; or, some guilt complex, and they want the preacher to sooth them. Have you ever had an itch? Have you ever been at dinner with somebody and got a terrible itch on the end of your nose, and you couldn't scratch it? It didn't look very good for you to be scratching your nose at the dinner table. That's how these people come in. But when you do scratch it, you say, "Oh, boy, that feels so good. Oh, that's so wonderful. Keep it up." We have people who are coming in, and they have these spiritual itches, and they're trying to find a preacher who will say, "Here, let me make that feel better." He shells out his human viewpoint guff to them, and they say, "Ooh, that feels so good. You're such a wonderful man."

Paul says, "Timothy, don't fall sucker to that. You're a candidate, as a pastor-teacher, for one of the unique crowns, and the degree of your faithfulness will undermine your eligibility for that crown. Don't do it – let alone what it will do to those people."

**The Book of Hebrews**

We come to Hebrews, and the writer to Hebrews keeps stressing these same principles of the supremacy of doctrine in the life of the believer. He sums it up with that tremendous verse, Hebrews 4:12: "For the Word of God is living and powerful (alive and powerful), and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." That's what the Word of God does. You wonder: why are some Christians so savvy? Why are some Christians so smart? Why can some Christians just not be made fools of? Why can they not be conned. Why can you not deceive them? It is because of this: the living and powerful Word of God is in their minds. It is a sharp sword. It cuts open the fake right before your eyes. You are a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart. When you have a spiritual maturity structure in your soul, and one of these con artists comes along, you can listen to them, and your mind is a discerning mind. You'll spot him for what he is. You'll know what he's doing, and you'll not be suckered in.

**James**

There is the promise of James in James 1: "But be doers of the word, not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any man be a hearer of the word, learning doctrine, and not a doer (positive volition), he is like a man beholding his natural face in a mirror, where he beholds himself, and goes his way, and immediately forgets what manner of man he was. But whosoever looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues in it, he, being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." The promise of James is blessing from positive volition to doctrine.

So, the Scriptures tell us that it is the supreme duty of the pastor-teacher elder in the local church assembly to make it possible for Christians to have the doctrinal understanding that they need in order to build the kind of spiritual maturity structures in their souls, without which, they will degenerate into what we see in the church at Laodicea.

**Peter**

So, in 1 Peter 5:1-4, Peter says, "The elders (the pastor-teachers) who are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a caretaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight of it, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd (that is, Jesus Christ) shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that does not fade away." This is the crown exclusively reserved for faithful pastor-teachers.

1 Timothy 3:2 touches again on the supreme duty of the pastor in the assembly: "A bishop then must be blameless; the husband of one wife; temperate; sober-minded; of good behavior; given to hospitality; (and then the kicker ability) apt to teach," and the Greek means "the ability to teach."

**Titus**

Titus 1:9: "Holding fast the faithful Word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to confute the opposers." Titus is speaking, again, of: what is the job of the pastor-teacher? Why should he have the ability to teach? Why is that put in such a supreme position? Because that's what it's all about. If he cannot teach the Word, then people cannot grow in the Word.

The depositing of Bible doctrine in the believer's human spirit is the basis for the erecting of the spiritual maturity structure in the soul. These words that we have studied for spiritual edification are words that tell us that that is the goal of the Christian life. As you remember, we have already studied the fact that there are three words in the Word of God that tell us something specific about the spiritual maturity structure. It is edification. The words for spiritual edification describe the act of erecting a structure; the structure itself; and, the builder of the structure.

So, what we've said here is that throughout human history, God has stressed that as doctrine is stored in the human spirit, a structure of spiritual maturity is erected in the soul. We find in Ephesians 6 that this spiritual maturity structure is the breastplate of righteousness. It is that part of the armor of the believer in the angelic warfare. This structure, with its five facets, forms a container for God' super-grace blessings. That is the objective of the pastor-teacher ministry. The reason for that is because it has been God's purpose, throughout the ages, to bring people to the position of those two men on the road to Emmaus, where their hearts do burn with the exhilaration of having entered into the thoughts of God: thoughts upon which they can click in their lives; thoughts upon which they can function; and, thoughts upon which they can make the right moves in life.

When was the last time you did something you wish you hadn't done: the last decision you made; or, the move you made that you wish you hadn't done? When you're functioning upon God's principles, and when you're being open to the leading of the Spirit of God, those occasions, you will find, will become less and less in your life.

Sooner or later, somebody is going to say to you, "But if you get all that doctrine, you're going to get indigestion from eating that doctrine all the time. I'm here to tell you that you don't get indigestion from good food. It's bad food that gives you heartburn, and that's something that Satan has in abundance for you. You never go bad with the Word of God in your soul.

We still have to touch upon the fact of the tragedy of tearing this down. People in this audience are probably at various stages of spiritual development in their structure within their souls. The great occupational hazard of the Christian life is tearing that down. We will move into that in the next session.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

[**Back to the Revelation index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/revelation.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)