

YOUR LIFE AND DOCTRINE

1 Tim. 4:13-16 (NIV) Until I come, **devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture**, to preaching and to teaching. [14] **Do not neglect your gift**, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you. [15] **Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them**, so that everyone may see your progress. [16] **Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.**

- In the last days many believers have stopped believing in a sovereign God
 - o A similar number of believers have “gone after signs”
 - o A majority of church attenders “go to church” but are not functioning as the church

I want to talk about YOUR LIFE AND DOCTRINE

- What is doctrine? It is what you believe that guides what you DO.
 - o DOCTRINE
 - a position or the body of principles in a branch of knowledge or system of belief
 - A principle of law established through past decisions

If we liken our ministry to a sailboat...

- Imagine that
 - o The boat itself is the people
 - The whole group is together “as one”
 - We move together guided by the rudder
 - o The sails are our interactions/ gatherings
 - The spirit of God blows upon us
 - The power of God moves us
 - o The BALLAST – the SUBSTANCE (weighty) that is down in the hold
 - Keeps the boat upright
 - Keeps the boat with the rudder in the water and sails in the wind
 - Stones or cargo were used as ballast in sailing ships

BALLAST in a ship is like DOCTRINE in the function of our Christian Community

- Doctrine is important in keeping our Christian community “upright and functional”
- Doctrine can be a lot like Ballast
 - o Ballast is
 - Heavy
 - Not very exciting
 - Takes up a lot of space

YET... keeps the PRACTICES of our faith upright and strong

- Without good doctrine
 - o our Christian community would fail
 - o This is A BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE (See 1 Tim. 4:16)

We exist in a culture that has a strong effect on HOW we follow God

- The culture around us affects us dramatically
 - o But we don't often understand or see how
 - Example: We live in a culture that values “consumerism”
 - We approach God as consumers... rather than as sons or servants
 - We expect God to do a lot for us – we forget that we belong entirely to him..

During the time of the FIRST CHURCH it was the same...

- 1Co 1:21-24 (NKJV) For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. [22] For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; [23] but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, [24] but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
 - **GREEKS were all about WISDOM** (knowledge, understanding SHALOM)
 - **JEWS were all about SIGNS** (experience, passion, SHAZAM)
 - **The culture of both People groups made them want unique things from God**
 - **These are things that God is less interested in than people**
- **The Bible says that Jesus is NEITHER of these things primarily (“we preach Jesus crucified”)**
 - **In the end JESUS IS BOTH POWER (Shazam) AND WISDOM (Shalom) of God**

EVERY MOVEMENT OF GOD IN HISTORY CHANGES OUR PRIMARY EXPECTATIONS FROM GOD

- Every Movement has promoted AN ASPECT of Doctrine that was important at the time
 - **EVERY MOVEMENT ALSO LEADS TO IMBALANCES IN DOCTRINE**
- **Movements**
 - Puritans 1600's - 1700
 - **Emphasis – Word of God** = following new Testament scripture
 - Conservative movement
 - England – expelled puritans and separatists
 - **IMBALANCE – Legalism – very little grace**
 - Holiness Movement 1850-early 1900's
 - **Emphasis– Sanctification = living a holy life**
 - Wesley & Quakers
 - **IMBALANCE – Legalism – Difficult to subdue the flesh**
 - Pentecostal Movement 1907- 1930's
 - **Emphasis – Baptism of the Spirit (“are you filled with the spirit?”)**
 - The activity of the Holy Spirit/ speaking in tongues demonstrative revelation of God
 - Azuza Street - Pentecostal Church
 - **IMBALANCE – License – Emotionalism, lack of Biblical foundation**
 - Evangelical Movement 1940 - 50's
 - **Emphasis – Salvation (“Are you saved?”)**
 - Word of God focused – Baptists (From Puritans)
 - **IMBALANCE: TRANSACTIONAL – God is “SAVER” (impersonal) rather than “FATHER”**
 - Charismatic Movement 1960 -70s
 - **Emphasis – Gifts of the Spirit (“operating in the gifts”)**
 - NON-DENOMINATIONAL - From Pentecostal
 - **IMBALANCE: CHARACTER: focused on “Gifts”(anointing) rather than “FRUITS” (Character)**
 - Fundamentalism 1980's
 - **Emphasis – Word of God (“God and Country”)**
 - Moral Majority – Christian Conservatism
 - **IMBALANCE: Legalism: Trying the make Sinners stop sinning**
 - Apostolic- Prophetic Movement 1990-2000
 - **Emphasis – 5 fold ministry – Support for Apostolic & Prophetic**
 - C. Peter Wagner, Kansas City Prophets
 - Non-denominational churches proliferate under prophets and Apostles

- **IMBALANCE:** Focus on splintering the church into radical groups (no unity)
- Prayer Movement 2000 -
 - **Emphasis – Encounter with God in Prayer & Worship**
 - Peter Greig, Mike Bickle
 - Houses of Prayer
 - **IMBALANCE: Individualistic, LACK OF COMMUNITY – Did not build “members of one another”**

BASED ON THIS... WE HAVE SOME “DOCTRINAL ISSUES” THAT I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS:

I found this article...

10 Signs You Are a Charismaniac

In Charisma Magazine - June 23, 2015

1. Believing prophecies and extra-biblical leadings are on the same level as the written Word of God.

- Charismaniacs:
 - Place prophecy from others on same tier as the Word of God
- Give more attention to visions and dreams rather than reading and meditation on the Word of God

The Scriptures rather than “signs” are our HIGHEST RULE (direction) for life and for judging truth.

