

WE ARE BAPTIST

EPILOGUE

2 Timothy 4:1-5 *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 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. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*

Introduction

As we wrap up this study on Baptist Distinctives, let us review some helpful practices that will enable believers to communicate Bible doctrine. Believers who are confident in their doctrinal stances have the duty to teach others. Also, some believers may find themselves struggling with some of the positions stated in this study. This section will also include a process about how it is best to approach the study of doctrinal questions.

I. How to Answer Doctrinal Questions

A. Make studying God's Word a Lifelong Discipline.

- We may not have every answer right away, so we should continue making the pursuit of God's truth a personal priority.
- We should never be satisfied with our current understanding of God's Word.

B. Never Be Dismissive

- We can do much harm by dismissing earnest questioning.
- We should never consider the dissenting perspective as ignorant. Many critics of our faith are intelligent, so treating them as fools does not help our cause.
- Critics of your doctrinal position may bring valid points that deserve consideration.

C. Learn to Back Away/Zoom In

- When you are helping another believer work through a doctrinal problem, sometimes it is helpful to back away from the trenches of their concern to regain stability on what God has made clear. Considering all of Scripture, God's agenda, and core Christian truths can be helpful when interpreting Scripture.
- Sometimes a believer needs to focus on specific texts that can help reshape their perspective. When the Bible is clear on a subject, we can stand firm on that truth.
- Usually, backing away and zooming in are both helpful tools in any biblical study.

D. Practice 1 Thessalonians 5:14

- Not every problem or question should be treated the same.
- When the question is rooted in rebellion, the person should be confronted.
- When the question is rooted in discouragement, the person should be encouraged.
- When the question is rooted in ignorance, the person should be educated.
- Regardless of the situation, we should always be patient.

E. Do not take Questioning Personal

- The goal in teaching doctrine is not to win arguments or prove intelligence.
- Questions about doctrine are not threats to your knowledge, but opportunities to instill faithfulness.

II. If we want to be faithful to God's Word, all believers should monitor the ratio of people we like listening to and our study of Scripture.

III. How to Study Doctrinal Questions

A. Search the Scriptures

- Our immediate solution to doctrinal questions should not be searching on Google or finding relevant articles.

- While those options could serve as good springboards to study, our first response to not understanding doctrine should be to study the Word of God.

B. Seek Wise Counsel

- God has given you spiritual guides and leadership through the local church.
- Therefore, it is foolish to ignore those investing in our lives to pursue advice from friends and strangers.

C. Stick to the Historical Position until you have sufficient evidence to alter that position.

- Even when you have concerns or questions about a particular teaching, recognize that generations before you have wrestled with the same concerns.
- Therefore, any novel idea we have about theology probably is not anything new.
- We should not be so quick to relinquish the historical position just because we think we found a reason to believe differently.

D. Pursue with humility

- We will encounter subjects and beliefs that will challenge us, and occasionally, we will discover that we hold a view that is not Scriptural.
- We will need to study with humility, knowing that we can be wrong.

E. Pursue with prayer.

- We pray for illumination and understanding with dealing with difficult and complicated passages.
- We pray for holy motives when interpreting Scripture.
- We pray for God to rid us of the toxic pride that could get in the way of accurately understanding and applying the Bible.

IV. Conclusion

A. Studying Bible Doctrines is not an attempt to grow the church or replicate disciples of individuals.

B. Studying Bible Doctrines is a biblical mandate to teach and believe what God's Word says so that we can remain faithful to God for the entirety of our days.