

Sound in the Faith

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Introduction

The goal of this set of lessons is that one may begin their walk in Christ, learning what is needed to be “Sound in the Faith”. There is much to learn beyond these lessons. But these are provided as a beginning point for studying the life we are to live in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul left Titus on the island of Crete that he might take care of things that were lacking. Among the things that Paul mentioned was a concern that the disciples there be sound in the faith. Titus was to rebuke those he needed to correct, that they might be “sound in the faith” (Titus 1:13).

The word “sound” means to be healthy. And this quickly leads us to understand that there are unhealthy doctrines and practices to avoid. Paul also told Titus to speak the things which were proper for “sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1). There is healthy doctrine, and there is unhealthy doctrine. We live in an age that seems particularly well suited to saying whatever sounds good. And this is unhealthy. But this isn’t new. The wise man wrote, “*There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.*” (Prov 14:12) There are people in the world who call evil good, and call good evil. But that is not new either (Isa 5:20). The only way we will know what is healthy in doctrine is to study the word of God. He revealed truth that we might study it and “*rightly divide*” it (II Tim 2:15). If we are to “*rightly divide*” His word, then we must beware of wrongly dividing it.

Our biggest problem in understanding the Bible correctly is our own desires. Sometimes it is past religious experience, or training. We’ve already drawn conclusions about what the Bible teaches, and everything we read is tainted by those preconceived notions. It’s like looking at the world through rose colored glasses. The appearance of everything is changed by the glasses. Things are not seen as they truly are. But then there are times when past religious experience is not the problem. Instead, one is unwilling to leave the world behind. There are pleasures of the world that we do not want to give up, and when the Bible teaches that we must, we try to find a way around it.

Learn to listen to the scriptures with an open mind. Do not try to understand the word by what you already believe. Seek to look at the scriptures with fresh, untainted vision. Paul warned Timothy of the time when people would “*not endure sound doctrine*” (II Tim 4:3). There, he defines the problem as being one in which people want to hear what pleases them, and as a result seek those teachers who will give them what they want. As you might imagine, if there is a market for teachers who teach a certain way, there will be people to fill that order. As we look at

the world around us, we can see that this has already happened. Many people imagine that the many different “Christian” religious groups are the result of a Bible that is unclear on what God wants. But they are actually the result of people wanting religion their own way, and seeking out teachers to give it to them as they want it. And they will not *endure* “*sound doctrine*”. They fight it with every ounce of strength they have. They will do so by calling you names, and questioning your motives. They will use false reasoning to persuade you that error is not really error.

Clinging to sound doctrine will not make us popular with the world around us; but it will make us pleasing to God. Paul told Titus that he was to have “*sound speech that cannot be condemned*” (Titus 2:8). At times, people will not like the fact that we do not go along with the religious winds that blow all about us. And, at times, people may get their feelings hurt because you will not go along with them. While we should not *try* to hurt people’s feelings; we also mustn’t compromise the truth. Jesus lost disciples in the course of His teaching, because people did not like what He said (Jn 6:66). Jesus also rebuked those in error (Mt 23); and chased the money-changers out of the temple (Mt 21:12f). Jesus was not popular with everyone. No one can be. But He was doing the will of God; and that is what we should focus our lives upon.

If you want to have a happy, satisfying life of service to God; determine that all of your faith and action be directed by the word of God. It’s not about how we feel about things - it’s about what God says. It’s not about what the preacher says - it’s about what God says. It’s not about what my family has always believed, or done - it’s about what God says. With that kind of conviction, and dedicated life, you will be able to walk through life with confidence in the grace of God, and mercy He extends through Jesus Christ.

Beginning with Lesson One, you will find memory verses listed at the top of each lesson. Rather than put one verse at the top of each lesson, you will find the same verses through the series, with additional verses added over time. Make sure you have all of the verses in each lesson memorized for class. Not only are these verses important to the material studied, they are also important exercises for the development of your mind.

Question Set From Introduction

- 1) The goal of these lessons is to learn what?
 - 2) There is much to learn _____ .
 - 3) Paul was concerned that disciples in Crete be...
 - 4) What does the word “sound” mean?
 - 5) What is the only way to know what is healthy?
 - 6) What is our biggest problem with understanding?
 - 7) With what should we learn to listen to scriptures?
 - 8) Paul warned of people who would...
 - 9) He was talking about people who want what?
 - 10) What do they do as a result?

 - 11) Many imagine that differences in religion is the result of what?
 - 12) These differences are actually the result of what?

 - 13) What three ways will people use to fight sound doctrine?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - 14) Clinging to sound doctrine will not make us what?
 - 15) But it will do what?
 - 16) Although feelings may get hurt, we must never...
 - 17) What happened to Jesus in the course of His work?
 - 18) What should we focus our lives upon?
 - 19) Serving God is not about...
 - 20) Nor is it about...
 - 21) Nor is it about...
 - 22) Serving God *is* about...
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