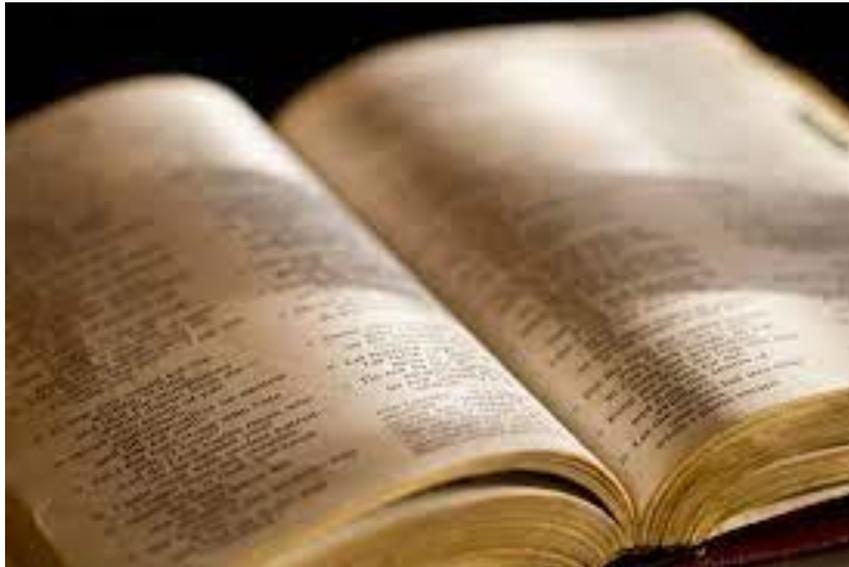




Bible Study

What is *Sound* Doctrine?

Questions and Answers



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The purpose and desire is to foster Biblical, historical and related studies that strengthen the Church of God's message & mission and provides further support to its traditional doctrinal positions.

Abstract

Many people today no longer know what sound doctrine is in a 21st century context.

Some spread leftist politically correct radicalism in the church and refuse to denounce issues in the church such as open borders, homosexuality, ordination of women and abortion!

Why? Is it due to their own radical positions and adoration of Obama, Clinton etc?

Should ministers preach ALL the fundamentals and other doctrines of the church or just a few basic ones recycled every 2 years? What are their Godly and legal obligations?

Introductory Comments

I don't know whether to call this an essay or Bible study. Nevertheless, it must be said.

Let us commence this study with a quote from Marcus Cicero (106-43BC) who was a famed politician, philosopher, lawyer and orator in ancient Rome. See how pertinent that quote is to the Church of God today:

"A nation can survive its fools, and even the ambitious. But it cannot survive treason from within. An enemy at the gates is less formidable, for he is known and carries his banner openly. **But the traitor moves amongst those within the gate freely, his sly whispers rustling through all the alleys, heard in the very halls of government itself.** For the traitor appears not a traitor; he speaks in accents familiar to his victims, and he wears their face and their arguments, he appeals to the baseness that lies deep in the hearts of all men. He rots the soul of a nation, he works secretly and unknown in the night to undermine the pillars of the city, he infects the body politic so that it can no longer resist. **A murderer is less to be feared.** The traitor is the carrier of the plague. You have unbarred the gates of Rome to him." (paraphrase from an essay written by Justice Millard Caldwell in 1965. Emphasis mine).

Now let us turn to reading of a serious situation that affected King David himself: treachery, undermining and false leaders/brethren as a type of harassment of Christ and Christians (lengthy but necessary quotes):

"For it is not an enemy who taunts me— then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me— then I could hide from him.

But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend.

We used to take sweet counsel together; within God's house we walked in the throng.

...

My companion stretched out his hand against his friends; he violated his covenant.

His speech was smooth as butter, yet war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.

Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved." (Ps 55:12-14, 20-22)



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In Psalm 69 David calls out to God Almighty:

“To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. Of David. Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck.

I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me.

I am weary with my crying out; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God.

More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; mighty are those who would destroy me, those who attack me with lies. What I did not steal must I now restore?

O God, you know my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you.

Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me, O Lord GOD of hosts; let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me, O God of Israel.

