*Sunday, March 19, 2017 am*

**THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH 2017**

**Authority – 3**

**How to establish authority**

We are in the midst of a study dealing with authority as it relates to the New Testament church. We have addressed that authority is permission to act. We have also established that God’s word is our STANDARD of authority as well as noted several false standards of authority.

We have also noted that the religious world is greatly divided. There is not a single topic that is universally accepted even among believers in God. And among those professing to believe the Bible and in Jesus, there is also great disparity. Furthermore, even among brethren there is a great diversity of beliefs, much of it with implications that affect our fellowship with one another and with Christ. Yet our Lord prayed for unity (John 17:20-21) and Paul on more than one occasion called for unity (1 Cor. 1:10, Ephesians 4:1-3, Philippians 2:1-2, etc.). So why are we not united? The simple answer is because many have rejected the authority of scripture or misapplied the authority of a text. For many, it has to do with HOW we establish authority. And that is where we want to begin our study of the elements of establishing authority.

In the next few lessons we are going to discuss:

1. Today – the 3 ways to establish authority – the acronym CENI
2. When is an example binding?
3. What do we need to consider when it comes to necessary inference?
4. The two types of authority - Specific and generic
5. What about expedients and aids? (How do they differ from additions?)
6. Is silence a legitimate way to establish authority?
7. **Establishing authority –** 
   1. There are 3 legitimate ways to establish authority – Direct Command, Approved Example and Necessary Inference. We will discuss all 3 of these in this lesson.
   2. These three ways are in common use today. Consider you job as an example:   
      You are hired to do a certain job – you are told what you need to do. The boss has a right (authority) to give you directions in doing that job.   
      - What he tells you to do is a DIRECT COMMAND. How he tells you to do something is a DIRECT COMMAND. If he gives you further instructions, it is still a DIRECT COMMAND that you must follow.  
      - But in learning your job, you might be provided a mentor (or training materials) to teach you how to do that job. He is an APPROVED EXAMPLE that you are to learn from so that you can do your job correctly.   
      - A third way that you will learn is simply by observing what goes on. As you observe you will see others doing certain things in certain ways and NOT doing other things. In time you can reach a NECESSARY CONCLUSION about what is and what is not accepted (provided they are doing what they are supposed to do).  
      In utilizing these ways to figure out your job you use your common sense (unless you are commanded otherwise). You DON’T ASSUME that something is acceptable or rationalize that you can do anything you want as long as it is not specifically forbidden (appealing to silence).
   3. These ways also apply to driving the car that you obtained a license for. There are specific laws you are to follow (COMMANDS). You learn how to drive by observing and following APPROVED EXAMPLES (in other words, those who are driving within the bounds of law). And through observations you figure out how to drive safely and courteously (NECESSARY INFERENCE). You may not be aware of a specific law, but through observation you can reach a conclusion. For example: On a road trip a while back, as I entered a state I did not see the sign that said “move over or slow down for vehicles on side of road”. But I observed that every time I saw a car on the side of the road, all cars would move over to the center lane. I began to wonder if that was the law. Later I saw the sign (the command). My point is that by observing PROPER examples I could NECESSARILY INFER what I needed to do.
   4. Just as in life, these are the same 3 ways we establish authority for all that we do according to God’s word.
8. **Direct Command**
   1. Means that something is specifically stated or prohibited. When God tells us to do something OR tells us HOW to do something, we need to follow that command. When He says, DON’T do something, we are prohibited.
   2. ***Ephesians 4:32*** – we are commanded to forgive one another. It is actually specified in many places (Col. 3:13, Matt. 6:14-15) While there are further instructions as to HOW we are to forgive, the command leaves no room for us to ignore it.
   3. ***Colossians 3***:9 – says, “Do not lie to one another” – we are forbidden from lying.
   4. ***Matthew 26:29, 1 Cor. 11:24-25*** – we are commanded to partake of the Lord’s Supper. Jesus instituted it and Paul re-emphasized the need to partake of it. There are other details that we will address in a few moments.
   5. ***Acts 2***:38 – Repent and be baptized – is a command and is necessary if we are to receive the remission of sins.
   6. **NOTE**: The majority of instructions come in this form of authority. When we appeal to examples and necessary inference – often it is associated with HOW to carry out something that is specifically commanded.
9. **Approved Example**
   1. *Approved Example* – Based upon what God has commanded us to do, we can learn details about HOW to fulfill those commands by approved apostolic example.
   2. WE are told to follow approved examples: ***1 Corinthians 11:1,*** “*Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*”  
      ***Hebrews 13:7*** we are COMMANDED to follow the faith of our elders.  
