

Upcoming Events

Wednesday evening Bible study
7:00 P.M.

Meet Up Open Bible Study:
For study subject and location: see church website

Thanks to our Speaker
Barrett Hoffman

Ecclesiastes 12:13

“...hear the conclusion of the whole matter; fear God and keep His commandments. “For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.”

April Birthdays

3 Amanda Hoffman 6 Susan Hudson 16 Alana Hudson
23 Shannon Hudson 26 Stori Rose Hoffman

April Anniversaries

19 Bill & Kena Brown

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher:
(Vacant)

Church of Christ
81-377 Ave 46
Indio, CA 92201
(760) 342-1859

(Address Service Requested)

Indio Informer

Vol. 32 No. 14

April 4, 2021

Bible Authority

Direct Command

Mike Johnson

How do we establish Bible authority? It seems clear from the Scriptures that God intends for us to determine biblical authority in four ways. These are direct command, direct statement, approved apostolic example, and necessary inference. (Sometimes, direct command and direct statement are combined.) A broader classification of these forms of authority are: direct (command or statement) and indirect (approved apostolic example and necessary inference). In this study, we will consider the Direct Command.

The basic definition of the word command is “to give directions or orders authoritatively.” Commands can be either positive or negative. It may be “Do this,” or it may be “Don’t do that.” The Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20 illustrate this principle. Of the Ten Commandments, eight are negative (Thou shalt not), and two are positive (Thou shalt).

We must understand that not every command found in the Scriptures is applicable today. Consider a few Old Testament examples. God told Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:16-17), for instance, that they were not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He intended this command to be only for them and to no one else. While there are lessons to learn from this commandment, it does not apply to us in its details. Another example involves God commanding Noah to build an ark out of gopher wood (Gen. 6:14). Again, it is clear that He gave this command to Noah and his family only. However, there are principles for us to learn from this, such as each person is under an obligation to obey God. However,

the specific details of this command do not apply to us today. Today, a person who goes out and builds an ark out of gopher wood would not be performing an act of obedience before God. Also, notice Genesis 22:1-2, where God commanded Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice. This commandment was for Abraham only. There is no indication that this commandment was for any other person who lived in the same dispensation as Abraham did. It certainly would not apply to us today.

There are also direct commands in the New Testament, which would not apply to us today. 1 Corinthians 14:1 says, “*Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophecy*” (NASB). In general, the early Christians were to desire spiritual gifts, but more specifically, they were to desire to prophesy. Paul wrote in verse 39, “*Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues*” (NASB). Are Christians to desire the spiritual gift of “prophecy” today? Is this a commandment for today? It is not as God intended spiritual gifts to be for a limited time. Spiritual gifts were for when there was no complete revelation, and they were to confirm God’s Word. (Hebrews 2:1-4, I Corinthians 13, Acts 8:1-25, James 1:25). Today, we have the complete revelation, and God’s Word has already been confirmed.

When we are trying to determine whether a command or specific statement applies to us today, we must consider three areas. First, we look at the immediate context (the material immediately before and after the specific statement or command). Then we look at the remote context (all relevant to the specific statement or command found in the rest of the Bible, other than the specific statement and the immediate context). Finally, taking the total context (the specific statement itself, the immediate context, and the remote context), we can determine the proper application of a particular statement or command.

Consider now some examples of commandments, which are applicable today. In Mark 16:15, Jesus said to the apostles, “. . . *Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*” Someone might point out that Christ addresses the

apostles, and this command is not for us today. We know, however, from the remote context (Matthew 28:18-20) that the commandment to “go and teach” is a part of what the apostles were taught, and Jesus told them to teach others “all things” they were taught. The command to “go and teach” is certainly for people today, as well. Acts 2:38 contains another direct command. This verse gives two commandments (repentance and baptism) as necessary for “*the remission of sins.*” The Bible commands wives to submit to their own husbands “*as unto the Lord*” (Ephesians 5:23), and husbands are to love their wives (Ephesians 5:25). It also says we are not to lie to one another (Colossians 3:9), not steal (Ephesians 4:28), pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17), give as prospered on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), and repent (Acts 17:30). The Bible also tells us to partake of the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-24) and assemble with the saints (Hebrews 10:25). There are many other examples of direct commands found in God’s Word. It is clear that these commands pertain to the dispensation we live under today; they are a part of the “*perfect law of liberty*” (James 1:25), the law of Christ, which is for us.

The direct command should be the easiest of the forms of authority to understand. Yet, some will teach the opposite of what the direct command states (note Acts 2:38). Many years ago, Satan sought to “get around” God’s commandment to Adam and Eve about not eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil by telling them they would not die if they violated God’s commandment (as God said they would). Many today insult God by doing the opposite of what He commands and encouraging others to do the same. **We need to obey what God’s Word commands.**

“...giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue. To virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, and to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.” 2 Peter 1:5-7