

God's Word – Can Examples Establish Doctrines (#18)

Text : **Eph. 3: 1-7 , 5: 6-10**

INTRODUCTION :

A. As we near the conclusion of this series we must keep its importance in mind.

1. Man's eternal salvation depends upon him having a relationship with God.
2. No one has a relationship with God without first having a relationship His word.
3. An incorrect understanding of the word renders an incorrect understanding of God.
 - a. In order to be saved, one must be pleasing to God.
 - b. In order to please God, one must understand His will for them.
 - c. Thus, one's eternal salvation depends upon his learning to understand the bible.

B. God wants mankind to be saved.

1. The bible reveals His plan to save man by grace through faith in Jesus the Christ.
2. It demonstrates the need for salvation.
3. It announces the arrival of the promised Savior.
4. It instructs believers how to be transformed into what God wants them to be.

C. God made His instructions very simple so everyone could understand them.

1. He used common uneducated men to write them, not scholars.
 - a. Written in the language of the common man.
 - b. It is written on the 6th grade level. (*Hebrews is the most scholarly; .. it is 9th grade level.*)
2. Making the bible difficult would have defeated God's purpose.
 - a. **I Tim. 2: 3-4** This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,
4 who desires all men to be saved and
to come to the knowledge of the truth.
 - b. **II Tim. 3: 15-17** and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings
which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation
through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is
inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for
correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of
God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
3. God would never command what cannot be accomplished.
Eph. 5: 17- So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

D. Satan actively works to prevent you from accomplishing God's will.

1. He tries to convince you that you cannot understand the bible. Why try ?
Remember Jeroboam : "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem;" I King 12

2. He will make little changes to deceive by distorting the truth.
Remember Eve : “You surely will not die.” **Gen. 3: 3-4**
3. He will use people you know and love to lead you astray.
Remember Peter : “Get behind Me, Satan;” **Mark. 8: 33**

We have just observed three things about Satan by recalling examples of him in action. This is how the majority of Biblical teaching is accomplished.

There are very few direct commands in the New Testament so how are we to learn the will of God for our lives from stories about Jesus and letters to several churches which are no more.

I. We must accept the bible (N.T.) for what it is, not try to make it a book of rules.

- A. **The Law of Moses governed a physical nation, but it did not offer salvation from sin.**
 1. **Deut. 29-30** ... The blessings and cursing are all physical.
 2. **John 5: 39-40** (*Jesus to Jews*) You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ⁴⁰ and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.
- B. **There were lists of rules in the O.T., but their purpose was to teach one principle. ... LOVE.**
 1. Jesus taught this to be true. (cf. – **Matt. 7: 12**)
Matt. 22: 35-40 One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ and He said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹ The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”
 2. The Apostles repeated this teaching.
 - a. **Gal. 5:14-** For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
 - b. **Rom. 13:8-** Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.
 3. **Therefore**, we understand that the mind of God in the time of the O.T. was for men to learn the concept of love.
 4. God is eternally consistent; His will for man never changes.
 - a. **Heb. 13:8-** Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
 - b. God has always desired that man approach Him with a devoted heart.

II. The principle taught in the N.T. is the same as that taught in the O.T. It is just taught in a different format.

A. No one understood the O.T. who did not understand that it was teaching love.

1. Each of the Ten Commandments related to love for God or for one's neighbor.
2. The stories of the O.T. illustrated how God deals with man.

B. The N.T. teaches fidelity which results from love, not based on rules keeping.

1. The Jews could feel approved of God just by performing acts even if their hearts were not in it. (*Modern denomination feel righteous repeating a prayer*)

2. The Christian realizes that all obedience must flow from the heart.

Rom 6: 17-18 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

3. The Jews did not always realize it, but this has always been what God requires.

a. **Isa. 29: 13-14** Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote, ¹³ Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous; And the wisdom of their wise men will perish, And the discernment of their discerning men will be concealed."

b. Many of those acts were required, but God did not accept them when not heartfelt.

c. **THUS**: When our good deeds are not motivated by love, God does not accept them.

C. How does God teach this eternal principle in the N.T. ?

1. We are given four brief records of the ministry of Jesus.

a. Apostle John acknowledged that his account was not meant to be comprehensive.

John 20: 30-31 Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

b. His book was to create faith, NOT to give a "new law", i.e., a new set of rules.

c. *Being condensed, they bring out all of the most important aspects.*

2. We are given letters written to churches long since gone out of existence.

3. None of these writings were addressed directly to our generation or our culture.

D. This is what is known as “indirect teaching.” (*Error to make indirect into direct*)

1. Everything we read about in the bible was originally addressed to ancient culture.
2. This being true, one must realize that most specifics don't apply to our time.
3. However, all of the same principles that applied to them also apply to our situation.
 - a. Truth is eternal.
 - b. Human nature has not changed since the beginning.
 - c. **THUS**, though the external trappings change, human nature doesn't change.