For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonor has covered my face.

I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother's sons.

For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

When I wept and humbled my soul with fasting, it became my reproach.

When I made sackcloth my clothing, I became a byword to them.

I am the talk of those who sit in the gate, and the drunkards make songs about me.

But as for me, my prayer is to you, O LORD. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love answer me in your saving faithfulness.

Deliver me from sinking in the mire; **let me be delivered from my enemies** and from the deep waters.

Let not the flood sweep over me, or the deep swallow me up, or the pit close its mouth over me.

Answer me, O LORD, for your steadfast love is good; according to your abundant mercy, turn to me.

Hide not your face from your servant; for I am in distress; make haste to answer me.” (Ps 69:1-17)

Who are these people – these traitors – these tares!?



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“And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder.

When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. **And many shall join themselves to them with flattery,**

and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.” (Dan 11:33-35)

These are the turn-coats, traitors and doctrinal heretics amongst us. Both false ministers (teachers) and false brethren. In fact, the Bible has more to say about false prophets/ministers/teachers/leaders than false brethren (ie members). Why?

To be able to answer the question, we need to understand what doctrine is and other associated questions.

Questions about Doctrine

Only by understanding what doctrine is and then study and apply the true doctrines can we identify false ministers (teachers) and false brethren.

1. What is a doctrine?

A doctrine is simply a teaching of the Word of God. We might rank them from fundamental to those that fall within or under the fundamentals. Of course, all Biblical teachings are important, and we can say that some are critical or more important than others but in the end, who are we to water-down or ignore vast portions of His Word?

False doctrines include the trinity in all its forms; immortal soul; anti-House of Israel (a bitterness inherent in certain ones); political correctness emanating from the 1968 uprisings (ie open borders; multi-culturalism; abortion; soft approach toward homosexuality; ordination of women; very soft approach toward divorce; anti-Britain & America and anti-Royal etc) are clearly not sound doctrine.

Why do some *never* preach against the evils of political correctness when it is such an issue within the Church? Mmm ...

Yet spend so much time attacking good leaders and the Royals.

Heresy is heresy and these are modern-day heresies and major issues impacting the Church.



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Here are some examples of essential doctrines: life of Christ and His shed blood; His divinity (ie binitarianism); those doctrines listed in Hebrews 6:1-3; Sabbath and Feast days; 10 Commandments and the Laws of God; fruit of the spirit; gifts of the spirit; beatitudes; identity of Israel and its vital importance to God's Plan; prophecy; healing; marriage & divorce; church eras; national identities and many, many more.

In a Church of God group one would have their Fundamentals listed and explained. Should a Church have 15, 25 or 50 Fundamentals and a minister seldom teaches them properly and if he deliberately ignores some as he does not believe in them – then should he be paid for belligerence and lack of ethics?

But the Fundamentals is not all there is to truth found within His Word. There are also many other 'lesser' ranked but still important doctrines.

Among these would be those such as: church eras, place of safety, healing, healthy living (ie looking after the temple of God's spirit), national identities such as Germany, divorce & remarriage are just a few examples.

There are also other requirements to preach on to convince others about – such as those worldly teachings that would impact upon the Body of Christ today and especially the youth, viz abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia, ordination of women, surrogacy and such like.

2. Why doctrine?

It inculcates His mind in us and way of thinking on issues such as abortion, male-female roles etc.

To find out His views and His will – we must study His Word and have sermons on the doctrines – not little stories that one can get from any Sunday School.

3. What should be preached?

Another way of saying this is *why was XXX Church of God established?* Among the reasons was to continue teaching the Truths that came via Herbert W Armstrong.

Ministers in particular are required to uphold the true doctrines.

If not, you know they don't believe in them. So let's be honest about all of this. How can one in all conscience draw a salary for a cause they don't really believe in, refuse to feed the flock fully and not believe in many of the Fundamental beliefs and so-called 'secondary' doctrines?

What if they never gave a proper sermon upholding Church teaching on many teachings including America & Britain in prophecy, clean and unclean meats as a health law or no women ministers etc.

If these are not preached by an elder are they are of “sound doctrine”? No! Because they do not believe in them.

