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# Buck the Trend

## Fall in love with doctrine

It is unfortunate that so many evangelicals downplay the importance of doctrine: what God has to say about Himself and us, our need for a Savior, how God interacts with believers and nonbelievers, and the central tenets of our faith. Biblical theology is central to putting life into perspective on a day-to-day basis, and it is what makes all the difference when we face the inevitable tragedies of life. As one of the writers in this issue notes, we are all theologians—some are just better than others.

The apostle Paul drew a clear connection between what we believe (our theology) and how we live (our practice) in his first letter to Timothy. “Be diligent in these matters,” he said; “give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Timothy 4:15,16).

True, we often know more about God than we put into practice, which is why Paul clearly connects the dots of our theology and our life. It is also true, however, that in the absence of understanding biblical theology, we often misinterpret the events of life, especially when tragedy strikes and we are forced to reconcile “life” with our faith.

As a pastor, it was always eye-opening to watch people weather the really tough stuff of life. Some weathered those storms and came out stronger—all because they had a biblical framework by which to operate and believe in the midst of suffering. Not that they understood the “why” but that they understood the “who” who knew the “why,” a sovereign, loving, good God who always was working in the lives of His people—through good and bad circumstances to build and shape and love.

There were others who never delved deeply into God’s Word and, consequently, never really understood the God who lies behind life. When hard times came, they ended up bitter at God or even walked away from God.

Is there a connection between our theology and our life? Yes! The truth is that our theology—our understanding of God and His ways—affects each of us every day.

This issue of *EFCA Today* will challenge you to buck the trend of downplaying doctrine’s importance in our lives. And it does so with real-life examples of why doctrine matters and how it affects us. I pray that it will again stimulate your thinking so that, as believers, we would watch our life and doctrine closely. ■



DR. WILLIAM J. HAMEL