The Christian Life

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Christian life is like a 3-legged stool. The legs are doctrine, experience, and practice (that is, obedience)

Seasonable therapy: Ferguson bring us back to biblical basics about the source, nature and expression of Christian life.
Intro

• A new desire among Christians for a solid foundation upon which experience may be built.
I. Prolog

A. Importance of doctrines
   1. “deeper truths” (if there are such things) are really the old basic truths of the gospel.
   2. Professing Christians are distressingly weak in our grasp of the basic framework of biblical doctrine.

B. Conviction and growth:
   1. The conviction that Christian doctrine matters for Christian living is one of the most important growth points of the Christian life.
   2. Practical Christian living is based upon
II. The teaching of Jesus

A. Jesus taught practical Christianity- Sermon of the Mt.

1. In the Sermon of the Mount: instruction on:
   a. How to behave, on the motivations which lie behind our actions, in prayer, anxiety and many other practical matters.
   b. These practical realities build on what foundation? On what we know of God, His nature, and the ways in which He deals with men.
2. The LORD’s prayer:
   a. The great motive for prayer is that we know God is Father (and we therefore His children), and know He knows what we need before we ask.
   b. The pattern prayer Christ gave us is a manual of doctrine— the Fatherhood of God, His heavenly existence, His holiness, His name, His kingdom and its coming, the nature of the divine will, His daily providence, His forgiveness, the problem of temptation and the existence of the Devil.
   c. The msg is the knowledge of God and the sure understanding of His character and ways provide the basis for all practical Christian living.
B. Jesus’ mind soars to the doctrines

1. doctrine of the Trinity: Jn 14:14-17;
2. the glory of God, Jn 17:1, 24

C. How explore the riches of such statements?

1. These great truths are in fact the very foundation of Jesus’ encouragement of His disciples and even Himself in an hour of great practical need.
2. “Only the man who has a grasp of these heights will be able to hold firm when he descends to the depths of human experience.”
3. How practically important Christian doctrines are.
4. Jesus teaches doctrine in order to fill our lives with stability and grace.
III. The teaching of Paul

A. Doctrines are practical.

1. 2 Cor. 2:23-28
   a. What sustained Paul under these pressures? He had a vital knowledge of the character of God, the work of Christ, the nature of God’s way, and he indwelling power of the HS. His life was characterized by the power which the truth released in his experience.
   b. If only you knew and understood, then your lives would be so different!
2. Romans 12:1-2

a. Let ‘God re-mould your minds from within’.

b. As we understand and appreciate the mercies of god we will live more fully for Christ. BUT, what are the mercies of God? How can we understand them? Rom 1-11 expounds God’s mercies. As we grapple with the teaching in these pages our eyes will be opened wide to the expansiveness of God’s grace in our salvation… consecration and practical Christian living will become more meaningful to us.

c. This is not an optional extra for Christian. It is a basic necessity. The doctrines of the GP are meant to mould us so that our lives begin to ‘set” in the likeness of Christ.
B. Our lives no different from contemporaries’

1. We have made little or no impression upon the world, for the very reason that GP doctrine has made a correspondingly slight impression on us.

2. 2 Tim. 3:14-17
   a. Notice Paul’s connection between Scripture, teaching and training, and the practicalities of being a Christian soldier ‘kitted out’ for ‘every good work’.
   b. All doctrine has this essentially practical quality about it. It forms our thinking in such a way that it becomes a determining factor in our living.
IV. Our doctrine should be practical

A. Doctrines and experience
   1. We ultimately benefit from experiences only when we trace the great doctrinal principles which they illustrate.
   2. These doctrines are character-building and life-changing. Most of them are key doctrines in the growth and development of the Christian life.
3. Many Christians have less knowledge of Christian doctrine than children at SS had in previous centuries. It may also be one reason for the differences between the quality of Christian character of previous eras and the relatively poor standard of our own Christian lives today.
B. Story by Am theologian Benjamin B. Warfield

1. It is in this way that our understanding of our Christian doctrine shapes Christian life.
2. It begins to influence even our unconscious bearing and our responses to all kinds of situations.
3. Christian doctrines are life-shaping.
4. They show us the God we worship and illuminate our understanding of His Son’s love and His Spirit’s work. They form the foundation of the Christian life.