      ***Philippians 4:9,*** “*The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.*”
   3. Based on the command to be baptized we have many examples of those who were baptized. ***Acts 2:41, 8:36-38, 16:33***, etc.
   4. ***Acts 20:7*** - Concerning the Lord’s supper. We find that Acts specifically tells us WHEN they partook – “*on the first day of the week*”. Paul even stayed there for 7 days leading up to this. From this APPROVED EXAMPLE we see that Sunday is the day we ought to partake of the Lord’s Supper.
   5. **NOTE**: The examples must be APPROVED. The Bible is full of examples that do not apply to us and are NOT approved.
10. **Necessary Inference** 
    1. Necessary inference means that something is necessarily implied when you look at the text and all the facts of a subject. Based upon the teachings and examples of scripture we reach a necessary conclusion as to how we are to do something.
    2. Jesus appealed to necessary inference as He sought to establish His authority.   
       In ***John 5:39–40*** He said, “*You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.*” Jesus was saying that if they would examine the law they professed to follow (the Law of Moses) they would conclude that He was the Messiah.   
       In ***Matthew 22:31-32***, as Jesus was confronted by the Sadducees who denied the resurrection Jesus posed a thought for them. He said, “*But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”*” NOTICE How He reached a conclusion based upon not just a word, but the TENSE of a word. And He expected them to understand it!
    3. Concerning baptism notice ***Acts 8:35-36***. As Philip was beginning to teach the Eunuch it says simply, “beginning at this Scripture” he “preached Jesus to him.” “*Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”*” (Acts 8:36) Notice how we are not told that Philip told the Eunuch to be baptized, but it can be necessarily inferred as a part of “preaching Jesus to him.” In fact, it was so important that it was immediate.  
       ANOTHER thought, this passage demonstrates that baptism is immersion in water - “*So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.*” (Acts 8:38–39) In addition to the word “baptize” actually meaning “to dip, to submerge” (a command) we find here an example where we can CONCLUDE that the Eunuch was immersed.
    4. ***Matthew 19:3-6*** – when Jesus was asked about divorcing for any cause, notice His reasoning. He appeals to scripture and that which is implied in it – “*Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate*.”  
       Furthermore, in vs. 9 of this discourse we can necessarily conclude that one who divorces FOR sexual immorality can remarry and it not be considered adultery.
    5. Concerning the Lord’s Supper – Acts 20:7 again. We have established by example that this was something to be done on the “first day of the week.” There is simply NO example to the contrary. But HOW frequently is it to be done? We are not given specific instructions that say how often. But by this example, it can be IMPLIED that it ought to be done EVERY first day of the week. How often does the 1st day of the week come around? Every week. Further, when you examine what other passages say about the Lord’s Supper you find it was done frequently (see 1 Cor. 11:20, 33). While some might argue that it should only be done monthly, quarterly or even yearly, there is NO implication of that being how often it was done. The safe course is to partake “on the first day of the week” whenever there is a “first day of the week.”   
       And though we are not under the Old Law, there is precedence of a weekly observance with the commands of the Jews to remember the Sabbath each week (though no passage specifically says EVERY Sabbath – but it was certainly implied- Ex. 20:8-11).  
       NOTE: 1 Cor. 16:1-2 – why don’t they have a problem understanding the frequency of taking up a collection?
    6. NOTE: There are rules to consider in dealing with necessary conclusion (such as it must harmonize with the rest of scripture, it should be the judgment inferred when all known facts are in place, etc.). But it IS a valid way to establish authority.
11. **An Application – Acts 15**
    1. In Acts 15, the apostles used all three avenues to establish their decision concerning whether or not Gentiles needed to be circumcised and keep the Old Law. Their conclusion was NO!
    2. Direct Command – James appealed to the law – Acts 15:15-17 where the Old Law is quoted (Amos 9:11-12 - note the question arose from the teachings of the Old Law)
    3. Approved Example- 15:7 – Peter recounts Cornelius’ conversion.    
       Paul and Barnabas refer to God blessing their efforts among the Gentiles – 15:12
    4. Necessary Conclusion – 15:15-19 – James made a necessary conclusion “therefore I judge”

And thus we have established the three ways to establish authority for what we do. This is NOT something we made up (as is now being claimed) to establish our way of thinking. We have seen that these are the ONLY logical ways authority is established. Some today mock these as the only ways authority is established. They might use the term CENI in a sarcastic way. Some want to appeal to what scripture doesn’t say or fill in details with subjective standards (I thinks, etc.) – NOTE: I’m not saying here that we do not have matters of liberty (we will discuss this in a future lesson on types of authority), but many stretch and twist scripture to reach conclusions that are not there.

If there is another way, let me know so that I can repent and amend my teaching. BUT I have one request: Please do so without telling me, showing me or without a necessary conclusion! Think about it!