III. Indirect teaching is still gleaned from the record of God's dealings with others.**A. Jesus' dealings with people teach us about God's attitudes toward people.**

1. His encounters with the Pharisees teach that God rejects those who are outwardly religious, but not truly devout of heart.
2. He showed us God's compassion for lost people.
 - a. He wept over Jerusalem while knowing they would crucify Him. **Luke 19: 41-44**
 - b. He fed the multitude out of compassion. **Mark 6: 33 ff**
 - c. He healed the sick. **Matt. 14: 14**
3. He demonstrated what it means to love the lost and be willingness to forgive.
 - a. He would not condemn to woman caught in adultery. **John 8: 3 ff**
 - b. He patiently taught the woman at the well. **John 4: 7 ff**
 - c. He sacrificed Himself on the cross. **John 2: 19 ff (John 10: 11-18)**

B. Reading how the Apostles taught the 1st century Christians to live as the body of Christ on earth teaches us the principles to guide our live in the 21st century.

1. Love for Christ demands that we function in unity. **I Cor. 1**
2. Love for God demands that we keep immorality out of His church. **I Cor. 5-6**
3. Love for God's church requires that we be patient with each other. **I Cor. 8**
4. Love affects the way we treat other people. **I Cor. 13**

C. Thought none of the churches in the N.T. are like ours, we face the same struggles against Satan, sin and the weakness of the flesh.

1. We are still tempted by the same things that temped Eve.
I John 2: 16- For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. (same fleshly body)
2. **THUS**, the same principles that guided them will guide us.

IV. Though examples illustrate how eternal principles were applied to a problem, an example cannot be used as the foundation of a doctrine or bound as law.

A. The N.T. did not change truth, truth is eternal so it can never be changed.

1. Situation ethics is a cloak for lawlessness. (*It is used to cover over to sin.*)
2. What was sin in the beginning will still be sin on the last day. (*God is consistent.*)
3. Over the centuries men have been creative in devising ways to “prove” what they believe to be correct, but NOTHING can prove wrong to be right or vice-versa.

B. Approved biblical examples recount the way a truth was applied at a particular place, at a particular time.

1. Reject all unapproved examples : Balaam, Judas, Ananias and Sapphira, etc.
2. God clearly emphasizes the things that are important to Him. (*love 50+ times*)
3. No process of interpretation can be subjective.
All interpretation must follow a consistent rule.

C. The same principle can be applied in many different ways, e.g., the “holy kiss.”

1. Five times the N.T. admonishes the brethren to “**greet one another with a holy kiss.**” (**Rom. 16: 16, I Cor. 16:20, II Cor. 13:12, I Thes. 5:27, I Pet. 5: 14**)
2. Jesus condemned Simon the Pharisee for not giving Him a kiss. (**Luke 7: 45**)
3. There is a background command and an approved example, why don't we greet each other with a holy kiss.
4. The act of kissing is not the principle, but the attitude of welcoming into fellowship.
 - a. We shake hands. (**“right hand of fellowship”... Gal. 2: 9**)
 - b. Down home brethren hug. *Just a handshake could be considered a cold greeting.*

D. No doctrine requires an example to establish it as God's will.

1. Some claim the example of **Acts 20** is needed to establish weekly communion.
2. Weekly communion is clearly taught by scriptures without using an example.
 - a. Christians were commanded to meet together on the first day of every week.
I Cor. 16: 2 - On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.
 - b. The purpose for the weekly assembly was to eat the Lord 's Supper.
I Cor. 11: 20-21 Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, 21 for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. (cf. - Acts 20: 7)
3. The misuse of examples has caused divisions. (**“Upper room” congregations**)

CONCLUSION :**A. Each man is individually responsible before God.**

1. Those who are lead astray have no excuse.
 - a. Satan led Eve astray in the garden and she was condemned. **Gen. 3**
 - b. The old prophet led the young prophet astray, but he died for it. **I Kings 13**
2. You will stand before God to give an accounting of the deed done on earth.
 - a. **Rom. 14: 11-12** For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall give praise to God.” ¹⁴ So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.
 - b. **I Cor. 5: 10** - For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

B. The life of the Christian is centered around his quest for the will of God.

1. **Eph. 5: 6-10** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore do not be partakers with them; ⁸ for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰ trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.
2. **Rom. 12: 2**- And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

C. What is the will of God for your life ?

1. That you be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

I Tim 2: 4- ... God our savior ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
2. He wants for you to serve Him the rest of your life.

I Cor. 6: 19-20 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰ For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (cf. – **II Cor. 5: 14-19**)

INVITATION :

Lesson Text :**Ephesians 3: 1-7**

1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles — **2** if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; **3** that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. **4** By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, **5** which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; **6** *to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, **7** of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.

Ephesians 5: 6-10

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. **7** Therefore do not be partakers with them; **8** for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light **9** (...) **10** trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.