

The Basic Doctrines of Christianity

Introduction

Certain elementary teachings are essential for all Christians to understand sufficiently to be able to teach new Christians.

Only when we have such depth of understanding will we be able to fulfil the commission given to us by Jesus Christ just before He left the earth to become our High Priest at the right hand of God the Father.

Matthew 28:19-20 [NIV] *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

This is not just for ministers, but for every Christian.

First a Christian is a disciple, but as we are about to find out in our study, it is essential we also, as a disciple, teach others who are wishing to become disciples of Jesus Christ.

We need to ask the question, am I able to clearly explain to another human being these six basic doctrines of Christianity?

Where do we find these basic doctrines listed?

Hebrews 6:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of **repentance** from acts that lead to death, and of **faith** in God, instruction about **baptisms**, the **laying on of hands**, the **resurrection** of the dead, and eternal **judgment**.”*

In this series of studies we will explain and amplify each of these doctrines.

Why is this understanding so very important?

Only when we have assimilated and made these doctrines a part of our life will we be able to “go on to maturity”.

Unless we accomplish this we will remain “*spiritual babies*” unable to grow.

The word “*therefore*” at the beginning of this passage of scripture tells us to look back at what has just been given and the warning that follows this passage of scripture that lists these basic doctrines.

Hebrews 5:11-14 [NIV] *“We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, **being still an infant**, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”*

Written to warn people who, because they haven’t placed themselves on a strict training programme for maturing as a Christian, are slow to learn.

What is the deadly outcome of such a lack of commitment?

Hebrews 6:4-6 [NIV] *“It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of*

God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.”

A spiritual falling away from which there is no way back, and a loss of our inheritance in the Kingdom of God.

Hebrews 6:7-8 [NIV] *“Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.”*

A physical example of a land that accepts the blessings from God but does not use them to produce “fruits” acceptable to God.

Hebrews 6:9-12 [NIV] *“Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case, things that accompany salvation. God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.”*

A warning not to be lazy in our seeking to mature as a Christian and produce the “fruits” in our lives by allowing the Holy Spirit to work in and through us.

Galatians 5:19-21 [NIV] *“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

If these are the only “fruits” in our lives we will **not** inherit a place in God’s Eternal Kingdom [created family].

Galatians 5:22-25 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”*

Fulfilling the first four basic Christian doctrines in our life will allow the Holy Spirit to create these acceptable “fruits” in our lives.

Genesis 1:26 [NIV] *“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’”*

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, and in our likeness’ [character of God].”

The “fruits” of the Holy Spirit are the characteristics of God’s very nature, that must be ours if we are to be part of the created family [kingdom] of God.

This is why it is essential we know and live by these basic doctrines of Christianity.

John 15:5-8 [NIV] *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”*

A warning directly from the words of Jesus Christ.

The writer of Hebrews is also saying that if we remain in the sluggish state of mind and we don't deal with the problem fairly soon we could reach the place where it is impossible to be renewed to repentance.

Such a position is fatal.

“Slow to learn” is not referring to our intelligence quotient. The Greek word used is “*nōthrōs*” sluggish, lazy or slothful.

The King James translation is **“dull of hearing”**, the writer is **not** talking about a natural inability to learn but **a lack of willingness to hear God's voice.**

Hebrews 3:7 [NIV] *“So, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you hear his voice,’”*

Hence this warning, **“if”** tells us we have the choice to hear or not hear.

We are told we **“ought to be teachers”** – this is where the Greek helps us to see what the English translations do **not** convey.

Greek for “ought” is “*ōphēlēō*” – to be under obligation – must – bound – indebted.

In other words, their time had come and they were found wanting. It is possible that if the meaty things do **not** become plain, as we mature, then the plain things [milk] will be lost.

Matthew 25:24-30 [NIV] *“Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. “Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.””*

It was the one who buried his talent, did nothing with it, that was cast out into darkness, where he joins all who did not make the effort to mature, to increase what God had given him by teaching others to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:2-9 [NIV] *“Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is short-sighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.”*

Growth is something that is commanded throughout God's Word, the Christian Bible.

2 Peter 3:18 [NIV] *“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever! Amen.”*

Such growth will bring glory to Jesus Christ as we teach others to become His disciples.

There are some “*Christians*” who after many years are still needing the same kind of help as when they first became “*Christians*”. It has never entered their mind to be ready to help anybody else become a Christian.

Often the best way to solve our own problems spiritually, mentally or even physically is to get our eyes completely off ourselves and start helping someone else.

Our own problems then begin to diminish!

If we are in a state of “*arrested development*” spiritually, then no matter how many years we live we will **not** automatically get any more mature.

We might continue to attend church meetings, take communion, read daily our Bible but with “*arrested development*” we never move on to imbibe the “*meat*” of God’s Word, we still seek to live on the “*milk*”. Constantly going over the foundational concepts of Christian living, **not** fully understanding them and then moving on to deeper, more “*meaty*”, things such as the “*order of Melchizedek*” as referred to in this passage of scripture, [**Hebrews 5:1-11**].

1 Peter 3:15 [NIV] “*But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,*”

The reason we have hope is linked to the six basic doctrines we are about to study.

I ask the question again, are you able, right now, to clearly and convincingly explain to another human being these six basic doctrines of Christianity?

If not, please let the Holy Spirit help you understand by what He inspires to be written in this series of articles.