Essential Doctrines

You can't afford to be ignorant about them

A 30-Lesson Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®

Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Series

This series examines the doctrines the Apostle Paul, in our epistles for this dispensation of grace, marks as essential for members of the Church, the Body of Christ, to understand and appreciate. On at least six occasions in Romans to Philemon Paul introduces a doctrinal issue with "I would not have you ignorant, brethren" or a similar expression; each is a pet doctrine of the satanic policy of evil against us. Lessons 1–2 identify the six and the satanic warning attached to each. They are numbered and named: (1) Pauline authority and godly edification, Romans 1:13 (Lessons 3–6); (2) Israel and the mystery, Romans 11:25 (7–10); (3) godly sanctification, I Corinthians 10:1 (11–14); (4) spiritual gifts, I Corinthians 12:1 (15–22); (5) sufferings, II Corinthians 1:8 (23–26); (6) physical death, the rapture, and the Lord's Day, I Thessalonians 4:13 (27–30).

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Lesson Summaries

L1

Identifying the Six Essential Doctrines *"I would not have you ignorant" — Romans 1:13 to I Thessalonians 4:13*

What Makes a Doctrine Essential

- On at least six occasions in Romans to Philemon, Paul introduces a doctrinal issue with an expression similar to "I would not have you ignorant"; if Paul says you can't afford to be ignorant about it, that means they're essential

Doctrines One and Two: Romans

- The first essential doctrine is Paul's authority as the apostle of the Gentiles and the godly edification God designed through members submitting to it — Pauline authority and godly edification
- Romans 11:25 winds down Romans 9, 10 and 11; the second essential doctrine is what God has done with Israel in view of having brought in the dispensation of grace — Israel and the mystery

Doctrines Three and Four: I Corinthians

- Paul deals with what is called here, for now, a particular aspect of our sanctification; Israel did not respond properly to their sanctification, and the Corinthians were doing much the same — the third doctrine, godly sanctification
- I Corinthians 12:1 leads off the three-chapter doctrine of spiritual gifts (chapters 12, 13 and 14); if you don't understand what God says about it, you're easily deceived by the satanic policy of evil's counterfeiting of spiritual gifts

Doctrine Five: Sufferings

- II Corinthians 1:8 begins with "for" and follows the first seven verses on the sufferings of Christ; this essential doctrine is named with the one word, sufferings

Doctrine Six and the Foundation

- I Thessalonians 4:13, carrying on into chapter 5, gives the sixth essential doctrine and its three major components — death, the rapture, and the Lord's day — all commonly attacked

L2

The Value Satan Sees in Essential Doctrines *Ephesians 4:7–16 and the Satanic Warning with Each Doctrine*

Ephesians 4: Edification vs. Ignorance

- In Ephesians 4:7–16 Paul deals with the divine design and provision for growth and maturity; verse 13 sets forth God's design for your full education
- When Paul says "I would not have you ignorant, brethren", that's God saying it through Paul; in direct contrast to the value God has upon your edification, the adversary values your ignorance
- In verse 14 "children" is used in a bad sense: God wants you a perfect man, a fully educated adult son of God that He's made you to be in Christ; the deception's goal is to keep you a child

Romans 1:13 — "but was let hitherto"

- The Satanic warning with each doctrine is not a warning from Satan but from Paul — God through Paul — about Satanic desires in connection with these things
- Paul "was let hitherto" — hindered by someone who knew the value of establishment — the adversary, Satan himself; the first two essential doctrines comprise one half of your establishment

Sufferings, the Lord's Day, and the Package

- All six are essential to God for our edification; the adversary needs to keep you ignorant about them or corrupt you in connection with them to keep you a child; Paul understood them as a package

L3

Mutual Faith with Our Apostle *Romans 1:1–15; I Thessalonians 2; Ephesians 3:1–9: Paul's Special Gentile Apostleship*

The First of the Six Essential Doctrines

- This lesson begins examining the first of the six essential doctrines identified in the first two lessons, here called Pauline Authority and Godly Edification
- The doctrine is recognizing Paul's authority as the apostle of the Gentiles, our apostle, so we know where to go in the Bible to find God talking expressly to us and about us today

Romans 1:1–12: Paul's Apostleship and God's Purpose

- Establishment lays a doctrinal foundation so you understand who you are in the plan and purpose of God; that is where the edification process begins
- The whole big picture is mutual faith between yourself and Paul — understanding and appreciating things as the apostle of the Gentiles himself did; that is what godly edifying comes down to

Our Apostle, Sent to the Gentiles

- Edification in this dispensation of grace comes through the ministry of the apostle of the Gentiles and the body of doctrine set forth in his epistles, Romans through Philemon
- The Bible contains two plans and purposes of God — one with the nation Israel and one with the Body of Christ; they aren't the same and don't go on at the same time

L4

The Office, Not the Man: Our Chief *Romans 11:13; Romans 15:8–17; I Timothy 1:3–20: The Authority for Edification*

The Most Fundamental Essential Doctrine

- This first of the six essential doctrines is the most fundamental one of them all; growth to the perfect man status doesn't fully take place without it

Romans 11:13 — The Office, Not the Man

- In "I magnify mine office" Paul declares who he is in the plan and purpose of God; the issue is the office, not the man — God put Paul in an office of apostleship for us, as He had done with Moses to Israel
- The body of truth for our edification was deposited with Paul and comes out in his epistles, Romans to Philemon; if you are a Gentile, he is your apostle

