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GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Pauline Paradox Series: Part 1 – Is the Majority Ever Wrong?

TEACHING SUMMARY

This teaching opens the Pauline Paradox Series by encouraging believers to test everything they believe against the Word of God. The teaching challenges the assumption that popular doctrine, tradition, denominational beliefs, or majority opinion should determine what is true. Instead, believers are called to examine all teachings through Scripture and allow the Word of God to be the final authority.

The teaching emphasizes that every believer and every teacher is capable of holding incorrect beliefs. Because of this reality, believers should never stop learning, growing, and testing their understanding. The desire to seek truth and obey God's Word comes from the work of the Holy Spirit, which leads believers into truth and motivates them to practice what God teaches.

A major theme of the teaching is the relationship between faith and works. Salvation comes through faith and not through works. However, genuine faith produces obedience. Works do not cause salvation, but they demonstrate that faith is real. The teaching argues that every commandment of God should be viewed in the same way. Believers obey because they trust God and believe His Word is true.

The lesson asks several questions about doctrines that teach that God's instructions have changed. If God called His law truth, freedom, and perfection, can those things later become bondage or be replaced by something better? The teaching encourages believers to carefully examine these questions and reconcile them with Scripture rather than accepting apparent contradictions.

The teaching stresses the importance of correction. Scripture teaches that God corrects those He loves and that wise people welcome correction. Believers should not be afraid of having their beliefs challenged if the challenge comes from the Word of God.

Correcting others and receiving correction are presented as acts of love that help believers grow in truth.

The New Covenant is discussed as a covenant in which God writes His Torah on the hearts of His people. The teaching argues that the purpose of the New Covenant is not to abolish God's law but to give believers a heart that desires to obey it. This is connected to passages in Jeremiah and Ezekiel that describe God placing His law within His people.

The lesson then examines the source of doctrinal error. Error occurs when people place their trust in traditions, institutions, teachers, or popular opinion rather than in the Word of God itself. While teachers are valuable, believers remain responsible for testing everything they are taught against Scripture.

To illustrate this point, the teaching examines the Pharisees of the first century. They were respected scholars, teachers, and religious leaders. Yet Yeshua repeatedly corrected them because they elevated traditions above the commands of God. According to the teaching, the Pharisees serve as a powerful example that the majority, even religious experts, can be wrong.

The teaching highlights passages such as Mark 7, Matthew 23, John 7, and Matthew 5 to show that Yeshua consistently defended what Moses wrote and rebuked those who nullified God's commandments through tradition. The lesson argues that Yeshua taught obedience to the Word of God and warned against lawlessness.

The teaching also explores biblical imagery such as trees, fruit, wolves, shepherds, and seeds. Good fruit comes from the Word of God, while wolves and false teachers are associated with teachings that oppose God's law. The lesson warns believers to be discerning and to evaluate all teachings by Scripture.

The final portion of the teaching argues that large groups of people can remain in doctrinal error for long periods of time. The Protestant Reformation is offered as an example of many people realizing that long-standing traditions had departed from biblical truth. Because of this, believers today should continue examining their doctrines and traditions rather than assuming that majority opinion guarantees accuracy.

The teaching concludes by introducing the broader Pauline Paradox Series. It suggests that many teachings claiming that God's law has been abolished rely heavily on interpretations of Paul's writings. Future lessons will examine Paul's letters and determine whether Paul actually taught against the Law of God.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Truth must be tested against the Word of God.
 - Every believer and teacher is capable of holding errors.
 - Salvation is by faith, not by works.
 - Genuine faith produces obedience.
 - The Holy Spirit leads believers into truth.
 - God's law is described as truth, freedom, and perfection.
 - Wise people welcome correction.
 - The New Covenant places God's law on the hearts of His people.
 - Error results from placing faith in traditions or people above Scripture.
 - The Pharisees demonstrate that religious majorities can be wrong.
 - Yeshua rebuked traditions that nullified God's commandments.
 - Scripture repeatedly warns against lawlessness.
 - Believers are responsible for testing everything they are taught.
 - Popularity and history do not guarantee doctrinal accuracy.
 - The Word of God must remain the final authority.
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FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Basic

- Salvation comes through _____ and not through works.
 - The Holy Spirit leads believers into _____.
 - God promised to write His _____ on the hearts of His people.
 - The Pharisees were criticized for elevating their _____ above God's commands.
 - Yeshua said that He did not come to abolish the Law or the _____.
 - Scripture says that God's law is _____.
 - Wise people love _____.
 - Believers are commanded to _____ everything.
 - The Word of God is the ultimate source of _____.
 - The New Covenant is described in the books of Jeremiah and _____.
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Challenging

1. According to Ezekiel 36:27, God's Spirit causes believers to follow His _____.
 2. In Mark 7, Yeshua rebuked the Pharisees for nullifying the Word of God through their _____.
 3. Jeremiah 17:9 says that the _____ is deceitful above all things.
 4. According to Matthew 23, the teachers of the law sat in Moses' _____.
 5. Ezekiel 34 describes God being against the _____.
 6. According to Luke 8:11, the seed represents the Word of _____.
 7. Matthew 7 warns believers to beware of false _____.
 8. Hebrews 13:8 teaches that Yeshua is the same yesterday, today, and _____.
 9. Deuteronomy 12:32 commands believers not to _____ to or take away from God's commands.
 10. According to Hebrews 4:2, the gospel was preached to Israel at _____.
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GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is it important to test our beliefs against Scripture rather than relying on tradition?
- What is the difference between salvation by faith and obedience that results from faith?
- Why do you think many people struggle to accept correction?
- What lessons can we learn from the Pharisees about religious traditions?
- How can believers make sure they are not placing too much trust in teachers or institutions?
- What does it mean for God to write His law on our hearts?
- Why does Scripture repeatedly warn against lawlessness?
- Can the majority be wrong about spiritual matters? Why or why not?
- How should believers respond when they discover that a long-held belief may be incorrect?
- What practical steps can we take to test everything according to the Word of God?

ANSWER KEY – GROUP GUIDE

Basic

1. Faith
2. Truth
3. Law (Torah)
4. Traditions
5. Prophets
6. Truth
7. Correction
8. Test
9. Truth
10. Ezekiel

Challenging

1. Decrees
2. Traditions
3. Heart
4. Seat
5. Shepherds
6. God
7. Prophets
8. Forever
9. Add
10. Sinai