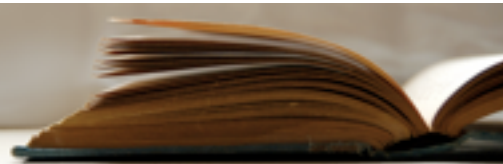


MODULE 1 DOCTRINE



INTRODUCTION

If you were to attempt to paint a picture of your perception of “doctrine”, what would that picture look like.

Leader's Help: *There are as many shades of like and dislike for doctrine as there are people. The point of this question is to uncover where your group (or disciple) is coming from. Do they have a natural distaste for doctrine (It's a “bad” word) or do they thrive on doctrine (almost as an idol)?*

EXAMINING THE PIECES

Read Ephesians 4:11-14

As you observe the text, how does Paul describe what it means for the body of Christ to be built up?

In the context of describing spiritual growth, if someone were to ask you to put v. 13 in your own words, what would you say?

According to v. 14, why is it crucial that the body of Christ be built up?

It is in v. 14 where we see the word “doctrine”. In light of how the word is used here, what does spiritual immaturity (or spiritual stagnation) potentially lead to?

Conversely, then, what should spiritual growth lead to?

What would v. 14 look like in a person's life if he/she wasn't maturing in Christ?

What's the point?

The point of this study is to re-engage your small group (or disciple) over this concept of doctrine - highlighting the fact that doctrine ultimately leads to a Person.

What's the problem?

Depending on our background, experiences, and idols, oftentimes just bringing up the word “doctrine” conjures up unhealthy emotions and images. For example, because of dogmatic and obnoxious believers, one person hates even the thought of “doctrine”.

On the other hand, another person may thrive on always being right, and therefore, “doctrine” feeds an idol that always wants to look smart or even godly.

What's the solution?

The solution is to not make doctrine an end in itself, but rather, to allow the truth of doctrine to point us to “the truth, the way and the life” - the ultimate revelation of Truth as expressed in Christ.

EXAMINING THE PIECES CON'T

Read Ephesians 4:15-16

To make sure we don't miss the ultimate goal of our growth, Paul aims our spiritual growth in one direction. Where?

What does it mean to grow in every way into Christ?

Leader's help: *make sure you help them notice the different types of words to describe growth in this entire passage - "unity of faith", "knowledge", "stature", "love". In other words, growing in Christ isn't just a warm fuzzy feeling. There is rigorous study, fighting for a unified faith of love, and just like an athlete's body can grow in stature through discipline and hard work, so also believers are to not be lax in building a corporate body that looks like Christ.*

So What?

How is growing in maturity in Christ different than merely growing in doctrinal knowledge?

How does growing in maturity in Christ enhance our growing in doctrine?

Think back to the opening question and how you "painted" a picture of doctrine. After studying this passage, how would you paint spiritual immaturity?

How would you paint spiritual maturity?

Paul says that we are to grow up in "every way" into Christ. In other words, we need to grow in multiple ways. What is one way that you want to see growth in Christ this semester?

By the power of God in you, what actions, attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors need to be changed and developed in order for you to see that growth this semester?

What's our response?

The primary response that we long to see from this study is a person seeing doctrine not as an "it", but as a "He" - that Jesus, as God in the flesh, is the embodiment of all truth and that growth in doctrine is a growth in Christ. Therefore, as believers, doctrine isn't a bad word, nor is it a source of just looking smarter or more spiritual. Instead, how can we grow into the person of Christ?
