

# Learning By Example

# Understanding the Will of the Lord

- No More, No Less
- Generic and Specific Authority
- Commands and Direct Statements
- Necessary Inferences
- Approved Examples

# Example

“A description of the conduct or activity of people in the Bible, primarily New Testament disciples, that acts as a pattern that we may imitate or avoid.” – Maurice Barnett, Understanding Bible Authority, p. 39

# Bad Examples

<sup>6</sup>Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted....<sup>11</sup>Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. – 1 Corinthians 10:6,11

# Good and Bad Examples

<sup>11</sup>Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good.... - 3 John 11

# Good Examples

<sup>1</sup>Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. – 1  
Corinthians 11:1

<sup>16</sup>Therefore I urge you, imitate me. <sup>17</sup>For this  
reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is  
my beloved and faithful son in the Lord,  
who will remind you of my ways in Christ,  
as I teach everywhere in every church. – 1  
Corinthians 4:16-17

# Classes of Examples

- Examples with limited application

# Examples with Limited Application

- Miracle working (Acts 19:11-12)



## Acts 19:11-12

<sup>11</sup>Now God worked unusual miracles by the hand of Paul, <sup>12</sup>so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.

# Examples with Limited Application

- Miracle working (Acts 19:11-12)
  - Not all could perform miracles then (1 Cor. 12:29)
  - Miracles were limited to apostolic times (1 Cor. 13:8-13)

# Classes of Examples

- Examples with limited application
- Examples used to teach a lesson

# Examples Used to Teach a Lesson

- Endure suffering while serving God (Jms. 5:10; 1 Pet. 2:21)

## James 5:10

<sup>10</sup>My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.

# 1 Peter 2:21

<sup>21</sup>For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.

# Examples Used to Teach a Lesson

- Endure suffering while serving God (Jms. 5:10; 1 Pet. 2:21)
- Humble service, not foot washing (Jn. 13:15)

## John 13:15

<sup>15</sup> “For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.”



# Examples Used to Teach a Lesson

- Endure suffering while serving God (Jms. 5:10; 1 Pet. 2:21)
- Humble service, not foot washing (Jn. 13:15)
- Serving others regardless of social distinctions (Lk. 10:29-37)

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- Humble service, not foot washing (Jn. 13:15)
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- Obedient faith (Heb. 11)
- In each of these cases, the lesson is binding, not the example itself

# Classes of Examples

- Examples with limited application
- Examples used to teach a lesson
- Authoritative examples of fulfilling specific instructions

# Authoritative Examples of Fulfilling Specific Instructions

- Church benevolence

# 1 Corinthians 16:1-4

<sup>1</sup>Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: <sup>2</sup>On the first day of the week let each of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. <sup>3</sup>And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.

# Church Benevolence

- Specific commands (1 Cor. 16:1-4)
  - For the needy saints
  - Chosen representatives preserved the autonomy of individual churches
  - Reflected the same instruction that was taught in every church (1 Cor. 4:16-17)

## Acts 11:29-30

<sup>28</sup>Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. <sup>29</sup>Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. <sup>30</sup>This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabus and Saul.



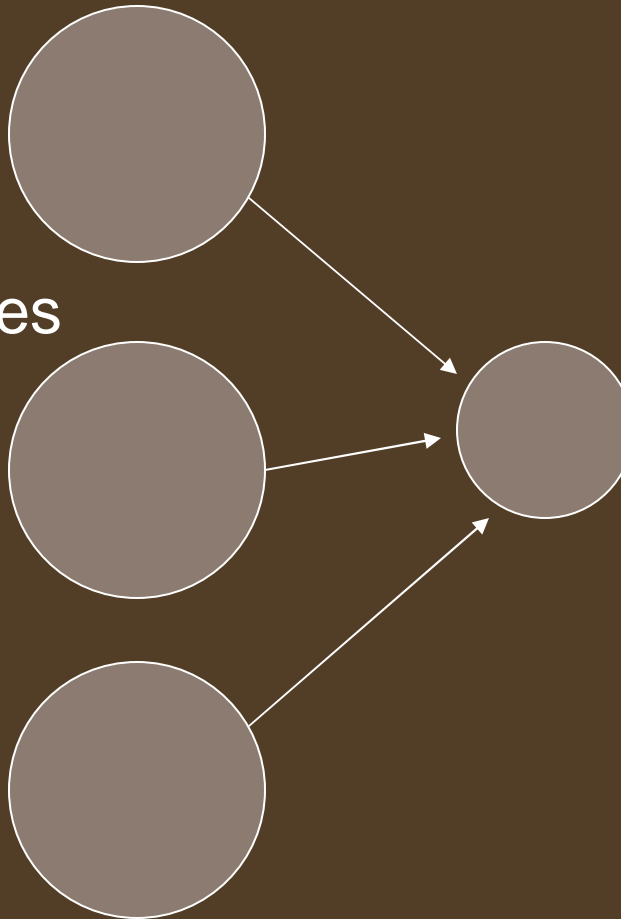
# Church Benevolence

- Specific commands (1 Cor. 16:1-4)
- Authoritative example (Acts 11:28-30)
  - Chosen representatives
  - Given to the specific congregation(s) that had the need
  - Church with more than enough gives to church with not enough

# New Testament Example

- Giving Churches

- Chosen representatives
- From 1<sup>st</sup> Day/week collections
- From church with plenty