Romans 15:8–17 — The Great Dispensational Change

- Jesus Christ is not a minister of the circumcision now; He has brought in a dispensation of Gentile grace. Without understanding this you won't rightly divide the word of truth, and you'll misapply Scripture

I Timothy 1:3–11 — Other Doctrine vs. Sound Doctrine

- The touchstone for sound doctrine is its alignment with the glorious gospel of the blessed God committed to the Apostle Paul

Our Chief and Pattern; Timothy's Example

- In "of whom I am chief" Paul speaks in the present tense: he is not saying he was the chief of sinners but is the chief of the ones saved by Christ — our chief, to be submitted to because of what comes through him
- The pattern that operated in Israel's program isn't designed to work in the dispensation of grace; the new pattern comes through Paul's ministry

L5

Authority for Edification and the House of Doctrine *II Corinthians 10:1–8; 13:10; I Timothy 1:3; Proverbs 9: What Edification Is*

Why This Doctrine Is Attacked

- The body of truth with the instructions, promises and doctrines God wants us to understand for our edification was deposited with Paul, who is resident in his epistles to us, Romans through Philemon

II Corinthians 10:8; 13:10 — Authority for Edification

- Verse 8 is the verse Keith is after: Paul is not trying to tear them down but to build them up — "authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification"
- The Lord gave Paul the authority to produce edification in the members of the Body of Christ; it needs to be recognized and submitted to or it won't take place

What Edification Is: A Building

- Edification, edifying and edifice come from the same concept — to build up, to construct, to build a building; not a physical building, but a building of knowledge within your inner man, your soul and spirit
- The building materials are the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, deposited for this dispensation with Paul; the blueprint and materials are in Romans through Philemon, to build the house of doctrine and live in it and out of it
- Paul is called the master builder; this is Pauline authority for godly edification

L6

Godliness Is God-Likeness, Produced by Edification *Genesis 1; I Timothy 1, 6; Titus 1; I Corinthians 2–3, 15: Godly Edifying*

Godliness: A Self-Defining Word

- This is the last lesson on essential doctrine number one, which is entitled, out of Romans 1:13, Pauline Authority and Godly Edification; the aim is an appreciation for the word godliness
- There is a mystery aspect to godliness in this dispensation of grace, but no mystery to what godliness itself is: the ending of godly is the abbreviated form of the word like — godly means to be God-like

Three Components, Produced by Edification

- Godliness is comprised of three components: thinking like God does from the knowledge God gives you, doing things God's way on the base of discernment from that knowledge, and laboring with God in what He is doing
- God began to edify Adam; the means to godliness is edification

Godly in the Dispensation of Gentile Grace

- The truth deposited with Paul is the truth "which is after godliness"; you become godly by the edification process, and the adversary hates doctrine because godliness gets accomplished by doctrine

Provisions and God's Order

- The hands-on provision is the word of truth as a whole and, in particular, its right division, acknowledging Romans to Philemon as the containment of the body of truth for your godliness

L7

Essential Doctrine Number Two: Israel and the Mystery *Romans 11:25; Romans 9–11 Surveyed; I Timothy 1 and 4; Romans 16:17; Ephesians 4*

Essential Doctrine Number Two (Romans 11:25)

- Lesson 7 begins the second of the six essential doctrines: the issue of Israel and the mystery, identified from Romans 11:25
- Ignorance of this doctrine causes problems in Christianity today — even for those who understand the dispensation of grace; Paul's concern for them is "lest ye should be wise in your own conceits"
- The particular aspect focused on is a blindness in part that has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in

Anticipated Misunderstanding: Biblical, but Not Dispensational

- The Satanic policy of evil seeks doctrinal corruption so members of the Body of Christ do not grow and mature: to have you be biblical, but not dispensational — all wrapped up in Israel's program

Teachers of the Law and Doctrines of Devils (I Timothy 1 and 4)

- The law is the Word of God, but not the Word of God to us, for us and about us today in the dispensation of grace

Divisions and Offenses vs. Knitting Together

- Ephesians 4 ends with a knitting together, the exact opposite of what the policy of evil is after; unity comes by the communication of sound doctrine — doctrine unifies, service without sound doctrine divides

L8

Wise in Your Own Conceits: Knowing the Time *Romans 11:25; Proverbs 3 and 26; Romans 11–13; Romans 15; Ephesians 1*

A Common Problem amongst Grace Folks

- Being wise in your own conceits is a common problem among members of the Body of Christ who understand right division; at Romans 11:25 Paul emphasizes the essential nature of this aspect of the doctrine

Conceit and Wisdom (Proverbs 3 and 26)

- Conceit is thinking more highly of yourself than you ought — not just pride, but thinking more capability for yourself and almost more right to things than you ought

Romans 11 and 12: Not Thinking Improperly about Ourselves

- God's program with Israel is not over; through the olive trees Paul explains God's capacity to restore Israel to their original position

Knowing the Time

- This dispensation of grace isn't a permanent situation; you have to understand what Paul teaches here so that you have the proper viewpoint about the time you're living in
- Israel's program is temporarily set aside, not abolished, so you don't have the guarantee of another day; God could end this dispensation of grace any moment

Learning from Israel's Program (Romans 15; Ephesians 1)