4. How should heresies be countered?

It is important that the heretic be talked to first by the minister. It is no good being lazy and not doing their job.

Relying on gossip from other ministers or members is not enough in addressing the heresy – find out the details.

Go see the heretic(s) first – publicly denouncing them without them being made aware how wrong their ‘understanding’ is (eg weird conspiracy theories) leads to further friction. They need to be helped and to change. They should be warned to stopped.

Then define which are the false doctrines that are circulating and have sermons, sermonettes or Bible studies addressing each of them.

For instance, it is no use giving the appearance that one is doctrinally ‘conservative’ stating that Christ was not created but then refusing to ever state publicly anything against the Trinity only raises suspicions. Do some continue to privately believe in the Trinity given their track record, private statements and refusal to preach traditional Church of God positions on this doctrine?

You see, the Trinity heresy is still an issue! You see, the apostates dwell within our midst and their running down Herbert W Armstrong and other old-time pioneers is a dead giveaway.

Turn to the letter of Jude which has similarities to Ezekiel 34. It speaker of false ministers, within a maritime theme with suggestion of the demonic:

“For certain people have **crept in unnoticed** [infiltrators wanting to pervert the Truth] who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality [worldliness, perversions] and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. [eg trinitarianism]

...

Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams,



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defile the flesh, reject authority [in context this is the authority of God in their lives or ministers rebelling against Church authority and teachings] and **blaspheme the glorious ones**. [this could refer to angels or perhaps Apostles. However, pastors, elders, deacons are not referred to as 'glorious ones' or anything similar in Scripture. We must be very careful not to accumulate accolades and authority far beyond the Biblical allowance or the Church's teachings]

...

Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion.

These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, **shepherds feeding themselves** [ie false ministers. Cp Ezek 34:1-8]; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; [fruitless ministry, chaos and deception]

wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame [their dirty talk is eventually exposed]; wandering stars [aimless without spiritual direction], for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever. [ie eternal death]

It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones,

to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage." (Jude 1:4, 8, 11-16) [NB: they have cliques, favourites and are jealous of others, exhibiting the fruit of the flesh. Cp James 2:1-9; Rom 2:11; 1Tim 5:21; Deut 10:17; IIChron 19:6-7; Job 34:19]

The apostates are still around – like a cancer or 'sleeper cell' slyly plying their trade, undermining the Truths of the Church of God by refusing to teach them or uphold them yet drawing a salary. Instead, they let these Truths die a 'death by a thousand cuts' or die on the vine.

These hold leftist and politically correct positions.

How unethical! How immoral! Are they breaking the terms of their contract?

5. Is it rebellion against Church leadership not to preach the doctrines?

Drawing a salary for something one does not believe in is breach of contract and deceitful. Refusing to uphold the doctrines of the organisation that is paying one's salary is divisive and does not feed the flock.

Listening to God's holy and righteous children cry out for spiritual food and get denounced by those that should be acting to do something about the situation heart-breaking.

Are those that refuse to teach the doctrines of God? Or are they rebels themselves? Do they refuse to be reviewed for their performance to uphold doctrines etc.

Refusal to abide by COE rulings is another area of rebellion. As some have said, unless all this information and thus requirements in a *Pastor's Manual* are on the Church's members' website, then members don't know the roles, duties and requirements for those who are supposed to teach sound doctrine etc and some thus do whatever they want with such little supervision. They have taken upon themselves unbridled power way beyond that given to them, refusing to properly teach and to uphold the doctrines.

6. How should the Church ensure doctrinal integrity?

There are those who want to 'serve' or be ordained. Wishing to be a servant is fine, but how do you know they are being deceitful or 'true blue' in their aspirations?

- i. Can they prove the doctrines such as the Abrahamic promises (ie 'lost' tribes of Israel, church eras etc?)
- ii. Do they believe in the full truth of God or only basics that any Protestant minister would know and agree with?
- iii. Can they demonstrate and prove that they have upheld the doctrines?

For any minister to just say to higher ups that he believes in this or that doctrine and then thumbs his nose at the leadership, refusing to teach the doctrines for years and years – well, should he be paid?

