

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Ms. Dannels, Mrs. Douglas, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Mr. Mathis, Lamar Mathis, Ms. Matchett, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mr. Sowder, Mr. Winns.
Out of town: Jared, Angela and Constance Law; Mr. and Mrs. Mark Law

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:
www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com.
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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Bible Authority - Part 2

By Derek Long

Positive divine authority is needed for all our actions if we are to “do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17). A thing can be authorized through generic or specific authority. A thing cannot be authorized by God’s silence on a particular topic. We want to examine some various commands of God throughout Scripture to establish these points which we will revisit, Lord willing, in a latter article.

God’s commands can authorize certain things through the use of generic and specific authority. One of the best places to see this principle illustrated is in God’s command to Noah. In Genesis 6:14-16, God gives instructions to Noah about the ark he was to build to find safety from the coming flood. God’s instructions authorized some things through specific authority. God gave Noah a specific type of wood to be used in constructing the ark, gopherwood. God gave specific dimensions for the size the ark was to be. God specified the number of decks to be contained in the ark. We could probably point out other aspects of God’s command to Noah which were specific. When God was specific in the command to Noah to build the ark, He excluded all other options within the category of the thing specified. For example, God specified the type of wood, gopherwood, and Noah was not free to substitute or add

a wood of his choice. God specified the dimensions and Noah could not enlarge or shrink the size of the ark God told him to build. Whenever God specifically tells us something to do, we do not have the freedom to alter God's command and do something else. God's instructions concerning the building of the ark also authorized some things through generic authority. God allows for Noah to use tools in building the ark because the command "make" would authorize everything essential to making the ark. God told Noah to make rooms in the ark but we have no record of God specifying the number of rooms and so the specific number may have been left up to Noah. God told Noah to make three decks but God did not specify how far apart each deck was to be spaced. In the areas where God's command to Noah was more generic, Noah had freedom to make choices as long as they still fell within the parameters set by God's generic command.

A New Testament command containing both generic and specific aspects can be found in Matthew 28:18-20. Jesus says, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Some aspects of this command are left generic. The command "go" is generic when it comes to the means of transportation. We may "go" by walking, driving, riding an animal, taking a train, flying a plane, riding a boat, etc. The command "go" does limit us from "staying" though. The means by which we make disciples is specific. We make disciples by baptizing and teaching them. The command "teaching" is somewhat generic however. We may teach in a

public setting, a one-on-one class, in a small group study, etc. We may use workbooks, visual aids, etc. in our teaching as long as they are being used to teach and not focused on entertaining. We are given a specific message to teach "all thing that I have commanded you." Christ did not send His disciples out to teach people English, mathematics, science, etc. We are given a specific message to teach (Mark 16:15). We can see how Bible commands contain both generic and specific authority for our practices.

In discussions regarding authority for a practice we often encounter the statement, "The Bible doesn't say not to." In other words, God does not prohibit the specific action and so it is assumed the action must be authorized. Is this a valid way to establish Bible authority for a practice?

In Leviticus 10:1-2 we are told, "Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord." The text does not say they offered "fire which God prohibited" but "fire ... which He had not commanded." Doing something God has not commanded is sinful. The fact the Bible is silent about something does not allow us to do the practice if God has specified what we are to do. In Hebrews 7:14 we read, "For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood." There was no specific prohibition for priests coming from the tribe of Judah. Rather, God specified priests come from Levi and that excluded priests coming from any other tribe. When God is specific, He does not have to forbid all other options. God's specific authorization only authorizes what He specifically wants done.