

# HOW to establish authority



Concerning First Principles

# 3 legitimate ways to establish authority

## Direct command or statement

A statement that either instructs us what to do or not to do.

- **Acts 2:38** - Repent and be baptized
- **1 Peter 3:21** - baptism saves us

A statement with the force of a  
command

- **Acts 10:48** - Peter commanded Cornelius to be baptized

# 3 legitimate ways to establish authority

## Direct command or statement

- **Hebrews 10:24-25** - exhort, do NOT forsake the assembling
- **2 Thessalonians 3:6** - churches to withdraw from the disorderly
- **Ephesians 4:25-32** - how to treat and NOT to treat each other
- **1 Thessalonians 5:17** - pray without ceasing
- **1 Thessalonians 5:21-22** - abstain from every form of evil

# 3 legitimate ways to establish authority

## Direct command or statement

- Most of what we are expected to do is based upon direct commands and statements
  - We still need to study and contextualize these commands properly.
  - If we desire to please God we will to this (**2 Timothy 2:15**)

# 3 legitimate ways to establish authority

## Approved example

- an example that clearly implies something God desires to be done, AND the way it is done.
- approved examples typically deal with HOW a direct command is carried out
- examples can be good or bad (what NOT to do)

# 3 legitimate ways to establish authority

## Approved example

- We are commanded to follow examples
- **Matthew 16:24** – “follow Me”
- **Philippians 2:5** - Jesus/humility
- **1 Corinthians 11:1**
- **Philippians 4:9** - things you learned, received, heard and saw - these do

# 3 legitimate ways to establish authority

## Approved example

- Bad examples to NOT follow:
- **Luke 17:32** – Lot's wife
- **1 Corinthians 10:5-10** - Israel's bad behavior in the wilderness
- **2 Peter 2:6** - Sodom and Gomorrah
- an example

# 3 legitimate ways to establish authority

## Approved example

- **Luke 10:30-36** – “Who is my neighbor?” - the good Samaritan
- **Hebrews 12:1** – a great cloud of witnesses of faith/endurance
- **James 5:16-18** - pray for one another. Consider Elijah
- **2 Corinthians 8:1ff** - churches in Macedonia prepare a gift to send to needy brethren in Judea



# 3 legitimate ways to establish authority

## Necessary inference

- also called unavoidable conclusion or necessary implication
- an obvious conclusion that is reached by reading the text and reasoning (common sense application)
- many direct commands use inference to clarify what/how something is done

# 3 legitimate ways to establish authority

## Necessary inference

- **1 Peter 3:21** – while the statement has the force of a command, how do we reach that conclusion? It is the ONLY logical conclusion to the statement. It IMPLIES we need to be baptized to be saved

- **Acts 17:1-4** - in Thessalonica, Paul “reasoned from the scriptures”.

They were expected to reach the only viable conclusion - Jesus is the Messiah

# 3 legitimate ways to establish authority

## Necessary inference

- **Matthew 19:3-6** – concerning divorce. Jesus appealed to **Genesis 2:23-24** and concluded, “What God has joined together do not let man separate”

- **Acts 8:35-36** – “see here is water”. Preaching Jesus INCLUDED baptism. What other conclusion can one rationally reach?

# 3 legitimate ways to establish authority

## Concerning CENI

- These are NOT an arbitrary formula invented by “the restoration movement” for “churches of Christ”  
They are the way authority for ANYTHING is established.

# 3 legitimate ways to establish authority

## Concerning CENI

- Consider one hired for a new job. How does one learn what he needs to do?
- He is given specific instructions
- He may be given a mentor/teacher
- He observes what is approved and concludes that is what to do, etc.
- **DANGER: Assuming that if something is NOT specified it is ok to do it (i.e. appealing to silence)**

# Examples of establishing authority

## **John 13:34-35**

- Command - love one another
- Example - as I have loved you
- Necessary conclusion - by this all will know you are my disciples...

# Examples of establishing authority

## **Acts 10 –**

- Peter's vision concerning Cornelius
- Command - he is told, "What God has cleansed you must not call common" (**15**)
- Example - the vision. He observes
- Necessary conclusion - as events unfold, Peter concludes God is sending him to Cornelius, a Gentile.

WHEN H.S. falls upon Cornelius' house, (**10:44-48**) Peter expects those with him to CONCLUDE that Cornelius needs to be baptized

Peter COMMANDS them to be baptized

# Examples of establishing authority

## **Acts 15 –**

A debate in Jerusalem concerning whether or not Gentiles needed to be circumcised and keep parts of the Law of Moses.

They go to Jerusalem to resolve the problem (apostles there, and where the problem originated)

All parties present and they reach the conclusion Gentiles do NOT need to be circumcised.

HOW did they reach that conclusion?



# Examples of establishing authority

**Acts 15** – Approved Example –

- **15:7-10** - Peter recounts the conversion of Cornelius

- **15:12 (4)** - Paul and Barnabas tell of miracles and conversions among the Gentiles - clearly God approved!

# Examples of establishing authority

**Acts 15** - Direct command

- **15:13-17** - James puts together all the facts and quotes **Amos 9:11-12** which prophesied that “the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, even all the Gentiles...” This is a STATEMENT with the force of a command. It was going to happen!

# Examples of establishing authority

- Acts 15** - Necessary conclusion
  - **15:18-21** - James concludes by putting all the facts together that they should NOT trouble the Gentiles with being circumcised.
  - **15:22-29** - After ALL the facts are discussed - there is agreement and a statement is drafted based upon CENI. Paul would continue to teach this -  
**cf. Galatians 3:27-28**

# Applying this practice today.

Concerning the Lord's Supper

- Commanded - **Matthew 26:26-29**, **1 Corinthians 11:23-26** - it is clear this is something we are intended to do
- Example - **Acts 20:7** - first day of the week. The ONLY example of WHEN the L.S. was taken
- Necessary Inference - how often? HOW often does the first day of the week come around? Thus, EVERY Sunday

# Applying this practice today.

## Concerning baptism

- Commanded - **Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16, 1 Peter 3:21** - commands to be baptized and why

- Examples - **Acts 22:16, 2:41** - Pentecost; **8:12-13** - Samaritans, etc.

- Necessary Inference - an act of faith - **Acts 8:35** - the eunuch, **16:30-33** - the jailer, etc.

ALSO, “faith” or “believe” CAN be a collective word for everything we need to do (**e.g., Ephesians 2:8, John 3:16**, etc.)

# Applying this practice today.

Properly applying how we establish authority will impact:

- How we approach scripture  
(**cf. 1 Corinthians 4:6**)
- How and when we worship God
- The purity of doctrine - including salvation and moral issues
- What we do as a church and HOW we do it - organization, work, worship and even fellowship (what we tolerate)



This is the legitimate way to establish authority for what we do

> IF there is another legitimate way, please let me know:

**BUT do so without telling me, showing me or reaching a necessary conclusion**



Do you respect the authority  
of God and His word?



Let us pray!