- Another detriment of being wise in your own conceits is failing to gain the benefits of understanding Israel's program; things "written aforetime" were "written for our learning" — not for our obedience

L9

Accursed from Christ: Romans 9 and 10 Surveyed *Romans 9:1–5; Matthew 3; Acts 1–9; Romans 9:6–10:21*

Something Has Happened to Israel (Romans 9:1–5)

- Being "accursed from Christ" is Israel's situation in this dispensation of grace: a cutting off of Israel from God's dealings
- To Paul God revealed a new dispensation of Gentile grace, the mystery of Christ, and the temporary suspension of His former program with the nation Israel

The Kingdom at Hand

- John could say "at hand" because a series of time schedules had been given to Israel — a particular one to Daniel at the beginning of the 5th course of punishment
- By the time of the Messiah's rejection, 98% of that time schedule had been fulfilled; in Mark 1 the Lord says it is fulfilled and the kingdom is at hand

The Epoch-Making Event (Acts 9)

- God cuts off His dealings with Israel, but not permanently, and turns to the Gentiles — putting Jew and Gentile at the same level and forming a new creation, the church: the mystery of Christ, kept hidden since before the world began

Romans 9:6–10:21: Anticipated Misunderstandings

- Romans 10 shows Israel responsible for their own stumbling: they heard, and they knew; they refused to believe

L10

God's Zeal for Israel's Fulness *Romans 11: Not Cast Away but Blinded; Provoke Them to Jealousy; Redeeming the Time*

The Special Aspect: God's Zeal for Israel's Fulness

- Lesson 10 is the final lesson on essential doctrine number two, focused on a special aspect of the doctrine in Romans 11
- God has not changed His mind: "the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance." The church, the Body of Christ, is for a secret purpose — not a replacement for His program with Israel
- Israel's fulness is yet to come, and God has a zeal for it; we need the same zeal for what He does today and will do when He resumes Israel's program

Not Cast Away, but Blinded (Romans 11:1–10)

- God has not cast them away — He has blinded them, which is far different; while this dispensation of grace is in effect they will not see the fulfillment of His program with them

The Last Piece of Concrete: a Temporary Program

- From verse 11 down to verse 29 Paul makes sure we understand this dispensation of Gentile grace is only a temporary program — not that its results are temporary, or our membership in the Body of Christ

The Olive Tree and "all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:16–29)

- The firstfruit guaranteed the acceptance of the culmination: Israel's program started, has been suspended, and its culmination is yet to come; in the tree illustration the Lord Himself is the root
- The blindness in part is only temporary; when the fulness of the Gentiles comes in, we are taken out of here and Israel's program resumes. Paul's "all Israel shall be saved" is the program salvation

L11

Godly Sanctification: Looking at It Like God Does *I Corinthians 10:1–6; Justification, Sanctification and Exaltation; the Liberty of Chapters 8–10*

The Third Essential Doctrine

- The third essential doctrine is called godly sanctification: a focus on our sanctified position in Christ, but especially on understanding and appreciating the goal of that position

Israel's Sanctification Out of Egypt (I Corinthians 10:1–6)

- Paul's example concerns Israel's attitude toward their sanctification: they had a poor appreciation for it, and so hankered to re-involve themselves in things they had enjoyed
- It is called godly sanctification because we need to look at our sanctification like God does; Paul doesn't want the Corinthians ignorant that they are doing the very same kind of thing Israel did

I Corinthians: Putting the Sanctified Position into Practice

- They were sanctified in Christ Jesus the moment they trusted Christ, yet that was the part of their identity in Christ they had the most problems with

Justification, Sanctification and Exaltation

- Our full position in Christ is composed of justification, sanctification and exaltation, and you learn them in order: sanctification won't make much sense until you understand justification

- You'll never really appreciate your exaltation with Christ if you're ignorant of your sanctification; that is one of the major reasons Satan wants that doctrine suppressed

L12

Dead to Sin, Alive unto God *Romans 6:1–13, 6:14, 7:1–6 and 6:19–23: The Fundamentals of Our Sanctified Position*

Sanctification: Our Relationship to God's Holiness

- Beginning in Romans 6, Paul teaches that justification and reconciliation are not the only things that happened when you trusted Christ; the second greatest thing God ever did to you, sanctification, took place at the same moment

Romans 6:1–4: Dead to Sin

- The moment you trusted Christ, the Holy Spirit baptized you into Christ's death, burial and resurrection, producing the functional death of sin's mastership in your mortal body; this is not water baptism

Romans 6:5–13: Alive unto God

- Romans 6:11: count, acknowledge, reckon being dead unto sin and alive unto God as your identity — the fundamental understanding of your sanctified position
- Sin hasn't been eradicated and the lusts are still there, but you don't have to obey them; you can yield your members as instruments of righteousness unto God

Not Under the Law, but Under Grace (Romans 6:14; 7:1–6)

- Our position in Christ will only be put into practice when we recognize we're under grace and God isn't dealing with us like He dealt with the nation Israel

Fruit unto Holiness (Romans 6:19–23)

- The real jewel in the crown of sanctification is fruit unto holiness — a capacity you never possessed or could have possessed, but now possess

L13

Zeal for Our Godly Sanctification *Romans 6–7; Galatians 2; Ephesians 2, 4 and 5; Philippians 1; Titus 2: Godliness Is Godlikeness*