- Receiving Church

- To the Elders
- To church with not enough
- For needy saints

# Church Benevolence

- Specific commands (1 Cor. 16:1-4)
- Authoritative example (Acts 11:28-30)
  - Chosen representatives
  - Given to the specific congregation(s) that had the need
  - Church with more than enough gives to church with not enough
- Sponsoring church arrangement violates this example
  - Not for needy saints (1 Cor. 16:1-2)
  - Does not preserve autonomy (1 Cor. 16:3-4)
  - Churches with less resources give to churches with more resources (2 Cor. 8:13-15)

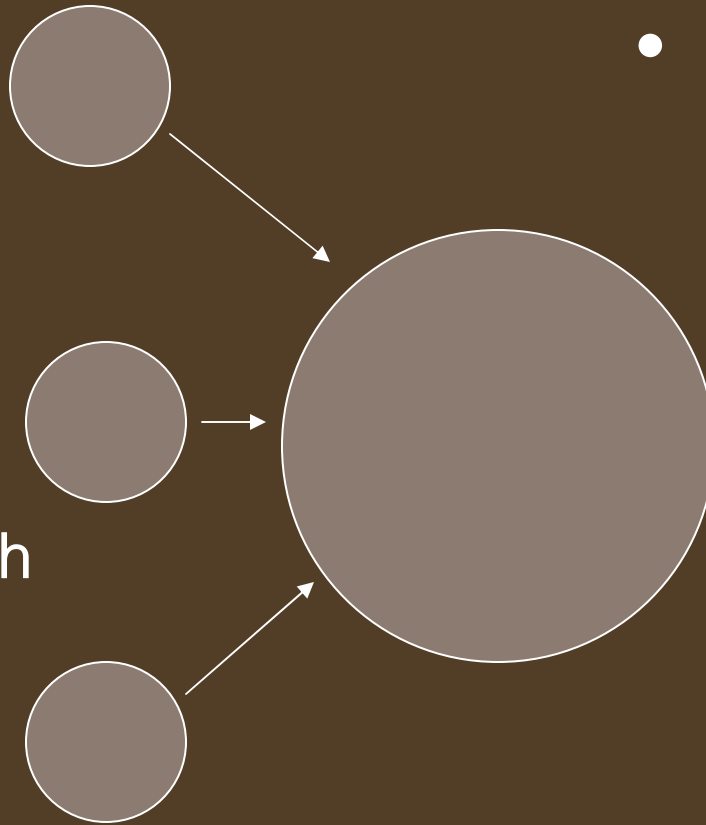
## 2 Corinthians 8:13-15

For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; 14 but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack--that there may be equality. 15 As it is written, "HE WHO GATHERED MUCH HAD NOTHING LEFT OVER, AND HE WHO GATHERED LITTLE HAD NO LACK."

# Sponsoring Church Arrangement

- Giving Churches

- From 1<sup>st</sup> Day/week collections
- From churches with less



- Receiving Church

- To the Elders
- To a church with more than enough
- Not for needy saints
- For a created need

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**Not Authorized**



# Authoritative Examples of Fulfilling Specific Instructions

- Church benevolence
- Partaking of the Lord's supper on the first day of the week

# The Lord's Supper on Sunday

- Specific statement behind it (Matt. 26:29; Luke 22:19)
  - “that day” indicates a particular day left unspecified



# Christ's Command

“But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until **that day** when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.” - Matthew 26:29

And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; **do this in remembrance of Me.**" - Luke 22:19

# The Lord's Supper on Sunday

- Specific statement behind it (Matt. 26:29)
  - “that day” indicates a particular day left unspecified
  - Command to partake
- Acts 20:7 - Disciples at Troas partake on the first day of the week
  - Demonstrates which day “that day” is

## Acts 20:7

<sup>7</sup>Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

# The Lord's Supper on Sunday

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  - “that day” indicates a particular day left unspecified
- Acts 20:7 - Disciples at Troas partake on the first day of the week
  - Demonstrates which day “that day” is
- First day is binding upon us by example

# Classes of Examples

- Examples with limited application
- Examples used to teach a lesson
- Authoritative examples of fulfilling specific instructions
- Examples of making generic choices

# Examples of Making Generic Choices

- The Great Commission: “Go” – Matt. 28:18-19
  - By foot (Acts 20:13)
  - By boat (Acts 20:13)
  - By chariot (Acts 8:26-31)
  - **Not binding: We are free to make other choices**

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Acts 20:7-8

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  - By boat (Acts 20:13)
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  - **Not binding: We are free to make other choices**
- The church at Troas: “Assemble” - Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7-8
  - At night
  - Just once
  - Upper room
  - **Not binding: We are free to make other choices**
  - No Bible classes
  - Long sermon
  - Lit by oil lamps



# Classes of Examples

- Examples with limited application -> **Can only follow if we are in those unique circumstances**
- Examples used to teach a lesson -> **Lesson is Binding**
- Authoritative examples of fulfilling specific instructions – **Example is Binding**
- Examples of making generic choices -> **Not Binding**

# Are Examples Binding?

- Some argue that only commands are binding
- What about this command...?

“Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.” - Philippians 3:17

# Example of Conversion

<sup>30</sup>And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

<sup>31</sup>So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

<sup>32</sup>Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. <sup>33</sup>And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.

Acts 16:30-33