

WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL
Fundamentals of the Faith
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**LESSON #14 — THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN’S RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD SOUND
DOCTRINE? (PART 2)**

2 John, verses 9 through 11. “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you, and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive Him in your house, nor greet him. For he who greets him, shares in his evil deeds.”

There are some people who teach, “Well, the doctrine of Christ that John is talking about here is just the basic teaching concerning Jesus.” That is, you must believe and remain in the fact that He came, is the Savior gave Himself, His body and His blood, He died, was raised and went back to heaven for us. That's what they say, the doctrine of Christ means. But we contend that that is false. That is twisting this Scripture. That is not consistent with the Bible. What is the doctrine of Christ? It's the doctrine which Christ taught, as recorded in his New Testament, the faith, the gospel. That's what He means.

If I deviate from the New Testament, add to it, take away from it, or don't remain in it in any way than I don't have God. You say, “Will you prove that to me? Will you show me that principle in the Bible?” And we say, “We'd be happy to. To show that the doctrine of Christ is the teaching that Christ made while he was here on this earth, and through His inspired apostles and prophets.” Let's look at several examples of this kind of terminology.

Let's look first of all, in the book of Matthew, in Matthew, the 16th chapter, and verse 12. Matthew 16, verse 12. Jesus, this is a record of what Jesus was talking to, with His disciples. “Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” There's the same kind of language. 2 John 9 says, “The doctrine of Christ.” Matthew, chapter 16, verse 12, says, “The doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.” Well, what do we think that means? Do we think that that means the doctrine, or the teaching, about the Pharisees and Sadducees? No, that's not how we understand that verse. What do we think? It's the doctrine, the teaching, that the Pharisees taught. Just like 2 John 9 is the doctrine of Christ, what He taught, not some teaching about Him.

And then we want to look in the book of Colossians. Colossians, chapter 2, verse 22. Colossians 2, verse 22. He says, “Which all concern things which perish with the using, according to the commandments and doctrines of men.” Again, what are the commandments and doctrines of men? They're the commandments and doctrines that men teach. Just as in 2 John 9, the doctrine of Christ is what Christ taught on all subjects in His New Testament.

Then in 1 Timothy, chapter 4, verse 1. 1 Timothy, the 4 chapter, verse 1. “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits, and doctrines of demons.” There's the phrase at the end of that verse, “doctrines of demons.” Does that mean it's the teaching about demons? No. It's the doctrines that demons

teach through man. So, the doctrine of Christ in 2 John 9, we believe these passages and others, clearly show us, refer to, the teaching of Christ. If I don't remain in it, I don't have God; if I do remain in it, I have the Father and the Son.

In verse 10, the emphasis shifts from the one who teaches false doctrine, to the one who hears the false doctrine, to the individual Christian. We're to be on guard against false teachers. And God says that if anyone comes and doesn't bring the teaching of Christ, two actions are required on our part: don't receive men to your home, and don't greet him. Or as the older version says, "Don't bid godspeed" to that false teacher. To bid Godspeed is to wish the approval, wish your approval, on whatever that person is saying, teaching or doing. So God is saying, "Do not do anything that would indicate your approval of that false teacher. That's our responsibility.

If one comes to us and doesn't bring the doctrine of Christ, then we are not to greet them. We are not to bid them Godspeed, to show our approval of them in any way. Because if we do, then we're violating this passage of Scripture. We must not do anything to commend, or show our approval of, a false teacher. God says that that's critically important.

What is the penalty if we choose to avoid this command from God? He gives us the answer in verse 11. He says, "He who bids godspeed, or greets a false teacher in an approving way, is a partaker with him in his evil deeds." That is really serious. God is saying that if I grant my approval on a false teacher by commending them, by praising them, by greeting them, showing approval in any way, then I'm a partaker in their evil deeds. That means that I share the guilt with them in that false teaching.

Now what have we seen concerning God's attitude towards those who teach false doctrine? We saw from the scriptures, Galatians 1, 6 through 9, that God says false teachers are to be anathema, accursed, devoted to God for destruction by Him. And we saw the other passages of Scripture that tell us that those false teachers are in for a horrible punishment from God unless they repent, and make things right with God. We don't want a share in that. We don't want to share in the evil that they're doing, that destroys them, that destroys those who teach it, who believe what they teach, and which causes division among those who claim to be the followers of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

So, let us all exercise our individual Christian responsibility towards sound doctrine, by doing the things that God says in these verses. Let's work hard at it so that we might be pleasing to God. We must always maintain the right spirit, and attitude.

We're continuing in our study of lesson number one, the authority and inspiration of the Bible. We're talking about the importance of sound doctrine, healthy teaching, which is according to the glorious gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 1:10-11). We want to continue the last particular point on our study of the subject of the importance of sound doctrine, and that is: What is the individual Christian's responsibility in the area of sound doctrine? We want to continue by looking at the Scriptures to answer that question.

This time, we want to look in the book of 2 Thessalonians, the third chapter. 2 Thessalonians, chapter 3, verse 6, verse 14, and verse 15. 2 Thessalonians 3, beginning with verse 6. "But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly, and not according to the tradition which he received from us." Then in verse 14 and 15. "And if anyone does not obey our word in this

epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” Here, God through His apostle Paul commands us, and He commands us in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the authority of Christ. Paul is saying, “I’m speaking to you by Jesus’ authority, and he tells us to withdraw from every brother, every fellow Christian, who walks disorderly. Withdraw our fellowship from a fellow Christian who walks disorderly.”