Just saying that they believe or agree with doctrines but do not uphold them or ever denounce false doctrines and political correctness – this is heresy as it is divisive.

Their refusing to say a word in private and especially in sermons against the ordination of women, homosexuality, abortion, the trinity, open borders etc yet condemning conservative



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leaders (Reagan, Thatcher while praising Clinton, Carter, Obama), condemning the Royalty, Herbert W Armstrong, the Church's television program and so on – is nothing but Tkachianism and apostasy. It is causing division.

Solution:

Quit appointing people to positions who do not believe in the doctrines and who belligerently refuse to teach them and are politically correct.

The members need protection from this – that is the duty of the spiritual mother. Notice the Biblical principle for what is supposed to happen:

“Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil.

Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few.

...

If you see in a province the oppression of the poor and the violation of justice and righteousness, do not be amazed at the matter, **for the high official is watched by a higher, and there are yet higher ones over them.**” (Eccl 5:1-2, 8)

That is what it is supposed to be like – the Biblical principal of checks ‘n balances.

But where is it?

Pertinent Scriptures

“Until I come, **devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching** [doctrine].

Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.

Practice these things, **immerse yourself in them**, so that all may see your progress.

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.” (1Tim 4:13-16)



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“He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

“But as for you, **teach what accords with sound doctrine.**

“Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, **rightly handling the word of truth.**

But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness,

and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus” (II Tim 2:14-17)

"Let the elders who rule well be considered **worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching** [doctrine]." (1 Timothy 5:17)

"holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to **exhort in sound doctrine** and to refute those who contradict." (Titus 1:9)

"For the time will come when they **will not endure sound doctrine**; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires..." (II Timothy 4:3) [eg conspiracy theories, trinity, anti-British weird ideas]

Can we live by those words?

Should we be disparaged by the leftist-politically correct in our midst due to our sound doctrine?

Shouldn't the flock be fed?

“In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, **doing nothing from partiality [eg toward their relatives, friends, the rich, political leftists].**

Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins



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of others; keep yourself pure.” (ITim 5:21-22) [eg partiality for youth, friends etc. Note Deut 1:16-17; 10:17; Prov 28:21; James 2:1-4; ITim 5:21; Jude 1:16; Eph 6:9]

A true minister of Jesus Christ would not be jealous or competitive seeing members as rivals.

Instead, he would not be able to help himself with service and love. For he would have a shepherd’s heart.

Would he not see each of God’s holy and righteous children as being so precious that they must be protected from political correctness and false ministers/teachers (as mentioned in Jude)?

Is there fear and trembling at His Word or belligerence, self-will and bullying? Do we **rejoice** in His FULL truth or watered-down Sunday School piffle?

Instead, shouldn’t we have a congregation where people rejoice in God’s truth and way?

“Serve the LORD with fear, and **rejoice** with trembling.” (Ps 2:11)

“Who now **rejoice** in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church.” (Col 1:24)

“**Rejoice** in the Lord always: and again, I say, rejoice.” (Phil 4:4)

“But **rejoice**, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” (IPet 4:13)

In the first century, the early Christians were heavily persecuted because of their zeal and views opposite to that of the Roman power.

They were fed to wild animals, crucified, burned alive and suffered the most terrible anguish. They took the narrow road yet rejoiced in the Lord because they lived for their eternal reward and protected true doctrine.

Final Comments

Some years ago an exasperated couple spent a considerable amount of time with a pastor who used valuable Sabbath preaching time to jealously denounce members, undermine members' activities, utter refusal to teach major doctrines of the church, childishly do the opposite to what was suggested or recommended so as to cause friction, run people down all over the country and to his family and never go and see or talk with those he falsely accused (and even appoint people to teach the youth when they have no teaching ability or knowledge of the Word and who do not believe in so many of our doctrines and who hold politically correct positions!)

He lost so many members or frustrated so many, that this leading couple eventually had to see him to try and curtail the damage done to the rapidly declining local church and members' spiritual lives.

After months of trying they gave up, saying he was so incredibly 'immature' and 'bloody-minded' that it was almost beyond belief. Because there was no performance review or 'checks 'n balances' such as a neutral committee to investigate and resolve the issues without bias toward their peers.

