

FOUNDATIONS

CORE TRUTHS
TO BUILD YOUR LIFE ON

TOM HOLLADAY & KAY WARREN





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FOUNDATIONS PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE | COURSE ONE

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ISBN: 978-1-4228-0454-4

Printed in the United States of America.





CONTENTS

COURSE ONE

Foreword by Rick Warren.....	7
How to Use This Guide.....	9
Introductory Study.....	13
The Bible Part 1.....	27
The Bible Part 2.....	47
God Part 1	61
God Part 2	75
Jesus: Part 1	95
Jesus Part 2.....	111
The Holy Spirit Part 1	131
The Holy Spirit Part 2	143
Endnotes.....	156
Resources Available.....	158
Memory Cards	160







FOREWORD

WHAT FOUNDATIONS WILL DO FOR YOU

I once built a log cabin in the Sierra mountains of Northern California. After ten backbreaking weeks of clearing forest land, all I had to show for my effort was a leveled and squared concrete foundation. I was discouraged, but my father, who built over a hundred church buildings in his lifetime, said, “Cheer up, son! Once you’ve laid the foundation, the most important work is behind you.” I’ve since learned that this is a principle for all of life: you can never build anything larger than the foundation can handle.

The foundation of any building determines both its size and strength, and the same is true of our lives. A life built on a false or faulty foundation will never reach the height that God intends for it to reach. If you skimp on your foundation, you limit your life.

That’s why this material is so vitally important. **FOUNDATIONS** is the biblical basis of the purpose-driven life. You must understand these life-changing truths to enjoy God’s purposes for you. This curriculum has been taught, tested, and refined over ten years with thousands of people at Saddleback Church. I’ve often said that **FOUNDATIONS** is the most important class in our church.

WHY YOU NEED A BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR LIFE

- *It’s the source of personal growth and stability.* So many of the problems in our lives are caused by faulty thinking. That’s why Jesus said the truth will set us free and why Colossians 2:7 says, “Plant your roots in Christ and let him be the foundation for your life” (CEV).
- *It’s the underpinning of a healthy family.* Proverbs 24:3 says, “Homes are built on the foundation of wisdom and understanding” (TEV). In a world that is constantly changing, strong families are based on God’s unchanging truth.



- *It's the starting point of leadership.* You can never lead people farther than you've gone yourself. Proverbs 16:12 says, "*Sound leadership has a moral foundation*" (The Message).
- *It's the basis for your eternal reward in Heaven.* Paul said, "*Whatever we build on that foundation will be tested by fire on the day of judgment . . . We will be rewarded if our building is left standing*" (1 Corinthians 3:12–14 CEV).
- *God's truth is the only foundation that will last.* The Bible tells us that "*the sound, wholesome teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . are the foundation for a godly life*" (1 Timothy 6:3 NLT) and that "God's truth stands firm like a foundation stone" (2 Timothy 2:19a NLT).

Jesus concluded his Sermon on the Mount with a story illustrating this important truth. Two houses were built on different foundations. The house built on sand was destroyed when rain, floods, and wind swept it away. But the house built on the foundation of solid rock remained firm. He declared, "*Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like the wise man who built his house on the rock*" (Matthew 7:24). The Message paraphrase of this verse shows how important this is: "*These words I speak to you are not incidental additions to your life . . . They are foundational words, words to build a life on.*"

I cannot recommend this curriculum more highly to you. It has changed our church, our staff, and thousands of lives. For too long, too many have thought of theology as something that doesn't relate to our everyday lives, but **FOUNDATIONS** explodes that mold. This study makes it clear that the foundation of what we do and say in each day of our lives is what we believe. I am thrilled that this in-depth, life-changing curriculum is now being made available for everyone to use.

—RICK WARREN, AUTHOR OF *THE PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE*





HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Get ready for a radical statement, a pronouncement sure to make you wonder if we've lost our grip on reality. *There is nothing more exciting than doctrine!*

Track with us for a second on this. Doctrine is the study of what God has to say. What God has to say is always the truth. The truth gives me the right perspective on myself and on the world around me. The right perspective results in decisions of faith and experiences of joy. *That* is exciting!

