

# THE IMPORTANCE OF SOUND DOCTRINE

**Text:** 2 Timothy 4:1-4

The letters written to Timothy and Titus by Paul are what we call the “pastoral epistles” because it contains the qualifications and instructions for men who are called to be pastors. The one instruction that Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit seems to dwell on is the importance of sound doctrine.

Doctrine means “that which is taught” and sound means “founded in truth and strong; valid, solid and can’t be overthrown or refuted”. So sound doctrine is accurate, biblical teaching that aligns with scripture, promoting spiritual health, holiness, and godliness. It serves as the framework for what you believe and how you live. It’s teaching that is faithful to God’s word, free from error, and directly derived from scripture.

The purpose of sound doctrine is to produce spiritual maturity, transform lives, and protect the church from error and division. Paul warned Timothy and Titus that the time would come that people wouldn’t endure sound doctrine but would turn to:

- **Fables** – the Greek word is “mythos” where we get our English word myth from. It’s a fabrication that replaces what is actually true.
- **Vain jangling** – Empty noise that has no spiritual benefit at all
- **Jewish fables** – warning against teaching extra-biblical oral traditions that were recorded in the Kabbalah or Talmud. These fables often pushed circumcision for Gentiles, forcing the dietary laws of Moses and keeping sabbaths for salvation
- **Commandments of men** – Teaching traditions not found in the word of God as though they were God’s commandments. Paul says this turns from the truth

Little by little the American church has drifted away from sound doctrine for over a hundred years, and it has brought the fulfillment of 2 Timothy 4:3-4. He said they would be driven by their own lusts to heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. Lust is instinctively selfish and self-fulfilling. The glaring problem in the American church today is that the focus is placed upon the sinner instead of the Savior. The prosperity gospel is about you...it teaches you how you can put God in your obligation to make you healthy and wealthy. The popular teachers today that “so-called” Christians flock to have one thing in common, their message will be all about you. Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyers, Creflo Dollar, T.D. Jakes, Paula White, and Steven Furtick are just a sample of the false teachers that people love today because they scratch their itching ears.

You can trace all of this back to the root. When the new birth was watered down from a miracle of God that transformed the lives of people into a head decision that anyone could be talked into at any time, we started down this path. The Bible teaches that the gospel of Jesus Christ must be preached in the power of God to illuminate sinners to their condition, bring conviction of sin, and the drawing of the Holy Ghost to repentance and faith in Christ. But in the last hundred years, much of the American church has taken salvation of sinners out of God's hands and put it into their own. They've done away with the work of the Holy Spirit entirely and made everything directed to people's intellect. If they agree with the message mentally, nod their head at some verses, repeat a prayer etc...they pronounce them saved. This has led to the American church being filled with unconverted church members who are bored to tears with sound doctrine and have no spiritual appetites at all. They live in sin because they are still in love with their sin. Jesus told us all about this in the parable of the wheat and the tares.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. **Titus 2:11-13** For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; **Titus 3:3-6** For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; *ALL THIS TEACHES US THAT BIBLICAL SALVATION CHANGES PEOPLE'S LIVES.*

Godly men of yesteryear have prophetically spoken of where we are right now. "A time will come when instead of shepherds feeding the sheep, the Church will have clowns entertaining the goats." Charles Spurgeon William Booth, founder of The Salvation Army, made this statement before the turn on the twentieth century "I consider that the chief dangers which confront the coming century will be religion without the Holy Ghost, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God, and heaven without hell."