The Focal Point: Zeal and Appreciation

- Only two lessons remain on this third essential doctrine, lessons 13 and 14; the zeal, appreciation, ambition and enthusiasm we ought to have is really the focal point in the doctrine of our godly sanctification

Living unto God, No Longer unto the Adversary

- To put our position in Christ into practice we need to be under grace and not under the law system; what we have now is fruit unto holiness

Created in Christ Jesus unto Good Works (Ephesians 2 and 4)

- The baptism of the Holy Spirit did the working, and we were created in Christ Jesus unto good works — the same kind Christ would produce, since He is in us producing them

Abhorrence: Darkness and Light (Ephesians 5)

- Not merely in darkness and now in the light: you were darkness, and now you're light in the Lord; that light is also designed to repudiate the adversary's

course for this world

Godliness Is Godlikeness

- Godliness means God-likeness: think like God does, do things God's way, and labor with Him in what He's doing; the goal of edification is to produce godliness
- Our sanctification is godly sanctification because God set us apart unto Himself to put His divine nature on display; ungodliness puts Satan's nature on display

L14 Called unto Liberty to Live Godly *Galatians 5; I Corinthians 8, 9 and 10:1–14; Exodus 15–19; Ephesians 5*

Called unto Liberty (Galatians 5; Philippians 2)

- When God sanctifies, He provides liberty to do something for Him consistent with what He's doing; the reason He's given you the liberty is for you to live godly

I Corinthians 8 and 9: Paul's Example

- The strong in the faith realized that an idol is nothing in the world, but lacked the understanding that their liberty is to put God's divine nature on display — which would give up that liberty for the weaker brother

The Two Hallmark Features

- The two primary objectives of godly sanctification: put the divine nature on display, and repudiate former participation in the Satanic policy of evil and the course for this world — both to God's honor and glory

Israel as Our Example (I Corinthians 10:5–14)

- Israel had a godly sanctification, but the edification of it didn't take place with them; Paul is afraid the same thing is happening to the Corinthians

Loving Our Godly Sanctification (Ephesians 5)

- Sanctification is by grace through faith just as justification is; God responds differently to us today than He did to Israel because He is dealing with us on the basis of grace
- What was lacking with Israel ought not be lacking with us today in this dispensation of grace; we ought to love our godly sanctification

L15 Spiritual Gifts: You Can't Afford to Be Ignorant *I Corinthians 12:1–3; Exodus 34:10; Psalm 74; Acts 2, 10–11: Signs Belong to Israel*

The Fourth of the Six Essential Doctrines

- This lesson begins the fourth of the six essential doctrines, the one dealing with spiritual gifts; the first three were Pauline authority and godly edification, Israel and the mystery, and godly sanctification out of I Corinthians 10

Why You Can't Afford to Be Ignorant (I Corinthians 12:1–3)

- You can't go by what you see or hear; ignorance of exactly what God says makes you an easy candidate for deception and really guarantees you will be deceived
- If you don't rightly divide the word of truth and keep God's program with Israel separate from this dispensation of grace, spiritual gifts will be confusing —

and the adversary is the author of confusion

Signs Belong to Israel (Exodus 34:10; Psalm 74)

- 98 to 99% of all references to signs, wonders, miracles and spiritual phenomena are recorded in the portion of God's word dealing with His program with Israel

Tongues: Israel's Gift

- The gift of tongues is Israel's gift: it was the way they would carry out the administration of God's righteous rule once the kingdom was established, speaking in all the languages of the nations

We Walk by Faith; Gentiles Given Israel's Gift

- Walking by sight was appropriate, natural and expected in God's program with Israel; the natural thing for us in this dispensation of grace is to "walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7)

L16

Satan Counterfeits the Power of God *I Corinthians 12:1–3: Dumb Idols and the Counterfeit Gift of Tongues*

The Most Devastating Ignorance

- Recap: 98 to 99% of Bible references to spiritual phenomena pertain to God's program with Israel, natural there because of the covenant in Exodus 34:10; from God they are not a natural thing in this dispensation of grace
- Satan can counterfeit spiritual gifts with such deceptiveness that you cannot tell the difference by what you see; the only way to tell is sound doctrine, especially in I Corinthians 12, 13 and 14

Verse 2: Carried Away unto Dumb Idols

- The satanic policy of evil produced genuine spiritual phenomena among the idol-worshiping Gentiles, and they all thought they were worshiping the true and living God

Counterfeits in Israel's Program

- Counterfeiting God's power is one of Satan's favorite things to do, both in God's program with Israel and in this dispensation of grace

Yet to Come When Israel's Program Resumes

- Satan has not been stripped of his power to counterfeit; II Thessalonians 2 describes the working of Satan in the day of the Lord "with all power and signs and lying wonders"

Verse 3: The Counterfeit Gift of Tongues

- Once God is out of the spiritual phenomenon business, the only spiritual phenomena in this dispensation of grace will be the adversary's counterfeits

L17

Diversities of Gifts, Administrations and Operations *I Corinthians 12:4–27: The Role of Each Member of the Godhead*

Essential Doctrine Number Four

- This is essential doctrine number four, the doctrine of spiritual gifts Paul sets forth in I Corinthians 12, 13 and 14; two lessons have covered only the first three verses of chapter 12

