

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: Mrs. Calvert, Mrs. Douglas, Mr. Douglas' mother, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Kelly Hall, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Lamar Mathis, Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mrs. Siota, Mr. Winns.

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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Generic and Specific Authority - Part 1

By Derek Long

We are taught in Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." To do something in the name of someone requires us to do it by their authority. Therefore, everything we say and do needs to be done by the authority of Jesus Christ.

One way the Bible instructs us in what God would have us to do is through the use of commands. Jesus clearly tells us, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Love for Jesus is displayed when we do what Jesus commands us to do. Failure to keep the commandments of Jesus shows our lack of love toward Him. 2 John 9 tells us, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son." In order to be in a right relationship with the Father and the Son, we must remain within the doctrine or teaching of Jesus. How can we approach commands to make sure the things we are doing are truly authorized by Jesus?

Sometimes people accuse those who seek to follow the Bible in all things of being inconsistent when they do something like driving a car, etc. when the Bible never mentions doing so. How can we determine whether a change is proper to use or whether it is improper to adopt something new because it would violate the doctrine of Christ? The principles we want to look at in our program this morning are sometimes spoken of as generic and specific authority. These principles allow for the Bible to remain relevant and yet still remain a constant standard which does not just accommodate itself to the times in which we live.

To begin with let's illustrate the concept of generic and specific authority with the following illustration. Suppose a parent sends his child into the store with some money and tells the child to buy some food. The child must go into the store, pick out some food, buy it, etc. in order to comply with the parent's command. Suppose a parent send a child into the store with some money and tells the child to buy a loaf of bread. The child must go into the store and buy a loaf of bread to comply with the parent's command. If the child comes back with something besides or in addition to the loaf of bread the parent authorized in this example, he has failed to comply with the parent's command. Suppose a parent though sends a child into the store with some money and tells the child to buy a loaf of a particular brand of whole wheat bread which is 16 ounces. The child must go into the store and buy the specific type of bread the parent told him to buy in order to comply with the parent's command. If the child buy something besides bread or buys a different type of bread, he has not obeyed the command given by his parent. These illustrations show the point that when commands are given they can be more generic or more specific depending upon the nature of the command. God's commands in the Bible equally contain elements which are more generic and allow us more options while other commands are more specific and limit the number of options we have in order to be obedient.

Let's examine an Old Testament command which helps us see how these principles work in interpreting a command given to us by God. In Genesis 6:14-16 God commands Noah to build an ark for the saving of his household from the coming flood. These verses say, "Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks." God's command to Noah contain both generic and specific aspects to it. The part of the command which says, "Make an ark," is pretty generic. God does not give Noah step by step instructions he is to follow in constructing the ark. God does not give Noah a list of how it is to be fastened together, what sort of tools to use in the

construction, etc. The command to, "Make an ark," authorizes everything Noah would need in order to construct the ark though. The ark is to be made out of gopherwood. God was specific when it came to what type of wood the ark had to be built out of. Noah could not be obedient to God by using another kind of wood because God had specified the type of wood Noah was to use. Noah could select which particular trees perhaps to use in the construction of the ark as long as the tree was gopherwood. God commands Noah to "make rooms in the ark." Noah had to have different rooms within the ark but we are not told how many he is to make or the size of each room. God tells Noah to "cover it inside and out with pitch." Noah had to cover it with pitch and not something else he might could have chosen. How Noah is to apply the pitch to the inside and out is not specifically stated. Noah could have perhaps spread the pitch on the inside and outside in a variety of different ways. Genesis 6:15 provides specific dimensions for the ark. The ark was to be 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. Noah could not say those dimensions seem too small so I think I will make it a little bigger. Noah could not say those dimensions seem too big so I think I will make it a little smaller. Noah could not say I will keep the same proportions but alter the exact measurements. When God specified the measurements for the ark, there were no other acceptable alternatives. The ark was to contain three decks. Noah could not have made fewer than three decks or more than three decks and have obeyed the Lord. God does not seem to have specified how far apart the decks were to be and so Noah may have had some flexibility when it came to exactly how far apart each deck was to be placed. God's commands may be generic and authorize us to use whatever lawful expedients are necessary to fulfill the command. God's commands may be specific and only authorize what God has specified.