**Doctrine and Morality**

*Titus 2:11-14*

**Introduction**

1. The notion that God does not care about the “form” of our religion, but only that we’re a “good” person is misguided.
   1. The world (denominations):
      1. Relationship over religion – Idea that the relationship we have with Jesus is separate from any kind of organized religious practice.
      2. Or, idea that organized religious practice is important, but there is no wrong form.
      3. Idea that all forms of “Christianity” boil down to the same thing – whenever we leave church, or finish doing whatever it is we do, and we go into the world, we treat each other better than how we did before. (I.e. God just cares that we are a “good” person.)
   2. Some in the Lord’s church are putting less emphasis on what might be called “doctrinal matters” and are simply teaching generalities like, “Do good,” and “don’t do bad.”
      1. Matters like the work, worship, and organization of the church aren’t preached on.
      2. More teaching is becoming about being a better, or good person (a moral term) without taking care to emphasize the need to submit in all areas of Jesus’ teaching, like “doctrinal matters.”
2. All should realize that this idea of a separation between doctrinal matters and moral matters is not real.
3. God wants us to be “good” people (a moral term), but such only comes from following His doctrine (teaching) and following it entirely (even in so-called “doctrinal matters”).
4. **Titus 2:11-14** – teaches us (doctrine – teaching), deny worldly lusts, live soberly, righteously, and be purified (moral purity), but also deny ungodliness, and live godly.
   1. Godliness – Godward reverence/piety.
   2. It is the idea of always having an attitude which seeks to honor and please God – this would include all realms like “doctrinal matters” and “moral matters.”
   3. I.e. doctrinal and moral purity go hand in hand. One cannot persist without the other, and God cannot be pleased when one is lacking.
5. The Relationship Between Doctrine and Morality
6. God Wants Our Obedience in All Things
   1. **Luke 6:46; Colossians 3:17** – in all matters we are to let Jesus rule by doing as He says.
      1. “The things which I say” and “whatever you do” are comprehensive.
      2. He is not saying, “Make a distinction between doctrinal matters and moral matters.”
      3. He is not saying, “As long as you’re a good, moral person I don’t care what you do.”
      4. He is not saying, “If you are a moral and good person it will supersede any failures in form, such as how you worship Me, or what specific things you teach.”
   2. **Matthew 7:21-23** – what problem did Jesus have with these people.
      1. **(v. 22)** – are these matters pertaining to fleshly lusts, or what we might describe as “moral matters.”
      2. Jesus did not say they were guilty of murder, sexual immorality, or hate.
      3. Prophecy – inspired teaching; Cast out demons – spiritual gift demonstrating the power of God; many wonders – miracles attesting to God’s power and truth.
      4. If these were all actually done according to Jesus’ word, they wouldn’t be wrong.
      5. **(v. 23)** – problem was they were without law – ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING “DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY” – THEY DIDN’T HAVE THE TEACHING OF JESUS TO BACK UP WHAT THEY WERE DOING.
7. What is morality?
   1. Jesus to the rich young ruler – **Matthew 19:16-17**
      1. Good – a moral term.
      2. Jesus was not denying His goodness or deity but teaching a lesson.
      3. **(v. 16)** – man did not fully comprehend who Jesus was yet – just a teacher, but he called Him good.
      4. **(v. 17)** – Jesus is showing that God is the standard, and He is the only truly “good” One.
         1. NOTE: man said “what good thing” – as if there was something additional to his obedience to God that would grant him life. **(v. 20** – kept commandments from youth)
         2. **(v. 17)** – Jesus told him to keep the commandments.
         3. Commandments come from God – God is good – the “good” things you must do are the commandments.
         4. **(v. 18)** – “which ones” as if they differed in importance – ALL THE COMMANDMENTS.
      5. Summary – Jesus directed the mind of the man to Who is truly good – God. In doing that He directed His mind to all “good” things that must be done – the commandments that emanate from the One who is “good.”
   2. Morality, or goodness, can be defined simply by looking to who God is – He is good.
      1. Therefore, any command that He gives is required by us to be doers of good.
      2. Therefore, we cannot make a distinction of importance or degree in “doctrinal matters” and “moral matters.”
      3. The knowledge of morality only comes through the doctrine of Christ.
8. Immorality Follows Doctrinal Error
9. When Error is Present Immorality Follows
   1. It is extremely important that we are accurate in all areas, even those that might be described as “doctrinal matters.”
      1. **2 John 9** – if we don’t abide in the doctrine of Christ, we don’t have God. (**v. 4** – the truth in general)
      2. ALSO, there are logical moral consequences to doctrines which differ from those of Christ.
   2. No resurrection? – **1 Corinthians 15:12** – teaching there is no resurrection from the dead.
      1. **(vv. 13-19)** – various consequences to that error.
      2. But does this affect a person’s morality?
      3. **(vv. 30-32)** – if the dead aren’t raised then why is Paul suffering for Christ’s sake? Why not just “live it up?”
      4. **(vv. 33-34)** – the evil company of error and false teachers corrupt good habits (“good morals,” NASB), but since there is a resurrection, we should live pure lives.
   3. Flesh is inherently evil? – **1 John 4:2-3** – reason they said He didn’t come in the flesh is because flesh is inherently sinful.
      1. **1 John 1:5-7** – some were walking in darkness but saying they were in the light.
      2. **(v. 8)** – part of this was doing something sinful, but saying they had no sin – i.e. because the flesh was already sinful, and such did not affect their soul – no sin in the soul.
      3. **1 John 2:29** – only those who practice righteousness are of Him.
      4. **1 John 3:7-9** – cannot be of God and walk in sin – you are of the devil.
      5. People were practicing sin and claiming to be in fellowship with God due to this error.
   4. **Modern examples:**
      1. **Romans 14** – inclusion of sin – must receive those who are practicing sin or teaching error if they are “fully convinced in [their] own mind,” because “God is able to make him stand.”
         1. Consequence – Any sin goes, and it will all pervade the church and leaven it, and lost souls will think they’re safe.
      2. **Continuous cleansing** – **1 John 1:7** – the blood of Jesus cleanses us from sin even as we sin. (Logical conclusion – repentance not needed)
         1. Consequence – There is no good reason given to stop sinning, or even discuss sin for that matter.
10. Failure in “Doctrinal Matters” Manifests Ungodliness in General
    1. Nadab and Abihu – **Leviticus 10:1-3** – their actions were not “immoral,” but were without authority from God – they showed an ungodly character.
    2. **This exhibition of ungodly character only lacks time for it to spiral downward in a pit of immorality.**
    3. Hophni and Phinehas – **1 Samuel 2:12-17** – their sin here was one of fact in the matter of offering as the Law required. (Not immorality.)
       1. However, this was not their only sin.
       2. Their ungodly character led them down a path of rebellion in other areas.
       3. **1 Samuel 2:22-23** – they were even committing sexual immorality at the door of the tabernacle.
    4. When God is undermined in one area, it is only a matter of time before He is undermined elsewhere.

**Conclusion**

1. God makes no distinction between His desire for us to live moral lives and His desire for us to be sound in doctrinal matters.
2. If we don’t find it important to follow God in matters pertaining to doctrine and practice of religion, then we won’t find it important to follow Him in ALL moral matters.
3. When we depart from God’s word in one area, we are opening up the door to depart from it in another area.
4. We must be sound both in our doctrine and in our morality.