

Sound Doctrine

How can any of us know who is and who is not preaching the truth of God's word? Paul tells us that anyone we are learning from must acknowledge that Paul was given commandments directly from the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul wrote the books in the New Testament starting with Romans going through Philemon. But, Paul also tells us that we are to let a person be ignorant if he wishes to ignore Paul's teaching.

1 Corinthians 14:37-38

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

There are warnings throughout the Bible, (and most importantly for us, in Paul's writings) to make sure we know the word of God. Paul mentions philosophy, deceit, tradition of men, and the rudiments of the world, which are all used to supplement—or even in place of—God's word.

Colossians 2:8

Beware lest any man spoil you **through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.**

We have to be careful to stay anchored in God's word—given to Paul by Jesus Christ—because a lot of things are out there waiting to deceive us.

Ephesians 4:14

That **we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine**, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

A lot of these things appear to be of Christ! But, God's word tells us that even Satan can appear as an angel of light, so it is not difficult for Satan's messengers appear as righteous men. Those unsaved ministers of Satan will be judged according to their works, i.e. sent to Hell.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of

Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. **Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.**

Paul tells Timothy that these deceitful workers have a form of godliness, which makes it easy to deceive others, but when asked about it, they deny the power of God. People will always be willing to listen to these deceivers, but they will never come to know God's word—the truth.

2 Timothy 3:2-7

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; **Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away**

with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Many people want to hear what they want to hear. They need to “scratch” their itching ears with fables, and not the truth.

2 Timothy 4:3-4

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; **And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.**

Paul tells Timothy that if anyone teaches something contrary to the words of Jesus Christ and His doctrine given to Paul—some even teaching that following them will result in prosperity—we are not supposed to associate with them.

1 Timothy 6:3-5

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing

nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, **Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.**

Paul wrote to the Romans, and said the same thing. If someone is teaching doctrine contrary to what Jesus Christ has told Paul to teach, they are doing it to serve themselves and deceive the simple. We are to avoid them.

Romans 16:17-18

Now I beseech you, brethren, **mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.** For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

There are people who know the truth of God's word, but fight against it anyway, unwilling to admit that they are wrong. They try to confuse others with foolish and unlearned questions.

They have fallen into a snare set by the devil. They oppose themselves. We are to kindly tell them the truth, in the hope they may come to their senses.

2 Timothy 2:22-26

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. **But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.** And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure 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 his will.**

The next passage summarizes most of the previous ones we have discussed. This time, the warning is against people who desire to be teachers, maybe even had had training, but they don't understand what they are saying because they have been corrupted.

1 Timothy 1:3-7

As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that **thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith:** so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which **some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.**

Paul tells Titus to try to admonish people who do not know or acknowledge the truth of the scripture. After the second time, Paul tells Titus to reject the person because he has been subverted—captured by the devil. (2 Timothy 2:26.)

Titus 3:9-11

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. **A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition**

reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

There is a proverb that tells us not to enter into the path of wicked or evil men. We are to stay away from them.

Proverbs 4:14-15

Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

Paul's gospel is very simple and can be found summarized in 1 Corinthians. We need to know it, understand it, and then be able to tell others about it. We should also use it to identify those who do not know it, and tell it to them.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Moreover, brethren, **I declare unto you the gospel** which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; **By which also ye are saved**, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for**

our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Paul issues a stern warning to anyone teaching anything other than what Paul taught.

Galatians 1:8-9

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

It is extremely important for us to be able to identify those teachers who are teaching sound doctrine. God thinks doctrine is so important that He magnifies His word above His name!

Psalms 138:1-2

(A Psalm of David.) I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and

for thy truth: **for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.**

Paul tells us why doctrine is so important to God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

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.

You do not have to know all doctrine to be an effective ambassador for the Lord Jesus Christ. You just have to know what God wants.

1 Timothy 2:3-4

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; **Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.**

When you know what God wants—for all men to be saved—you simply need to know how all men are saved. You need to know the gospel of salvation, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (page 10.) Then,

all you have to do is understand that you, and everyone else in the Church, the Body of Christ is an ambassador. We need to take opportunities, when presented, to tell people how to be saved.

2 Corinthians 5:18-21

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; **To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ,** as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

You will find that you don't have to be a preacher or a teacher to find ways to tell people, simply and accurately, about salvation and how easy it is to be saved. Knowing sound doctrine is a blessing to you and to everyone around you.