

This We Believe: Beliefs Important to Christians

Biblical Teaching #5, Unit 14

Introduction

Every person who accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour begins the pilgrimage of studying, accepting, and living out “Christian doctrine” or Christian beliefs. Without doctrine (beliefs), our commitment to Jesus means nothing. Without beliefs, we have nothing to live by, to live for, or to share with others. In fact, without doctrine, we would not want to share Christ at all or commit to live as his follower.

What we believe matters greatly. With beliefs we form our understanding of the characteristics of God, define man, understand nature, identify sin, avoid Satan, give definition to baptism and the Lord’s Supper, understand church, cherish Heaven, defy Hell, accept the work of God’s Spirit in ourselves, and a whole host of other things that touch and form everything in our lives.

A few years ago, a phrase became a popular expression for ridiculing highly organized traditional churches having programs, committees, and multiple organizations. The phrase went something like this: “**(In our church) We don’t preach doctrine, we just preach Jesus.**” The problem with that statement is rather obvious. It wrongly defines the word “doctrine”! Obviously, if doctrine and beliefs mean the same thing (and they do), without doctrine, one has no reason to be a Christian or be in a church.

Right doctrine (belief) offers the whole foundation of being a disciple of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Lord of all creation, and our Saviour (all very doctrinal statements)! However, when it comes to preparing and studying beliefs as a Unit of Bible study, we quickly run into the fact that there are far too many doctrinal topics to fit into a reasonable number of Bible study and worship sessions. So, we have chosen 13 beliefs or sets of beliefs that merit the time and energy for a home-based church to study. Many other beliefs are identified, defined, and studied in the 220 sessions that comprise the guides within Home Church Online materials.

Your church may decide to not study all the doctrines defined in this Unit. On the other hand, you may decide to include more, and extend your time of study of doctrines to more than 13 sessions. As an autonomous church, please know that Home Church Online provides resources for you to use but the decisions of what, when, where, and how you study God’s Word remains your own responsibility and privilege.

You will find a list of basic beliefs that undergird all Home Church Online resources on the “Home Page” of the HCO website: www.homechurchonline.com. That summary does not attempt to define all our beliefs. However, it does include some of the important beliefs to which we hold that may differ, even importantly so, from a few beliefs of some evangelical Christian groups. But without beliefs, we would have little to share with your church. If you choose, we suggest that you make multiple copies of those doctrinal statements and share them with your congregation. It helps to see your beliefs in print, take them home, and read God’s Word—searching for God’s truth in all your beliefs.