For many Christians, the term "doctrine" is a very nasty term because it lacks emotion or feeling. After all, few people want to go to church to hear about doctrine. Inversely, "Felt Need" theology approaches ministry by understanding what people feel their needs are, meeting those perceived needs, and then building a bridge to share the gospel more directly. This approach helps people feel better about themselves because they believe a church is meeting their needs. Many modern churches lend themselves to this emotionalism by making church services all about the attendee's wishes. This style of ministry does not lend itself to strict doctrine as the natural tendency of a sinner is to run away from the dogmatic, authoritative teaching of God's Word. At NESBC, we believe sound doctrine is the foundation for spiritual growth. The more an individual knows God, the more he will soon realize God meets needs directly with and without the local church (Philippians 4:19). The church is not a "cash cow" for felt needs.

The Greek word "doctrine" means "teaching" or "instruction." The insinuation is teaching passed down from one person to another. In the Biblical context, the word refers to spiritually related fields of study. The usage in Scripture is more detailed than a simply passing on information from one person to another. Christianity is a faith founded on a peculiar message rooted in the significant death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. In Scripture, then, doctrine refers to structured truths that define and describe God's relationship to man (1 Tim. 1:10 ; 4:16 ; 6:3 ; Titus 1:9). Therefore, doctrine is not a vague teaching. It is rooted in truth. It points to truth. It is unsound and dangerous without an anchor in inspired, Biblical truth.

When you evaluate a church, what do you focus upon initially? Do you take a look at programs, ministries, the people in leadership, or how nice of a facility the church operates in? While all these things have their correct place and time, the doctrinal statement of a church is what best defines what the church is all about. In 1 Timothy 4:16, Paul demands of his son in the faith and pastor in Ephesus,

> Take heed (*Pay close attention*) unto thyself, and (*your relationship to*) unto the doctrine; continue in them (*stay put*): for in doing this thou shalt both save (*keep safe and sound*) thyself, and them that hear thee.

Doctrine is important to God. In fact, the word appears over 50 times in the Bible. The early church received its doctrine from the disciples of Christ, the apostles, New Testament prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and those who possessed certain spiritual gifts at the founding of the church. Now that the canon Scripture has been closed (1 Corinthians 13:10), the Bible is the absolute source for all doctrine of the Christian faith.

Definition of the Gospel: 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

> The gospel is the "good news" of salvation being a gift of God based on the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, through his substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection according to the

Scriptures (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4). God's wrath and the penalty for sin is appeased when a person accepts Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection "in my place." Salvation is a matter of faith, and not works. Having the correct definition of the gospel is a matter of life and death!

Galatians 1:8 - But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Introduction to Doctrine: The Fundamentals.

1. The verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures in the original manuscripts (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
2. The deity of Jesus Christ (John 1:1-2; 8:56-59; Colossians 1:15-19).
3. The virgin birth of Christ (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:26; 21, 34-35).
4. The substitutionary, atoning work of Christ on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18).
5. The physical resurrection and the personal, bodily return of Christ to the earth (Luke 24:1-6; 1Peter 2:21-24; 1Corinthians 15:1-7, 23-26).
6. The Trinity (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Genesis 1:26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6).
7. The Creation of man (Genesis 1:26-31), the Fall into sin (Genesis 3:1-7), and total depravity (Romans 3:10).
8. The universal transmission of spiritual death from Adam (Romans 5:12-21).
9. The necessity of the new birth (John 3:3-8).
10. Redemption by the blood of Christ (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19).
11. Salvation by faith alone in Christ (Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10).
12. The assurance of salvation (Romans 8:38-39; Philippians 1:6; John 3:16).
13. The centrality of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures (Colossians 1:15-17).
14. The constitution of the true church by genuine believers (Ephesians 2:11, 3:6).
15. The personality of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10-13; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Corinthians 12:11)
16. The believer's call to a holy life (1 John 2:15-17; 2 Corinthians 6:15-7:1).
17. The immediate passing of the souls of believers to be with Christ at death (2 Corinthians 5:8).
18. The premillennial Second Coming of Christ (Revelation 19:11-16).

Introduction to Doctrine: Issues Conflicting with Holiness.

1. False Teachers, Heretics, Under Church Discipline, Blasphemers, etc… (Galatians 1:8-9; 2 John 9-11; Romans 16:17-18).
2. Homosexuality (Romans 1:27).
3. Gender Confusion (Romans 1:24-32).
4. Gender Role Reversal (Ephesians 5:22-23).
5. Charismatic Movement (Hebrews 2:3-4).
6. Music (1 Corinthians 10:31; more explanation needed).
7. Fluid, Ungodly Trends (1 John 2:15-17; 1 Timothy 4:1-3).