

Essential Doctrines of the Faith

Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee (1 Ti 4:16).

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son (2Jn 1:9).

*... that thou mightest charge some **that they teach no other doctrine** (1 Ti 1:3).*

*... **and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine** (1 Ti 1:10).*

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing (1 Ti 6:3-4).

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 (2 Ti 4:3).

*If there come any unto you, and bring not **this doctrine**, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed (2 Jn 1:10).*

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them (Rom 16:17).

WHAT MAKES A DOCTRINE ESSENTIAL?

To be simple, every doctrine should pass the following criteria: First, it must be at the core of salvation. That is, it must be salvific. Such doctrines are crucial to the Christian faith because they concern **the divinity of Christ and His atonement**. Second, a doctrine must directly relate to **repentance from sin and obedience to God's Law** (as defined in the New Testament). These theological areas must never be compromised for the sake of unity. They are absolutely vital and non-negotiable. Yet when whole Churches divide over trivial doctrinal differences that neither pertain to salvation nor

comprise the fundamentals crucial to the Christian life, one begins to wonder where we draw the line. Here is a standard list of the essential doctrines of the Faith:

The Infallibility and Inspiration of the Bible as God's Word

The Word of God was preserved perfectly in its original form and was inspired by the Holy Spirit in order to direct men's lives in understanding God's character and His plan of salvation (Isa 48:8).

The Authority of the Scriptures

All doctrinal or theological beliefs must be filtered through God's Word and do not stand apart from it (2 Ti 3:16). If they have no basis in Scripture then they must be rejected.

The Trinity

Three primary **individuals functions** (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), ONE God (1 Jon 5:7-8).

The Divinity of Jesus Christ

Christ is the Son of God and was born of a virgin (Mat 1:18-25; Jn 3:16). He is also "very God and very man" (Jn 1:1; 14).

The Substitutionary Sacrifice and Atonement of Christ

Christ died once and for all as our sacrificial Lamb in order to absolve men from the just judgment of God (2 Cor 5:21). The benefits of this sacrifice only apply to those who put their trust fully in Christ Jesus and none other.

The Resurrection of Christ

Christ died and rose again (1 Cor 15:17).

Salvation by Grace through Faith

We receive salvation on account of God's grace when we place our faith in Jesus Christ (Eph 2:8-9).

Repentance as the Evidence of Genuine Conversion

A repentant lifestyle is the genuine mark of a saved person (Jas 2:18).

The Centrality of the Holy Spirit in every Believer's Life

The Holy Spirit's centrality is evident throughout the New Testament and cannot be denied. The Spirit of God regenerates man leading to their conversion and what the Bible describes as the born again experience. It is also responsible for baptizing individuals with a spiritual baptism. Believers should learn how to walk circumspect of the Spirit's abiding presence in their lives (Jon 16:13; Rom 8:4; 1Co 2:12; Gal 5:22).

Water Baptism

Water baptism is an outward demonstration of an inward happening. The Bible compares it to burial (Rom 6:4; Col 2:12) and describes it as a full body immersion in water (Act 8:36-40). Every Believer must partake in this ceremony as a testimony of their "death to self" (man's Adamic sin nature) and "resurrection" unto a new life with Jesus.

Observation of the Lord's Supper

Jesus commanded His disciples to partake in the communion meal in order to remember His atonement (Mat 26:26-28). In honor of Christ's death on the cross, symbolized by the unleavened bread and wine, we partake in the Lord's Supper while meeting together with fellow members of the Body of Christ (1 Co 11:25).

The Lordship of Jesus Christ

Since Jesus is Lord of our lives we are called to submit to His authority based on the commandments of Scripture. This means that if the Believer **does not fully desire** to obey all of God's binding commandments, then they are disingenuous in their willingness to live the Christian life (Luk 6:46). Such are not fit to partake in Church function and the fellowship of the Saints. However, the Church must never cast judgment upon others based on outward appearance or superficial perception (1 Sa 16:7; Jn 7:24). But rather we are called to examine the fruit of one's life based on their **love and devotion** to the Lord (Mat 7:16).

In Christ alone,
John A.