**Establishing Authority**

*Colossians 3:17*

**Introduction**

1. **Matthew 28:18** – Christ was given all authority by God.
2. **Colossians 3:17** – Paul understood this, and commanded that whatever we do or say is to be authorized by Christ.
3. **We know we need authority for what we say or do, but how do we get that authority? How is that authority established using the Bible?**
4. Prerequisites to Establishing Authority
5. Desire God’s Wisdom
	1. **Ephesians 5:17** – do not be unwise.
		1. There must not be any ulterior motives in the approach to finding authority for what we say and do.
		2. Preconceived notions, biases, personal desires, etc. must be laid aside to find proper authority – **SEEK GOD’S WISDOM INSTEAD**.
	2. **1 Corinthians 3:18-20** – What we may want, or come up with, no matter how wise it may seem, is foolish if it is not from God.
6. Abide in the Word of Christ
	1. ***“the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:37)*** – all of New Testament. (Not just red words – written by other men anyway, but inspired men like Paul.)
	2. **John 8:31-32** – true disciples stay in God’s word.
	3. **2 John 9** – to go beyond God’s word is to lose fellowship with Him.
7. Handle the Word Accurately
	1. **2 Timothy 2:15** – requires diligence to find authority for what we do, and be right with God.
	2. ***“accurately handling the word of truth.” (NASB)*** – many do not accurately handle God’s word.
8. Hold Fast the Pattern
	1. **2 Timothy 1:13** – Paul wrote of a pattern which Timothy (and us) have a responsibility toward.
	2. In the text:
		1. ***“pattern”*** – there IS a pattern. ***(“standard”*** – NASB)
		2. ***“hold fast”*** – it is not a suggestion, but something we MUST observe intently. ***(“retain”*** – NASB)
			1. **Cf. Hebrews 8:5** – Moses was given a pattern, and told to ***“make ALL things”*** by it.
			2. Moses was not given freedom OUTSIDE the pattern of the tabernacle. **Neither are we in regard to the pattern discussed by Paul.**
		3. ***“sound words”*** – what the pattern is – spiritually healthy WORDS:
			1. ***“heard from me”*** – Paul, and other inspired men.
			2. **2 Thessalonians 2:15** – written epistles for our pattern to observe. **(cf. 2 Timothy 3:16** – given by inspiration)
		4. **Our approach to holding fast the pattern:**
			1. ***“in faith”*** – **cf. Romans 10:17** – trust in God’s way by doing it (**cf. Jeremiah 10:23**)
			2. ***“in love”*** – **cf. John 14:15** – the way we show our love for God/Christ is by doing what He says.
9. Establishing Authority
10. Declaration
	1. **When something is directly stated or positively commanded.**
		1. When a Divine authority gives such a statement, or command it MUST be heeded or obeyed.
	2. **Example:**
		1. **Command** – **Mark 16:15** – Jesus commanding disciples to preach the gospel.
		2. **Direct Statement** – **Mark 16:16** – Jesus stating the conditions of salvation.
	3. **Used by Jesus:**
		1. Tested by a lawyer (command) – **Matthew 22:36-40** – these two commandments must be observed.
			1. Greatest two because all others are included in them.
			2. All the commandments must be observed.
		2. Jesus questions the Pharisees (statement) – **vv. 41-45** – what Jesus quoted (**Psalm 110:1**) stated the fact of the Messiah’s Divine nature. (*Must be believed*.)
11. Approved Example
	1. **When a thing is practiced by the church or Christians in the NT under Divine guidance and appointment.**
		1. **Matthew 16:19** – Apostles were given that which was bound and loosed by inspiration.
		2. *The 1st Century church operated under their guidance, and we continue to do so in part by observing their operation recorded in the NT.*
	2. **Example:**
		1. How were people saved? – **Acts 2:40-41** – exhorted to be saved, so were baptized.
		2. Such is the continued pattern by example in the NT.
	3. **Used by Jesus:**
		1. Himself as an example – **John 13:14-15** – when one approved by Divine authority does something approved, it is right to follow such.
12. Necessary Inference
	1. **When something, although not directly stated or commanded, is necessarily implied by the text, and we then necessarily infer.**
	2. **Example:**
		1. What is calling on the name of the Lord? – **Acts 22:16** – implication is that when Paul is baptized he would be calling on the name of the Lord.