The objective of **FOUNDATIONS** is to present the basic truths of the Christian faith in a simple, systematic, and life-changing way. In other words, to teach doctrine. The question is, "Why?" In a world in which people's lives are filled with crying needs, why teach doctrine? Because biblical doctrine has the answer to many of those crying needs! Please don't see this as a clash between needs-oriented and doctrine-oriented teaching. The truth is we need both. We all need to learn how to deal with worry in our lives. One of the keys to dealing with worry is an understanding of the biblical doctrine of the hope of Heaven. Couples need to know what the Bible says about how to have a better marriage. They also need a deeper understanding of the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, giving the assurance of God's love upon which all healthy relationships are built. Parents need to understand the Bible's practical insights for raising kids. They also need an understanding of the sovereignty of God, a certainty of the fact that God is in control that will carry them through the inevitable ups and downs of being a parent. Doctrinal truth meets our deepest needs.

Welcome to a study that will have a lifelong impact on the way that you look at everything around you and above you and within you. As the writers of this study, our goal is to help you to develop a "Christian worldview." A Christian worldview is the ability to see everything thorough the filter of God's truth. The time that you dedicate ot this study will lay a foundation for new perspectives that will have tremendous benefits for the rest of your life. This study will help you to:



- Lessen the stress in everyday life
- See the real potential for growth that the Lord has given you
- Increase your sense of security in an often troubling world
- Find new tools for helping others (your friends, your family, your children) find the right perspective on life
- Fall more deeply in love with the Lord

Throughout this study you'll see four types of sidebar sections designed to help you connect with the truths that God tells us about himself, ourselves, and this world.

- **A Fresh Word:** The “big words” of doctrine make many people nervous. Throughout this study we'll take a fresh look at these words, including words such as *omnipotent* and *sovereign*.
- **A Closer Look:** We'll take time to expand on a truth or look at it from a different perspective.
- **Key Personal Perspective:** The truth of doctrine always has a profound impact on our lives. In these sections we'll focus in on that personal impact.
- **Acting on the Truth:** James 1:22 says, “*Do what God's teaching says; when you only listen and do nothing, you are fooling yourselves*” (NCV).

Memory cards: Your guide also includes a memory card for each of the 11 core truths in this study. Each card states the essence of the doctrine on one side, with a key verse concerning that doctrine on the other side.

Discussion questions: You'll find Discussion Questions at the end of each study.

Get ready for God to do incredible things in your life as you begin the adventure of learning more deeply about the most exciting message in the world: the truth about God!









INTRODUCTORY STUDY

LIFE-CHANGE OBJECTIVES

- To trust in the power of God's truth to change your life.
- To anticipate in faith the changes that learning doctrine will make in you.

DEVELOPING A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best.

PHILIPPIANS 1:9-10

But you, dear friends, must continue to build your lives on the foundation of your holy faith.

JUDE 1:20 (NLT)



A FRESH WORD

What Is Christian Doctrine?

Christian doctrine is an _____
of what the _____ about the most
important issues of life.

A working definition of theology is: _____

WHY LEARN DOCTRINE?

Because knowing the truth about God helps me

We are cruel to ourselves if we try to live in this world without knowing the God whose world it is and who runs it. The world becomes a strange, mad, painful place . . . for those who do not know about God.¹

—J. I. PACKER



*Listen carefully to wisdom; set your mind on understanding.
Cry out for wisdom, and beg for understanding. Search for
it like silver, and hunt for it like hidden treasure. Then you will
understand respect for the LORD, and you will find that you
know God.*

PROVERBS 2:2-5 (NCV)

*Knowing God will make you wise;
Knowing God will open your eyes;
Knowing God will give you hope;
Knowing God will help you cope.*
—Kay Warren

Because knowledge is an _____

*Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ,
let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of
repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of
instruction [doctrine] about washings [baptism] and laying on of
hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.*

HEBREWS 6:1-2 (NASB)



Life without a foundation

... until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

EPHESIANS 4:13-14

1. “Tossed back and forth by the waves . . .”

Without truth I am vulnerable to _____.

2. “Blown here and there by every wind of teaching . . .”

Without truth I am victimized by _____.

Life with a foundation

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”

MATTHEW 7:24-25



Because doctrine feeds my soul

In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.

1 TIMOTHY 4:6 (NASB)

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature.

HEBREWS 5:12-14 (NASB)

“And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up.”

ACTS 20:32 (NASB)

Because knowing the truth enables me to serve others

If you give these instructions to the believers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, as you feed yourself spiritually on the words of faith and of the true teaching which you have followed.

1 TIMOTHY 4:6 (GNT)



He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

TITUS 1:9

Because knowing the truth protects against error

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

COLOSSIANS 2:6-8

But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

HEBREWS 5:14

How can we equip ourselves and our kids for survival in a disintegrating culture? With _____ firmly believed, clearly taught, and consistently lived out.