But what does that mean? “Walks disorderly”? What does the phrase, or the word translated, “disorderly” mean? It was a military term. And it meant to be out of rank, to be out of place. So God is saying, that if a person chooses to move themselves out of place, not in accordance with the standard, the regulation, if you will, of the New Testament of Christ, then we are to withdraw our fellowship from that Christian. Every brother, every sister, every Christian, who does not walk in accordance with this standard, who does not live in accordance with this standard.

Does this mean that every time someone makes a mistake, that we should withdraw our fellowship from them? That's not what God is teaching in this passage. And that's where it's important for us to go to the rest of the Bible, and see what God wants us to do. He wants us to work patiently with our brethren in love, and in meekness. (Galatians chapter 6, verse 1). He wants us to work with our brothers and sisters, and encourage them and exhort them, lest they be the hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. (Hebrews 3, verse 12 and 13). He wants us to give them time and space, to repent of their sins, and to make things right with God and with their brothers and sisters in Christ (Revelation chapter 2).

But when someone refuses to repent, and make things right, and continues in a life of disorderliness, of not living according to this precious standard that God gives us, then we must withdraw our fellowship from them. And that includes those who teach, those who preach, that which is not in accordance with the standard of the gospel of Christ. So false teachers are to be withdrawn from, if they have had an opportunity to repent of their false teaching, and have chosen not to repent.

He says, “Who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.” There is a way in which the word “tradition” is used in an acceptable way. And that is the tradition that was passed on through the apostles and prophets, and was made permanently a record in the New Testament of Christ of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. So if anyone chooses to go outside that rank, leave the ranks of New Testament Christianity, the gospel of Christ, then we’re to withdraw our fellowship.

In verse 14, he says the same thing, he uses a little bit different words. He says, “If anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with them.” So, the same thing is being taught to us: withdraw our company, our companionship, our fellowship, from those who refuse to obey the words of Christ revealed in the New Testament of Christ. Why are we to do this? He gives us the answer at the end of verse 14 — “that they may be ashamed.” Hopefully, when people recognize, our fellow Christians recognize, that we have withdrawn our fellowship, because of their disorderly lifestyle or teaching, they will be ashamed, they will want to repent. They will want to change their behavior, so that we can be together again, as brothers and sisters in Christ. We can enjoy that close and tender and

loving fellowship, which should exist between fellow members of the family of God, the church of our Lord.

And God talks about our attitude in withdrawing our fellowship from our brothers and sisters in Christ, who refuse to repent, in verse 15. He says, "Don't treat them as an enemy, but admonish them as a brother." The worst thing that we could do is treat people in a hateful, unkind, disrespectful manner, when we're withdrawing our fellowship from them. Then we will have run them off, if you will. And the chances of redeeming them back to the Lord, are limited. We have to have the right attitude. We need to love them, and warn them as our brethren, as our fellow members of the God-spiritual family, the body of Christ, Christians.

So God tells us, this is our responsibility, to withdraw our, fellowship our company, from those who choose to break ranks with the standard of the New Testament. Who leave, who deviate, from the pattern of New Testament Christianity, revealed in the gospel of Christ. Who refuse to obey the words found in this New Testament record. We're to withdraw from them. Our hope is that they will be ashamed of their behavior or their teaching, and that they will repent and make things right with God. Make things right with the brethren, and then be in full fellowship with God and the family of God, again.

This is not something that is pleasant to us, to have to withdraw our fellowship from a fellow member of the Body of Christ, but it's something that God requires of us if they will not do what they're supposed to do. And if we want to please God, if we want our brethren who are out of rank, out of order, if we want them to be saved, we must take this biblical action. The goal, as always, is not to hurt that person, to harm that person, to do them any damage at all. But rather, as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 5, verse 5, the goal is, the saving of the soul of that precious and dear brother or sister in Christ.

Now another passage that tells us the individual Christian's responsibility concerning sound doctrine, found in 2 Timothy. 2 Timothy, chapter 2, verse 19. 2 Timothy 2, verse 19. "Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'" Here, God talks about the solid foundation of God, the foundation of God that is established in His Word, and it stands, and He knows who are His. He knows who are truly His. And something else that is involved in the solid foundation of God is that every person, every Christian, who names the name of Christ, who confesses the name of Christ, and obeys the gospel of Christ, including their baptism into Christ, should depart from iniquity.

It is distressing, saddening, to see those who have named the name of Christ, see how close they can get to sin. Let me see just if I can get just a little bit closer to that sinful behavior, so I can enjoy the things of the world, and I can still claim to be a Christian. That is so foreign to New Testament Christianity. That is not the kind of attitude that God wants us to have. We should not want to be close to that which is wrong. Instead, He says, "You depart from iniquity. You flee from it. Get away from it. Don't have anything to do with it." That's what God wants us to do. Withdraw ourselves from that which God defines as iniquity. That is, as sin, transgression of his law.

We need to keep ourselves, then, separated from that which is wrong, including false doctrine, false teaching. We don't want to see how close we can get to that false teacher and his teachings, and try to maintain his friendship and the friendship of God at the same time,

because that can't be done. God is not the friend of those who are going to teach that which is false doctrine. He hates that false doctrine. He loves the people, but He does not approve of, or like in any way, that false doctrine. And so, we need to separate ourselves from all iniquity, including false teaching.