

valueless mission. You perceive it is declared that he is to teach us all things; but if some of these “all things” are really of such minor importance, and so quite non-essential, then surely it is not worthwhile disturbing our minds with them and so to that degree, at any rate, we accuse the Holy Spirit of having come to do what is not necessary to be done; and I trust that our minds recoil with Holy repulsion from such a half-blaspemy as that.” - C. H. Spurgeon.

CONCLUSION

In **Colossians 1:28**, the Apostle speaks of the importance of teaching the Word of God, “*Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*” I would rather be safe than sorry and I would rather err in being too serious than not being serious enough. Let us “*adorn the doctrine of God*” (**Titus 2:10**). May we cherish every truth as precious to God. Let theology unite us and not compromise. Yes, it may cost us something, but we are told in **Proverbs 23:23**, “*Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.*” All doctrines are essential and divine and no one has the authority to say otherwise. The Lord Jesus spoke of the importance of doctrine and how we can receive it: **John 7:16-17**, “*Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*” May we believe God’s Word and count every jot and tittle as precious truth.

“The purpose behind all doctrine is to secure moral action.”

- Tozer

“*For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*”

Revelation 22:18-19



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“*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*”
Acts 16:31

The RICHIES

OF GRACE

“hath appeared to all men.” Titus 2:11

Robert W. Reed

June 2012

Non-Essentials

“*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*”

Matthew 28:19-20

+ Which Bible Doctrines are Non-Essential? +

The doctrine of Non-Essentials is taught by many today, but refuted by Jesus Christ in the New Testament. This philosophy is often stated in the slogan commonly attributed to Augustine over fifteen hundred years ago, “In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity.” It was also used by some of the reformers and has been embraced by the emergent church movement. On the surface this may sound good, but in reality it denies the principles and teachings of the Bible. The word non-essential means unnecessary and the word essential pertains to that which is necessary and must be believed.

“Anything that is in the word of God and has the stamp of approval, I tremble at. Someone said to an old Puritan, “Some have made such allowances in their conscience, can’t you make a little exception in yours? There is no reason why you should be so precise”, but the other replied, “I serve a precise God.”

- C. H. Spurgeon

There are no non-essentials in the Bible. Be assured that every doctrine in Holy Scripture is essential to either our salvation or our walk with the Lord. The whole council of God is essential to full obedience. In **Matthew 28:19-20**, the Lord told His disciples to teach all things He had commanded them, “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*” The Lord had trained and taught them for three years. He had taught them the Sermon on the Mount (**Matthew 5-7**), and in the upper room (**John 13-17**), the Olivet Discourse (**Matthew 24-25**), and much more. The great commission was about going to the nations and teaching them the commandments of Christ. In **John 14:26**, Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would bring all things He had taught them to remembrance when they went forth, “*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*”

There is a tendency to choose some truth and reject others as non-essential. Many have divided doctrine into cardinal and secondary categories. This means that the secondary or non-essentials can be put aside for the sake of unity. Millions have embraced this philosophy and have started down this slippery slope of compromise. They speak of tearing down walls, destroying denominational boundaries, building bridges, thinking outside the box, tolerance, etc. But they have forgotten that all doctrine and truth are equally important, “*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone*” (**Matthew 23:23**). Here, the Pharisees were not condemned for tithing, but for overlooking other important matters in the Law. They were not to leave the other undone. No one has the liberty to sort out doctrine into two categories. No one has the right to put one Biblical truth above another or to pick and choose. We must accept it all as Divine.

The Bible makes no distinction between primary and secondary doctrine (**II Timothy 3:16-17**). All doctrines are essential, whether salvation or Christian living. The cry for non-essentials and unity is just a nice way of rejecting God’s Word and still appearing godly on the surface. All Scripture is pure and important (**Proverbs 30:5**;

Psalm 138:2); we must always divide truth from error, “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*” (**II Timothy 2:15**). Much emphasis is placed on correct doctrine throughout the Bible (**I Timothy 1:3, 6:13-14**; **II Timothy 4:1-6,12**). There are heresies that are damnable which affect our eternal salvation and must be guarded against, “*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction*” (**II Peter 2:1**).

The church is plagued today with the teaching of non-essentials. Many have redefined the doctrine of salvation and Christian living. The essential doctrines on the Trinity, Deity of Christ, Repentance, and Atonement are being reduced to compromise. Not many can say with the Apostle Paul today, “*Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*” (**Acts 20:26-27**). In **Matthew 5:18**, Jesus spoke of every jot and title as being important. The Apostle Paul commanded the church to keep the ordinances He delivered to them in **I Corinthians 11:2**, “*Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.*” We are not to be as the Pharisees and divide the precepts of the Law into lesser and greater, nor are we to make void the Word of God by the traditions of men (**Mark 7:8,9,13**). Again, the doctrine of non-essentials is just a cover up and excuse for compromise and rejection of God’s Word. It is deceptive and misleading. It creates half-way Christianity, a lukewarm fuzzy environment. Essential truth is more than just salvation, it produces fruit and holiness. There are no divine non-essential doctrines, if so, where are they?

“When people talk of non-essentials in regard to anything concerning which God has revealed His mind, it is well to ask, essential or non-essential to what? If it be a question of the souls salvation, undoubtedly the one great essential is faith in His blessed Son, whose finished work alone avails to put away sin and procure peace with God. But if it be a question of what is essential to the enjoyment of communion with God-essential to obtaining Gods approval at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Then it is well to remember that in everything the believer is sanctified to the obedience of Christ. . . If you say that any one part of the truth is unimportant, you do as good as say—to that extent the Holy Spirit has come upon as unimportant or