

**“Searching for Sound Doctrine,” *Ephesians 4:11-16*, page 1144**

**Introduction:**

1. Last Sunday we referred to *Ephesians 1*: where we discovered that “one” is a complete number.
  2. It is amazing how two people can see and hear the same event but have different descriptions of that event.
  3. I have been asked many times how can we all study the same Bible but have different interpretations of the Bible.
  4. We must realize that studying the Bible is hard work.
  5. Is it possible to find sound doctrine and understand the Bible? Answer, yes!
  6. It will not be easy:
    - A. Truth is not automatic.
    - B. Truth is not universal
  7. Sound doctrine is more than simple faith and emotions.
    - A. Sound doctrine is understanding the deeper teachings of God.
    - B. Sound doctrine is knowing what we believe and why.
- I. The search for sound doctrine is personal. *Philippians 2:12*: “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”**
- A. Salvation is made available to us by Jesus Christ.
    1. We cannot establish our own salvation. *Acts 4:12*, page 1065.
    2. However, after we have accepted salvation, we are to work out the lifestyle of the Christian life.
  - B. Sound doctrine is not something we inherit from our parents.
    1. They may have taught us the Bible.
    2. They may have taken us to church.
    3. They may have been an excellent example before us.
  - C. Sound doctrine is what I personally believe and what I am personally experiencing.
    1. If I believe in Jesus Christ, then I can personally experience Jesus Christ.
    2. If I believe the Bible is the living Word of God, then I can personally study His Word.
    3. If I believe in the Holy Spirit, then I can personally allow the Holy Spirit to direct my life.
    4. If I believe in the reality of prayer, then I can personally talk to God.
  - D. I must work out my own salvation.
    1. Not my parents.
    2. Not my church.
    3. Not my spouse.
  - E. Finding sound doctrine is up to each of us to personally discover.
- II. The search for sound doctrine demands extreme focus. *II Timothy 2:15*: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”**
- A. We will find sound doctrine when we focus on the Bible.
  - B. Our compaq P.C. came with a “user guide.”
    1. The user guide explains how the P.C. works.
    2. The user guide describes all the parts of the P.C.

3. The user guide has a problem solving section.
  4. The user guide is only productive when we follow the instructions.
  5. If I think the P.C. should operate a specific way and try to change the user guide = failure.
- C. The Bible is the user guide for the Christian life.
1. The Bible explains how the Christian life should be lived.
  2. The Bible describes the various aspects of salvation and holiness.
  3. The Bible has a problem solving section.
  4. The Bible works when we follow its instructions and focus on studying it.
- D. If we attempt to change the Bible to fit our belief or lifestyle = failure.
1. I believe it is possible to take some scriptures out of context and support non-Christian activities.
  2. Sound doctrine is realized when we take a specific topic and then say “What does the Bible teach concerning this topic?”
  3. What does the Bible teach us about:
    - a. Marriage.
    - b. Love.
    - c. Anger.
    - d. Homosexuality.
    - e. Honesty.
  4. It is not what I think—it’s all about what the Bible teaches!
  5. It is not what I feel—it’s all about what the Bible teaches!
- E. The only way to know what the Bible teaches is to study the Bible.
1. Attending church is a good thing but not enough.
  2. Reading a devotional book is a good thing, but not enough.
  3. We need to study the Bible.
  4. Study the Bible in group study and personal study.

**III. The successful search for sound doctrine will be rewarded. *John 8:31-32: “Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”***

- A. Truth sets us free to use the object for our benefit or reward.
1. The stove is hot—avoid getting burned and cook dinner.
  2. The stone is hard—avoid hitting the stone and use it in the foundation of our house.
- B. When we have found sound doctrine, we are set free to experience the promise of blessings and rewards.
1. When we know what we believe, we are not threatened by what someone else may believe.
  2. When we seek first the kingdom of God, He will bless us with needed material blessings.
  3. When we repent, He gives us forgiveness.
  4. When we love God with all our hearts, He helps us love our neighbor.
  5. When we cast all our worries on Him, He gives us peace.
  6. When we talk to Him, He communicates with us.
  7. When we lose our lives in Him, He gives us eternal life.

**Conclusion:**

1. It is amazing what computers can accomplish, and the user guide is necessary to understand our computers.
2. It is a miracle what God can accomplish in and through us, and we need the Bible to guide us in our Christian lives.
3. I urge you to continue your search for sound doctrine as together we study His Word.