

The Whole Truth About God: Biblical Theology (Sound Doctrine)

Session Three: Sound Doctrine is for Holiness

Getting Started

We live in an age of information overload. Emails, blogs, text messages, twenty-four-hour news, Twitter, and more all add up to vast amounts of information daily passing in front of our eyes.

1. What are some examples of information that you regularly encounter that have little or no impact on your life?
2. What's one piece of information or one idea that radically changed your life?

In this study we're going to consider how one specific kind of information – sound doctrine – is intended by God to have a dramatic impact on our lives as Christians: namely, growing us in holiness.

Main Idea

Sound doctrine is a central means by which Christians grow in holiness, and holiness is the goal of sound doctrine.

Digging In

In John 17, Jesus prays for his disciples in view of his impending death and resurrection. After praying that God would keep them in his name, just as Jesus himself had kept them in God's name, he continues:

John 17:13-19

1. According to verse 13, what is the goal of Jesus's prayer?
2. How does Jesus intend for this goal to come about (v. 13)?
3. What does Jesus ask the Father to do in verse 17?

To "sanctify" something means to set it apart or devote it to a specific purpose. For a person to be sanctified is for that person to be separated from sin and totally devoted to God's purposes. The Bible teaches that as Christians we *have been* sanctified (1 Cor. 6:11). That is, when we became Christians we were purified, given new natures, and set apart for God's service. It also teaches that we *are being* sanctified as we grow in overcoming sin and obeying God (1 Thess. 4:1-3).

4. What are some practical examples of what sanctification looks like in everyday life?
5. In verse 17, Jesus prays that the Father would sanctify us by his Word, which is truth. What are some ways in which people attempt to pursue holiness that ignore or bypass or minimize God's Word?
6. How would you apply sound doctrine to help someone grow in the following areas of life? What are some specific doctrines that are especially relevant to each of these?
 - a. Faithfulness at work
 - b. Discernment and purity in the use of TV, the internet, and other media
 - c. Dealing with difficult people
 - d. Addressing racist thoughts and attitudes

In 1 Timothy 1:8-11, Paul shows that life and doctrine are inseparable.

1 Timothy 1:8-11

7. In this passage Paul mentions a long list of immoral behaviors that appears to be a condensed summary of the Ten Commandments. What does he say that these immoral actions are contrary to (v. 10)?
8. What does the answer to the previous question teach us about sound doctrine?
9. In light of Paul's teaching in this passage and Jesus's prayer in John 17, how would you respond to someone who said, "What matters to God is that we live holy lives, not that we have good theology?"
10. How should this inseparable bond between sound doctrine and holy living inform a pastor's regular preaching?
11. A church's work of evangelism and missions should result from its growing love, but it should also result from its growing holiness. Do you see the connection between the call to holiness and the call to evangelize? What is it?
12. What are some ways that sound doctrine has equipped you personally to live a more holy life? Give specific examples.