The Focus: Chapter 13

- The focus is especially the latter half of chapter 13, where Paul deals with the temporary nature of these manifestations of the Holy Spirit; they would cease in the very lifetime of the Corinthians

Verses 4–6: Each Member of the Godhead

- Verses 4–6 set forth the role of each member of the Godhead: God the Holy Spirit (verse 4), God the Son (verse 5), God the Father (verse 6); verses 7–31 amplify those three issues
- The Holy Spirit is not operating as a maverick; the gifts fit the goal of a master plan God the Father drew up, and all of it is subservient to the operations He wants accomplished

The Gifts and the Body (Verses 7–27)

- The gifts are designed to function not independently but in a cooperative effort to serve the same Lord, like pieces of a puzzle that fit together

A More Excellent Way Coming

- Something more excellent than having any or all of these gifts was to be provided; they were all temporary, and the one best operation was to be replaced by a much more excellent way

L18

Ranking the Gifts by God's Operations *I Corinthians 12:28–31: Covet Earnestly the Best Gifts*

Diversities of Operations: The Focal Point

- In verses 28–31 the diversities of operations of God the Father, "which worketh all in all," become the focal point, and Paul ranks the gifts for the Corinthians

At Least Five Operations of God (Verse 28)

- Verse 28 gives a first, second, third, an 'after that' and a 'then' — at least five operations, ranked from best downward; listed straight down there are eight, but for now they are treated as five
- 1st: apostles, prophets and teachers — the communication of the Word of God, the first and foremost operation of God; by verse 31 these are the best gifts
- 5th: diversities of tongues — a final sign to unbelieving Israel, given at the beginning of the fifth course of punishment to testify His displeasure; it has no role in the church

A More Excellent Way

- All these spiritual gifts are going to be done away, because some of the operations don't last throughout this dispensation of grace; for those that continue, a far better provision is coming in
- All 13 verses of chapter 13 amplify on it: the more excellent way is the completed written word of God

L19

A More Excellent Way: Charity Never Faileth *I Corinthians 12:31–13:10: The Gifts Done Away; That Which Is Perfect*

Counterfeits and the More Excellent Way

- God did have spiritual gifts and spiritual phenomena at the beginning of this dispensation of grace, but replaced what they did with what Paul calls "a

more excellent way" (end of 12:31)

Five Operations; A Superior Replacement

- The five operations: communication of God's Word (apostles, prophets, teachers); confirmation of God dealing with the Gentiles (miracles); confirmation of God turning from Israel; local assembly orderliness (helps, governments); a final sign to unbelieving Israel (tongues)
- The gifts were a less excellent way; the completed written Word of God accomplishes all these in a superior manner, mainly because it is all resident within one handleable entity

The Most Excellent Ministry of the Holy Ghost (Verses 1–7)

- Chapter 13 is in two parts, verses 1–7 and 8–13; verses 1–7 deal with the most excellent ministry the Holy Spirit has, which exceeds the possession of any spiritual gift

That Which Is Perfect (Verses 9–10)

- "That which is perfect" is the antithesis of the partial knowledge of verse 9; it is neuter — not "He which is perfect," not a person — and not the kingdom, which is God's program with Israel
- It is the completed revelation from God in written form, the Bible, completed through the ministry of the Apostle Paul; since then the only spiritual gifts in operation have been counterfeits

L20 That Which Is Perfect Has Come *I Corinthians 13:11–13; Ephesians 1 and 4; Colossians 1–2; II Timothy 3–4*

Appreciating the More Excellent Way

- Essential doctrine number four continues: Paul underscores the naturalness of the less excellent way of spiritual gifts being replaced by the more excellent way of the completed written word of God

Verses 11–13: Childish Things, Face to Face, What Abides

- Verse 11 is an illustrative analogy of mental growth from a child to a man; mental growth takes place on the base of knowledge, and the childish things were the spiritual gifts

Ephesians: The Gifts in the Past Tense

- The gifts would be done away in the Corinthians' own lifetime, so in Paul's too; in Ephesians, written much later with Paul in prison, Paul testifies that that which is perfect has arrived
- Ephesians 4:11 says "he gave some" — past tense, not 'he gives'; God wasn't giving them anymore when Paul was writing Ephesians

Colossians and II Timothy: The Word of God Fulfilled

- Fulfill means fully fill: Paul in prison was fulfilling the Word of God (Colossians 1:24–25), and 'fulfilled' is the same word as 'perfect' in I Corinthians 13; it wasn't the Apostle John who wrote the last of the Word of God
- Paul didn't die until that which is perfect had come; God has not given a single spiritual gift since that which is perfect came

L21 The Gifts No Longer in Operation *Ephesians 4; I Timothy 3 and 5; II Timothy 4; I Corinthians 14 Begun*

The Last Two Lessons on the Fourth Doctrine

- These are the last two lessons on the fourth of the six essential doctrines, spiritual gifts; the passages confirm the gifts being done away, just like Paul said
- Ceasing involves an event that stops a course of action: tongues was the final sign to unbelieving Israel, and once that event takes place, the gift of tongues ceases

Ephesians 4: "He Gave Some"

- Ephesians 4:7–16 deals with the fulness of God's provision for the edification of the Body of Christ; the giving of the gifts for the communication of God's Word is put in the past tense in verse 11

Bishops Qualified by Edification (I Timothy 3; Titus 1)