Because how I think determines _____

Be careful what you think, because your thoughts run your life.

PROVERBS 4:23 (NCV)

Because I am commanded to:

1. _____

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

2 TIMOTHY 2:15 (NASB)

Knowing the truth enables you to better *use* the truth.

2. _____

Teach me to live according to your truth, for you are my God, who saves me. I always trust in you.

PSALM 25:5 (GNT)



I have been sent to bring faith to those God has chosen and to teach them to know the truth that shows them how to live godly lives.

TITUS 1:1 (NLT)

3. _____

Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.

1 PETER 3:15 (NASB)

WARNING: KNOWLEDGE ALL BY ITSELF CAN BE VERY DANGEROUS!

Knowledge must be balanced with _____.

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best.

PHILIPPIANS 1:9-10





Warning signs of knowledge without discernment: Knowledge remains theoretical; one person or group becomes a person's exclusive source of knowledge.

Knowledge must be balanced with _____.

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2 PETER 3:18

Warning signs of knowledge without grace: Learning more about God without growing closer to God; legalism.

Knowledge must be balanced with _____.

If I . . . can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge . . . but have not love, I am nothing.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:2

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

1 CORINTHIANS 8:1

Warning signs of knowledge without love: Knowledge leads to intolerance of others; growth in knowledge leads to a growth in pride.



BUILDING A FOUNDATION THAT LASTS // THREE LEVELS OF TRUTH

Here's a brief look at what we'll be studying together. This chart helps you to see the different levels of learning that go along with grasping a truth. Being able to quote a truth does not mean I've fully grasped that truth.

	TO GRASP A DOCTRINE I MUST...	LEARN IT (UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH)	LOVE IT (CHANGE MY PERSPECTIVE)	LIVE IT (APPLY IT TO LIFE)
COURSE 1	THE BIBLE	The Bible is God's perfect guidebook for living.	I can make the right decision.	I will consult the Bible for guidance in my decision about _____.
	GOD	God is bigger and better and closer than I can imagine.	The most important thing about me is what I believe about God.	When I see how great God is, it makes _____ look small.
	JESUS	Jesus is God showing himself to us.	God wants me to know him better.	I will get to know Jesus through a daily quiet time.
	THE HOLY SPIRIT	God lives in me and through me now.	I am a temple of God's Holy Spirit.	I will treat my body like the temple it is by _____.
COURSE 2	CREATION	Nothing "just happened." God created it all.	I have a purpose in this world.	The reason I exist is to _____.
	SALVATION	Grace is the only way to have a relationship with God.	I am an object of God's grace.	I'll stop seeing _____ as a way to earn my salvation. I'll begin doing it simply in appreciation for God's grace.
	SANCTIFICATION	Faith is the only way to grow as a believer.	I grow when I see myself in a new way.	I'll spend more time listening to what God's Word says about me and less time listening to what the world says about me.
	GOOD AND EVIL	God has allowed evil to provide us with a choice. God can bring good even out of evil events. God promises victory over evil to those who choose him.	All things work together for good.	I am battling evil as I face _____. I will overcome evil with good by _____.
COURSE 3	THE AFTERLIFE	Heaven and hell are real places. Death is a beginning, not the end.	I can face death with confidence.	I will have a more hopeful attitude toward _____.
	THE CHURCH	The only true "world superpower" is the church.	The best place to invest my life is in God's church.	I need to make a deeper commitment to the church by _____.
	THE SECOND COMING	Jesus is coming again to judge this world and to gather God's children.	I want to be living alertly for him when he comes.	Someone I can encourage with the hope of the Second Coming is _____.





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Since this is your first time together as a group, take a few minutes to get to know each other. Share your name, where you were born, and one reason you decided to participate in this study.
2. When did understanding the truth about the Bible first become important to you? Tell about a time when knowing a truth was a real lifesaver. How has a truth about God and faith . . .
 - helped you deepen your relationship with God?
 - kept you from making a terrible mistake?
 - made you better able to serve God and others?
 - encouraged you in a time of trouble or temptation?
 - given you a new sense of freedom in your life?
3. If doctrine is so important, why do you think so many people seem to have a negative attitude toward the teaching of doctrine? Why do people so often see doctrine as something dry and boring, or loud and dogmatic?
4. Discuss things you can do to make sure your knowledge does not get out of balance. Don't just talk about what others should do; talk about what *you can do*. List two or three specific things that will help you and your group keep your knowledge balanced with love and grace and discernment.