**Appendix: Shaping Doctrine**

1. Base doctrine on literal statements in the Bible rather than figurative portions.

*Example: Don’t use John 15:6 to start a debate about whether a believer can lose their salvation. Stick to the clear teaching in John 15:10 – that those who obey Jesus’ commands will remain in his love.*

2. Base doctrine on plain statements rather than obscure ones.

*Example: 1 Peter 3:19 can be difficult to interpret, so it should not be used to contradict the clear teaching of Hebrews 9:27 and 2 Corinthians 5:8-10 that after death comes being with the Lord or judgment.*

3. Base doctrine on teaching passages rather than historical ones. (Teaching passages interpret historical passages.)

*Example: Acts 19:1-7 describes “disciples” who had not received the Holy Spirit when they believed. When hands were laid on them they received the Spirit and spoke in tongues. But texts such as Romans 8:9 and 1 Corinthians 12:7, 13 make it clear that* ***all*** *followers of Christ have received the Holy Spirit. Acts 19 describes disciples of John the Baptist who had not yet believed in Jesus.*

4. Base doctrine on all relevant passages, not just a few.

*We’ve already seen the importance of “Interpreting Scripture with Scripture.” Considering as many relevant passages as possible helps us more accurately understand the mind of the Lord.*

5. Emphasize what Scripture emphasizes.

*We do well to focus mainly on the themes the Bible emphasizes over and over. Themes such as the glory of God, salvation through Christ’s death, the lostness of humanity apart from Christ and the truth of God’s Word. God commands his people to “avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless.” (Titus 3:9)*

**Useful Resource:** *Doing Bible Interpretation: Making the Bible Come Alive for Yourself and Your People*, by Larry W Caldwell

**Other resources for additional reference:**

*How to Understand Your Bible,* by T. Norton Sterrett

*How to Read the Bible for all it’s Worth,* by Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart

*Knowing Scripture,* by R.C. Sproul

*Biblical Hermeneutics* by Milton Terry