- In I Timothy 3 Paul does not speak of bishops as having a gift; if God were still giving the supernatural gift of pastor-teacher, there would be no need for such a passage

Healing Gone: Timothy, Trophimus, Luke

- Paul had to leave Trophimus sick — not for lack of faith; he couldn't heal him because the spiritual gift was gone

What Abides; I Corinthians 14 Begun

- Chapter 14 gives further corrective doctrine to stop the effects of the satanic policy of evil in their midst; God is not the author of the confusion, so either the Corinthians or the adversary is — they are cooperating with the adversary

L22

Counterfeit Spiritual Phenomena Continuing On *I Corinthians 14; Acts 28; II Corinthians 11; Colossians 2; I and II Timothy*

The Final Lesson on Essential Doctrine Number Four

- This is the final lesson on essential doctrine number four, capping it off with the reality of counterfeit spiritual gifts and spiritual phenomena continuing on in this dispensation of grace by the satanic policy of evil

The Confusion behind I Corinthians 14

- Verses 2–12 show the foolishness of speaking in an unknown tongue in the church and of not speaking to edification; a local church is a classroom for the communication of sound doctrine resulting in godly edification

Tongues: A Sign to Unbelieving Israel

- God had one final sign to give Israel, expressing His displeasure and leaving them without excuse — the gift of tongues; He had done that earlier when the fifth course of punishment began
- From the moment Paul made the Acts 28 declaration, the gift of tongues ceased; God is out of the spiritual phenomenon business for the balance of this dispensation from the very time Paul's ministry concluded

Counterfeits in Paul's Epistles

- In this dispensation of grace Satan operates completely differently than in God's program with Israel; the first thing he is after is to corrupt the truth so spiritual edification can't take place

Shun It; Stick with the More Excellent Way

- The Spirit speaks in the word of truth, which you rightly divide (II Timothy 2:15); the counterfeit of the power of God will continue on — shun it, refuse it,

avoid it, and stick with that which is perfect

L23

Not Deliverance, but Capacity to Endure *II Corinthians 1, 4, 12; Philippians 3; Colossians 1; II Thessalonians 1; II Timothy 1–2*

The Fifth of the Six Essential Doctrines

- Lesson 23 begins the fifth of the six essential doctrines; the fifth one has to do with sufferings, introduced by Paul's "we would not, brethren, have you ignorant" of the trouble in Asia (II Corinthians 1:8)

Why It Is an Essential Doctrine

- God wants us to look at sufferings differently in this dispensation of grace than Israel would have looked at them in God's program with them; and no one by nature wants to suffer

Not Deliverance, but Capacity to Endure

- In II Corinthians 1:8–10 there was an appreciation for the power of God, not in delivering Paul from the suffering; the issue today isn't deliverance from sufferings, it's capacity to endure them
- You don't expect deliverance from them or not to suffer; God provides the more excellent issue of the capacity to endure them, to His honor and glory

Rejoicing in Them; Two Categories

- Look at sufferings as God does: two categories — the sufferings of this present time, which are common to man, and the sufferings of Christ
- From Romans 8:18 Paul holds out no deliverance from the sufferings of this present time; God equips you to patiently endure — fortification of your inner man

L24

Two Categories of Suffering — and a Third *Romans 8; II Corinthians 1, 4; Deuteronomy 28; Leviticus 26; II Chronicles 7:14*

Two Categories — and a Third

- There are two categories of suffering, two places from which sufferings can come; there is also a third, which will be brought out later
- The sufferings of this present time (Romans 8:18) are common to the sin-cursed creation, produced by the bondage of corruption — sickness, disease, accident, crime; all creation experiences them
- The sufferings of Christ are a special category, produced by the satanic policy of evil and directed against the members of the church, the body of Christ — suffering for Jesus' sake (II Corinthians 1:5)
- The lesson adds, "actually, there's a third category": "You can suffer because of your own stupidity" — dealt with in connection with both categories, "not dealt with by Paul so much as a separate category"

Israel's Program: Both Categories Avoidable

- Under the law contract — an if-then performance contract — comply and Israel avoids sufferings of both categories; don't comply and they get both categories and even more (Deuteronomy 28)

No Promise of Avoidance Today

- God holds out no promise today that we can avoid them; you are not to expect or request deliverance from the sufferings of this present time, and

He's made no promise to curse you for not performing

- II Chronicles 7:14 pertains only to God's program with Israel: "my people" there is members of the nation of Israel, not of the church, the body of Christ

L25

Sufferings Banished Only in Israel's Program *Isaiah 11, 33, 65; Hebrews 6; Revelation 20–21; Romans 8:18–39*

The Two Categories and Israel's Program

- The two categories — the sufferings of this present time, common to man from the bondage of corruption, and the sufferings of Christ, suffering for the Lord's sake — apply in God's program with Israel also; Israel had the opportunity to avoid both
- Only through the fulfillment of God's program with Israel are the two categories banished — not in this dispensation of grace; this present time has suspended God's program with Israel

Our Situation in the Dispensation of Grace

- We live in the dispensation of Gentile grace; God is suspending His program with Israel, not replacing it — the gifts and calling of God to Israel are still without repentance
- The sufferings of the bondage of corruption continue as your natural lot, with no promised deliverance no matter how you live; the satanic policy of evil works against you with an even greater hatred than for the remnant of Israel