- 1Co 1:21-24 (NKJV) For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. [22] For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; [23] but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, [24] but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
- WE MUST JUDGE ALL PROPHECIES
 - 1Co 14:29-31 (NIV) Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. [30] And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. [31] For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged.
 - 1Co 14:39-40 (NKJV) Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. [40] **Let all things be done decently and in order.**

2. Blindly seek out and follow leaders/ events with the most “signs and wonders.”

- Charismanics
 - idolize those with powerful prophetic/healing ministries (without discerning their character)
 - Follow those with more gifts (prophesy, healing, tongues) rather than more fruit (love, joy peace..)
 - Follow anointing rather than faithfulness to the Word of God

GIFTEDNESS “Signs and wonders” are not always a sign of God’s Blessing

- Mat 7:15-23 (NIV) "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. [16] **By their fruit you will recognize them.** Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? [17] Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. [18] A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. [19] **Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. [20] Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.** [21] "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven,

but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. [22] Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' [23] Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

FRUIT are much more important than GIFTS

- 1 Cor 12:28-31 (NKJV) And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. [29] Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? [30] Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? [31] **But earnestly desire the best gifts.** And yet I show you a more excellent way.
 - o Seem like the gifts are very important in the life of the church?
 - o What is "A MORE EXCELLENT WAY?"
- 1Co 13:1-3 (NKJV) Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, **but have not love**, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. [2] And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, **but have not love, I am nothing.** [3] And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.
 - o Without Love (the

3. You come to church looking for experiences more than Jesus.

- You need to "feel" the presence of God in the service if God is really there

WE NEVER GATHER TO SEEK EXPERIENCES

- Transcendental Meditation; practiced this when I was a teenager
 - o I had some crazy experiences.. because TM is just opening the door to EVERYTHING!

WE GATHER TO SEEK GOD...

- **IF WE SEEK GOD WE WILL HAVE EXPERIENCES WITH HIM!!**

IF WE SEEK EXPERIENCES...

- **WE MAY EXPERIENCE ANYTHING** (from the devil, angels, emotionalism, apathy... etc..)

The Early Church dealt with a similar issue: Gnosticism – God revealed knowledge

- 1Ti 6:20-21 (NIV) Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and **the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge**, [21] which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith. Grace be with you all.
- 1Ti 4:13,16 (NIV) Until I come, **devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture**, to preaching and to teaching... [16] **Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere** in them, **because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.**
 - o **The Early Gnostics were "seekers of Secret Knowledge"**
 - They did not seek God
 - They were after knowledge – They believed strange things
 - They denied the deity of Jesus

4. You think weird physical manifestations are necessary to experience the presence of God

- You believe that physical manifestations such as jerking, gyrations, shouting, falling down etc. are always a sign that the presence of the Holy Spirit is moving.

There are fleshly desires/expressions that can masquerade as spiritual ones

- Pro 16:25 (NKJV) There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

In their zeal for God, charismaniacs give in to emotions and participate in manifestations that are nothing more than a work of the flesh.

- These expressions are celebrated as moves of God attracting others
- The final fruit of it is often very damaging, leaving people looking for more signs instead of true Christian community (love of God, love of others)
 - o 2Pe 2:10-12, 19 (NIV) This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, they are not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings; [11] yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not heap abuse on such beings when bringing judgment on them from the Lord. [12] But these people blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like animals they too will perish. [19] They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for "people are slaves to whatever has mastered them."

FOR NEXT TIME...

5. You focus on “soaking in the Spirit” rather than loving God and loving others.

- You come to church to feel good in the presence of God
 - o Soaking in the presence of God is for your benefit
- TRUTH: every single time a human being encountered the presence of God in the Bible, it resulted in transformation that enabled that person to better live and work for the kingdom of God
- The life that God has called us to live is directed by righteousness and truth rather than feelings.

6. You are mystical rather than spiritual.

- You are constantly having experiences, interpreting numbers, impressions, dreams, and visions
- You spiritualizing events and believe that every happening in your life has a profound spiritual meaning.
- Every spiritual or mystical experience that does not directly result in either me knowing God more intimately or being equipped to serve Him better in this world is a waste of time and not worth my attention.

We are called to SEEK GOD not experiences

- If we SEEK GOD then we will have experiences with Him
- If we seek EXPERIENCES – we may miss God entirely
 - o We never seek to go from one Spiritual high to another
 - o Our aim is to love and minister to God and love and minister to others
 - The mysticism APPEARS in the pursuit of God
 - We will have

7. You claim to speak to the saints in heaven or have regularly have angelic encounters.

- You claimed to have conversations with Biblical saints
- You claim to interact with Angels and/or send them on missions
 - o I Timothy 2:5 says there is only one mediator between God and men: the man Jesus Christ.
 - o I don't need to speak to Paul, Mary, Abraham or any of the saints of old.

- Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth and to take of His and reveal it unto us (John 14:26; 16:14).
- **Heb 1:14 (NIV) Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?**

8. You lack biblical depth and doctrinal soundness.

- Seek new experiences with God rather than to grow in righteousness and maturity
- You do not regularly meditate on scriptures as a primary part of your walk with God
- You cannot discern false teaching based on the Word of God
- Jesus told the religious leaders of His day they were in error because they knew not the Scriptures nor the power of God (Matthew 22:29).
- Scripture has to frame our power encounters so we can have proper discernment!
- Scripture is our PRIMARY SOURCE for discernment
- If our experience does not line up with scripture it is not of God

9. You are independent from the Body of Christ because you are “led by the Spirit.”

- You are not connected to any one local church but just float around from church to church
- YOU don't listen to the council of others because you are being led by the Spirit.