Immaturely he would continue and continue and continue to do undermining and weird things to get on peoples' nerves. Or if suggested something – just do the opposite on purpose to frustrate people.

So, if he was told by higher ups to hold regular Bible studies he would refuse, claiming that no one wanted them; if told to have a Speakers' Club, he would hold a couple of sessions and do no more ever; if told to help members' to use or develop their 'gifts' and talents he would hold one session then proceed to put people 'square pegs in round holes.'

There was an utter refusal to fulfil his legal obligations.

The local church was just a game.

If told to preach on our doctrines he would say he has, and inappropriately title sermons to give the impression it was preached on.

No wonder some people said 'we are not paying his salary' and 'tithes will go to other groups, or to help others' etc.



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He just couldn't care and would belligerently go around not supporting the Church's doctrines or even undermining them. This is a good example of the lack of doctrinal integrity.

What if a minister is slothful in sound doctrine? If not, they do not have the heart of a shepherd!

One sound doctrine is spiritual gifts and talents – when will that be taught and implemented?

Instead, aspersions are cast against the true believers. Using one's position and valuable Sabbath time to cause restlessness on a rest day is showing God where their hearts are. The Sabbath is a time for rest and fellowship not politically correct statements and jealous remarks.

They should instead expose the evils of abortions, homosexuality, euthanasia, globalisation and real false prophets - like Christ did – not go around attacking God's children.

So why are there the same recycled sermons every two years? Why are some visiting other Church of God groups – is it not for company and desperation for spiritual nourishment? Are these the 'wandering stars' which Jude 13 refers? No! But in context what Jude is saying has nothing to do with being friends with other groups – that Scripture is talking about false ministers (teachers) NOT about visiting other Church of God groups for nourishment and friendship.

One must look at oneself and ask 'why are God's holy and righteous children visiting other groups?' Blame yourself, not God's children if they do so.

The bottom line is this: Don't offend God's little ones! You know the penalty, so why do some continue this and become vindictive when people stand up for themselves and the Church.

Instead, preach "sound doctrine" not Satan's political correctness!

Roy Gane explains the importance of doctrine well:

"The basics of salvation are so simple that a little child can grasp them. But God has revealed much more for those who want to "go on to maturity" (Heb 6:1; RSV). The details are for our benefit. They not only show us more clearly how we are saved, they teach what God is like. If we want to spend eternity with God, it is a good idea to get acquainted with Him now as much as possible.

"Details are important to relationships. When I was dating Connie, the young woman who later became my wife, I wanted to know



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everything about her. I was interested in her childhood, family, friends, values, plans, habits, talents, and the way she treated people. **Nothing was unimportant. Everything was fascinating. I find the same to be true of what I learn from God**" (Roy Gane, *Altar Call*, p.31).

"for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls,
but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you." (1Pet 1:24-25)

Appendix: The importance of accumulating Doctrinal Knowledge

“**Every word** of God *is* pure: he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him.” (Ps 30:5)

“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matt 4:4)

“**All scripture** *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Tim 3:16)

“For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money, and **the advantage of knowledge** is that wisdom preserves the life of him who has it.” (Eccl 7:12)

“Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life.” (Prov 4:13)

“Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and **he will increase in learning.**” (Prov 9:9)

“The wise **lay up knowledge**, but the mouth of a fool brings ruin near.” (Prov 10:14)

“How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge?” (Prov 1:22)

“Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach **a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.**”

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.” (Prov 9:9-10)

“Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, **weighing and studying** and arranging many proverbs with great care.” (Eccl 12:9. Cp II Tim 2:15; 3:16)

“For Ezra had set his heart to **study the Law of the LORD**, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.” (Ezra 7:10)

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“When a land transgresses, it has many rulers, **but with a man of understanding and knowledge, its stability will long continue.**” (Prov 28:2)

Other Scriptures:

Prov 1:5, 22, 29; 2:1-10; Rom 12:11; Col 3:23-24; IIPet 1:5; Deut 11:19; Ps 119:66, 99; Prov 10:14; 14:15-18; 21:11; 23:12; Dan 1:17; Hos 4:6; IITim 2:15; 3:16.