The Effectual Working of God's Word

- The excellent power is God's Word operating within the inner man; the doctrines are designed to produce endurance to the honor and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then a desire for the fellowship of His sufferings and rejoicing in them

Romans 8:18–39

- Verses 18–34 are designed to handle the sufferings of this present time; verses 35–39 introduce the second category, the sufferings of Christ from the policy of evil

L26

The Excellency of the Power *Romans 8:35–39; II Corinthians 1, 4, 12; Ephesians 3*

Not Deliverance, but the Excellency of the Power

- In this final lesson on the fifth essential doctrine, the issue is not deliverance but capacity to endure, to God's honor and glory — the excellency of the power of God's Word operating within our souls and spirits

The Sufferings of Christ (Romans 8:35–39)

- The things in verse 35 are not common to man as natural results of the bondage of corruption; usually there is hatred behind them, especially peril, sword and persecution

The God of All Comfort (II Corinthians 1)

- In verse 4, "any trouble" includes the sufferings of this present time, and even "that third category, which is a natural byproduct of ignoring the doctrine, which is your stupidity"; II Corinthians gives examples of the Corinthians suffering trouble for their stupidity

Treasure in Earthen Vessels (II Corinthians 4)

- The earthen vessels can easily be dashed, easily be broken, so that the excellency of the power of God is on display — His power operating in the inner man, something the angelic beings never understood could take place

My Strength Is Made Perfect in Weakness (II Corinthians 12)

- The excellency of His strength can only be made perfect, fully developed and put on display in weakness; verse 9 — "my strength is made perfect in weakness" — is the message that's to go back

The Power That Worketh in Us (Ephesians 3)

- Paul prays that the Ephesians would not cave in under the satanic policy of evil; the greatest display of God's power is the effectual working of His word within the soul and spirit, far superior to God putting His hand between you and your problems

L27

Physical Death, the Rapture, and the Lord's Day *I Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:2: Essential Nature, Attacks, and Physical Death Defined*

The Sixth and Final Essential Doctrine

- This is the sixth occurrence of Paul's unique expression introducing an essential doctrine; the passage dealt with primarily is I Thessalonians 4:13 down through verse 11 of chapter 5, taken in four lessons
- Physical death, the rapture, and the Lord's Day are three issues "wrapped up into one package"; they are taken in the order they come in the passage

Three Issues in I Thessalonians 4–5

- "the times and the seasons" (5:1) concern the resumption of God's program with Israel and the coming of the day of the Lord; there is a coming of the Lord associated with both programs, and it is essential to keep them distinct

"that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope"

- The issue is not that you sorrow not — when physical death becomes an issue to a Christian, the sorrow is genuine — but that you sorrow not even as others that have no hope

The Blessed Hope Kept Blessed

- The doctrine makes sure our blessed hope, the rapture, is as blessed as God designed it to be; in Titus 2 the Lord's coming for us at the end of this dispensation is called the blessed hope

Commonly and Favorably Attacked

- This doctrine is "commonly and favorably" attacked by the policy of evil; some Thessalonians were taken in by an extremely clever tactic — a counterfeit epistle of the Apostle Paul

L28

Absent from the Body, Present with the Lord *I Thessalonians 4:13–15; Luke 16; Psalm 16; II Corinthians 5; Philippians 1; I Corinthians 15*

"we which are alive *and* remain"

- This lesson and two more complete the sixth of the six essential doctrines, which begins with what takes place at physical death and proceeds to what takes place at the rapture
- There is a particular place designated for the soul or spirit, depending on

whether it is justified or not — and a dispensational thing to understand about where it has gone

Before the Cross: Luke 16

- Abraham's bosom is not the third heaven but a compartment down in hell in the heart of the earth; that lower part of the earth is divided into two sections, with a great gulf between them — the shaft of the pit

Psalm 16: Not Left There

- When David died he went to the comfort section, Abraham's bosom, but knew he wouldn't be left there; his release from hell would be based on what the Holy One of Israel would do

At Home in the Body, Absent from the Lord (II Corinthians 5)

- Right now we are at home in the body and absent from the Lord — where we are supposed to be; if physical death takes place before the rapture, the soul and spirit goes present with the Lord

Paradise: a Locale in the Third Heaven

- Paradise is not just another name for the third heaven but a particular locale in it — where a member of the Body of Christ goes at death

L29

Our Mystery Resurrection and the Last Trump *I Thessalonians 4:14–18; I Corinthians 15:20–57; Jeremiah 25; Psalm 47: the Timing of the Resurrection*

We Shall Not Prevent Them (I Thessalonians 4:14–17)

- The concern now is the timing of the resurrection: when the Lord returns for us, those who died in Christ throughout this dispensation of grace are resurrected at that time
- Not preventing them means we don't go ahead of them and get things in advance; without the resurrection we would get a glorified, immortal body before they did
- This coming and this resurrection are part of the revelation of the mystery committed to Paul, not found in the prophetic scriptures — so he says "by the word of the Lord", not "As it is written"

The Order of the Resurrections (I Corinthians 15:20–28)

- "they that are Christ's at his coming" is not His coming at the end of this dispensation of grace, but at the end of the day of the Lord, when He establishes the kingdom

"at the last trump"

- The last trump is not last in a series of trumps — a common mistake, going to the Book of the Revelation — but the announcement of the end
- When the Lord ends this dispensation of grace, He simultaneously announces the beginning of His day; the last trump is the end of His long-suffering and grace to the world