		2. **We then necessarily infer that to “call on the name of the Lord” is to “be baptized.”**
	3. **Used by Jesus:**
		1. Sadducees question Jesus about resurrection **– Luke 20:37-38** – necessary implication is that the dead will rise, because God is not God of the dead.
		2. Jesus then necessarily inferred – ***“that the dead are raised”*** – i.e. there is a resurrection.
13. Applications of Authority
14. Conflict over Circumcision
	1. **Note:**
		1. **Galatians 2:2** – directed to Jerusalem by God to defend the truth.
		2. **(v. 4)** – false brethren – because of the doctrine they taught. (Not according to ***“that gospel” – v. 2)***
		3. **(v. 5)** – they did not yield to them at all – because they were wrong.
		4. **Jerusalem counsel** – not to decide whether circumcision would be binding, but to DEMONSTRATE that it wasn’t and that doing so was wrong.
			1. **They would do so by appealing to these three ways to establish authority.**
	2. **Acts 15**:
		1. **Peter** – **vv. 7-11** – used necessary inference.
			1. **Vv. 8-9** – the giving of the HS was God acknowledging them.
			2. This is something implied, which Peter then inferred.
			3. **Vv. 10-11** – Further inference by Peter concerning the salvation of the Gentiles.
		2. **Barnabas and Paul** – **v. 12** – used approved example.
			1. They spoke concerning their labor among the Gentiles – preaching the gospel to them, and converting them (*did not command them to be circumcised)*.
			2. **Miracles –** God worked through them, thus showing the example set by them was approved.
		3. **James** – **vv. 13-19** – used declaration.
			1. **Vv. 15-17** – The inspired words of prophets agree with what Peter stated concerning salvation of Gentiles.
			2. **Vv. 18-19** – Because of this statement, we should not bother them with the Law of Moses.
15. The Lord’s Supper
	1. **Declaration** – observance – **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**.
		1. Received from the Lord.
		2. This do.
	2. **Approved Example** – time of observation – **Acts 20:7**.
		1. The disciples did it on the first day of the week.
		2. **(v. 6)** – Paul waited until the first day for this purpose.
		3. Why did they do it on the first day of the week? – **cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:15** – word of the apostle Paul?
	3. **Necessary Inference** – frequency of observation – **Acts 20:7**.
		1. Every first day of the week – because every week has a first day.
		2. ***“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8*** – which Sabbath? Understood – every Sabbath).
16. The Nature of Authority
17. Common Misunderstandings
	1. Unless a thing is specifically mentioned in the Bible it is not authorized?
	2. We do a lot of things without Bible authority?
	3. This is not how authority works 🡪
18. The Dual Nature of Authority
	1. **Generic (inclusive)** – Anything authorized by God necessarily includes the authority for whatever is necessary and incidental in fulfilling the authorized action.
	2. **Specific (exclusive)** – Anything specified in the authorized action necessarily excludes all other things. Anything not specified in the authorized action, unless it is necessary and incidental in fulfilling the authorized action, is excluded.
	3. **Implications:**
		1. A thing may be authorized even though it is not specifically mentioned. (Generic – inclusive).
		2. A thing may be unauthorized even though it is not specifically condemned. (Specific – exclusive).
19. Examples
	1. **Noah’s Ark (Genesis 6:14-16):**
		1. **Specific (exclusive)** – gopherwood, inside and out with pitch, dimensions, window and position, door in its side, number of decks.
		2. **Generic (inclusive)** – what tools will be used? How will he get the material to the place of construction?
	2. **Music in Worship (Ephesians 5:18-19):**
		1. **Specific (exclusive)** – singing, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.
		2. **Generic (inclusive)** – song books, memory, song leader (for order).
20. Will we submit to God’s authority? – **cf. Jeremiah 6:16**.

**Conclusion**

1. Everything we do and say must be authorized by Christ **(cf. Colossians 3:17**).
2. He has not left us without ample information to serve Him acceptably.
3. **We must take these principles of authority into all that we do.**