
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: *Is there such a thing as false doctrine and does it even matter?*

THE FIRST QUESTION

There are actually two questions being asked here. Let's begin with the first question: *Is there such a thing as "false doctrine"?*

- Doctrine means "teaching."
- False doctrine means "teaching which is not true."

So the first question we are asking is this: *Is there such a thing as teaching which is not true?* That is the same thing as asking, *"Is there such a thing as false doctrine?"*

The answer to this question is simply: YES. There are teachings which are not true.

John 8:31-32

31 Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide **in My word**, you are My disciples indeed.

32 And you shall know **the truth**, and **the truth shall make you free.**"

The word of the Lord makes men the Lord's disciples if they obey that word. Jesus said the words He taught were truth and that truth would make men free from sin.

John 17:17

17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

These words were also spoken by Jesus. According to this the word of the Lord is truth. That truth will "sanctify" men – according to Jesus. "Sanctify" means to "set apart." One day, when the Lord comes again and the world comes to an end, those who are "set apart" will be spared from destruction.

So ... from these two passages which the Lord Himself spoke, we learn three important things:

- 1) We learn that the Lord's teachings are truth.
- 2) His teachings set men free from their sins if men will obey those teachings.
- 3) His teachings set His people apart from those who will be destroyed on Judgment Day.

If these things are correct, and they are, then the implication is: Anything which the Lord did not teach is false doctrine or false teaching.

We just noticed three important truths from two passages which the Lord Himself spoke. Now consider three more important truths which the Lord implied:

- 1) If the Lord's teachings are truth (and they are), then anything which the Lord did not teach is false.
- 2) If the Lord's teachings set men free from sin when men obey those truths, then when men obey false teachings, they are not set free from sin – they simply remain in sin or perhaps plunge deeper into sin.
- 3) If the Lord's teachings set His people apart from those who will be destroyed on Judgment Day, then false teachings will cause people to remain part of the group which will be destroyed.

THE SECOND QUESTION

This brings us to the second question we are investigating this week: ***Does it even matter?*** In other words, does it matter what men believe?

The answer is: YES. It matters what men and women believe.

Remember what we have said:

- Doctrine means "teaching."
- False doctrine means "untrue teachings."

Believing something that's not true is very dangerous – even if a person does not know it's not true. Some people are unaware that what they believe is "false doctrine," but their ignorance does not protect them from danger.

ILL: Suppose someone eats a rat biscuit but does not know it is a rat biscuit. Are they safe and protected from danger because they thought the biscuit was a Pillsbury buttermilk biscuit? The answer is obvious.

What people do not know kills and harms them every day.

- When someone does not know the gun is loaded their friend is not protected from danger when the gun is pointed and the trigger pulled.
- When someone does not know they opened the wrong bottle of medicine, they are not protected by their ignorance.
- When someone believes false doctrine, they are not protected from the danger just because they were ignorant.

Doctrine matters because:

- What we are taught is what we believe.
- What we believe affects how we act.
- How we act determines whether we are saved or not.

Example #1: When men are taught they are saved before baptism, they do not get baptized in order to be saved ... because they think they're already saved. Doctrine is important. Baptism is for sinners who want to become saved (Acts 2:38).

Example #2: When men are taught they cannot fall away and be lost once they get saved, they will become careless and sin, but they do not worry, because they have been taught falsely "once saved, always saved." But the Bible warns Christians to "take heed lest you fall" (1 Cor 10:12).

Example #3: When men are taught they evolved from lower life forms and they are nothing more than an animal, then men begin to act like animals. Doctrine is important. What men believe affects how they act. But the Bible teaches we were made in the image of God and we owe God the very best service we could possibly give (Gen 1:26).

Example #4: When men are taught that homosexual behavior is just as acceptable and normal as heterosexual behavior, then men begin to practice homosexual behavior with no shame. But the Bible teaches that those who practice homosexual behavior "shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9-10).

Yes, there is such a thing as false doctrine and it does matter what we believe.