L30

Delivered from the Wrath to Come *I Thessalonians 5:1–11; II Thessalonians 2:1–8: No Need of the Times and the Seasons*

Delivered from the Wrath to Come

- By the Lord's coming for us we are delivered from the wrath to come: the

dead in Christ resurrected, those alive and remaining changed and caught up together to meet the Lord in the air

- The end of this dispensation of grace and the beginning of the Lord's day, with the resumption of His program with Israel, are "simultaneous events"

"ye have no need that I write unto you"

- We have no need to be written unto because we are not going to be here; the times and seasons are written to the nation of Israel as a whole and particularly the remnant of Israel

Children of the Day, Not Appointed to Wrath

- "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation" — deliverance from the wrath; Paul knows this doctrine is going to be attacked

What Withholdeth: the Mystery of Iniquity

- As the lesson puts it, "the mystery of iniquity is a reference to what's going on in this dispensation of grace": instead of the prophesied day of His wrath, God responds with long-suffering and grace and the formation of the one new man
- God is the one withholding, by what He is doing in forming the one new man; not until He takes him out of the way will the Lord deal with that other man — "until he be taken out of the way" is the rapture

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

Israel's Program vs. the Dispensation of Grace

The Bible contains two plans and purposes of God, one with the nation Israel and one with the new creation, the church, the body of Christ; they aren't the same, and they don't go on at the same time. Israel's program isn't abolished but temporarily set aside; Romans through Philemon is the portion of God's Word dealing with this dispensation of grace, and Hebrews through Revelation follows in connection with the resumption of Israel's program yet to come.

Being Scriptural vs. Rightly Dividing

You can be scriptural and not produce godly edifying; you must rightly divide the word of truth and recognize that not everything in the Bible is about us today. The law is the Word of God, but not the Word of God to us, for us or about us today in the dispensation of grace.

Walking by Sight vs. Walking by Faith

On the basis of the covenant in Exodus 34:10, signs, wonders, miracles and spiritual phenomena were natural in God's program with Israel, and Israel was taught to walk by sight. The norm for this dispensation of grace is walking by faith, not by sight.

The Less Excellent Way vs. the More Excellent Way

The spiritual gifts are the less excellent way, replaced by the more excellent way of the completed written word of God. “That which is perfect” is neuter, not a person, and not the kingdom; it is the completed revelation from God in written form, the Bible, completed through the ministry of the Apostle Paul himself.

Sufferings: Not Deliverance but Capacity to Endure

The issue today in this dispensation isn’t deliverance from sufferings; it’s capacity to endure them. Sufferings break down into two categories: the sufferings of this present time, common to man from the bondage of corruption, and the sufferings of Christ, a special category produced by the policy of evil. The lesson adds, “actually, there’s a third category”: “You can suffer because of your own stupidity,” a category “not dealt with by Paul so much as a separate category”; later it is called “a natural byproduct of ignoring the doctrine.”

The Rapture vs. the Lord’s Coming in Israel’s Program

The rapture that ends this dispensation of grace is kept distinct from the Lord’s return at the end of His day; rightly dividing, recognizing the two programs, is the key to keeping them distinct. The end of this dispensation of grace and the beginning of the Lord’s day, with the resumption of His program with Israel, are simultaneous events.

Justification vs. Sanctification

Justification is the identification in Christ that produces harmony between God’s righteousness and His justice; sanctification is the identification in Christ that produces compatibility with God’s holiness. Walk and conduct pertain to sanctification and have no effect upon justification.

Key Scripture References

Romans 1:13	The first essential doctrine; “was let hitherto” is Satanic opposition
Romans 6:1–13	The fundamentals of our sanctified position in Christ; the baptism is not water baptism but puts you into Christ
Romans 8:18–23	The sufferings of this present time, common to all men under the bondage of corruption
Romans 8:35–39	Paul introduces the second category, the sufferings of Christ from the policy of evil
Romans 11:13	Not the man but the office: Paul declares the position he holds in the plan and purpose of God
Romans 11:25	Blindness in part is only temporary; when the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, we are taken out and Israel’s program resumes
Romans 15:4	Things written aforetime: for our learning, not our obedience
I Corinthians 10:1–11	Paul makes an example of Israel in time past, written for our admonition in

	this dispensation of grace
I Corinthians 12:1–3	A man claiming to speak by the Spirit of God called Jesus accursed by a counterfeit gift of tongues
I Corinthians 12:28–31	At least five operations of God, ranked from best downward; and yet a more excellent way
I Corinthians 13:8–10	“That which is perfect”: the completed revelation from God in written form, the Bible
I Corinthians 15:51–52	At the last trump the dead in Christ are raised incorruptible and we who are alive are changed
II Corinthians 1:4–8	The fifth essential doctrine: the trouble of verse 4 defined as the sufferings of Christ; capacity to endure, not deliverance
II Corinthians 10:8	The Lord gave Paul authority to produce edification; it must be recognized and submitted to
I Thessalonians 4:13–17	Sorrow not as others that have no hope; a resurrection and the rapture when the Lord returns
I Thessalonians 5:1–10	The times and seasons concern the day of the Lord; not appointed to wrath: deliverance from the wrath
II Thessalonians 2:6–7	God withholds by forming the one new man; “taken out of the way” is the rapture