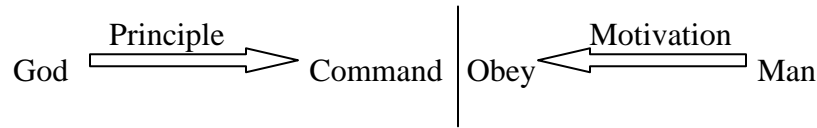


Understanding and Applying Biblical Principles for the Glory of Christ

Introduction-



I. Overview of Biblical Principles

- a. Comparing the Three
 - i. Command- order/mandate given to human beings, based on the authority of God; things the Bible says we *must* do
 - ii. Principle- the primary source of any command of God; “an important underlying law or assumption” (Encarta Online); the *why* behind the *what* regarding God and His commands; guiding truth, commanded or not, for every Christian to live by
 - iii. Conscience- decisions that must be made regarding issues the Bible does not address specifically by command or principle, dealing with *neutral* issues, but to which a person must apply faith and decide before God, being bound by his/her decision (issues are ultimately neither right nor wrong)
- b. God’s Communication of Principles
 - i. God never commands anything of human beings without perfect and holy reasons/principles behind it.
 - ii. Sometimes God may communicate principles, without giving us specific commands.
 - iii. God most often communicates both the commands and the principles to us in the Bible.

^{NAU} **1 John 4:7** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

The Bible is not predominantly a book of commands, but the revelation of God to us in the person of Jesus Christ, primarily communicated to us through principles based on God’s character and works. The relationship between God and man, through Jesus Christ, is principle driven and not command driven.

c. The Divine Source of All Biblical Principles

Everything that God commands us is rooted in principles that flow from who He is and what He does.

- i. The Character of God: Who He is?
 1. *Truth/Honesty*
 - a. Command- Tell the truth. Why?

^{NAU} **Ephesians 4:25** Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE *of you* WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another.

- b. Principle- God is a truth teller, and you are made in His image

^{NAU} **Numbers 23:19** "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"

2. *Authority*

- a. Command- Submit to human authority? Why?

^{NAU} **Romans 13:1** Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. ² Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

- b. Principle- God is the ultimate authority, and we cannot proclaim ourselves obedient to divine, unseen authority if we disobey human, seen authorities. Obedience to human authority is obedience to divine authority.*

ii. Redemptive Realities/Gospel Pictures: What He is doing?

1. *Marriage*

- a. Command- Remain married/faithful to your wife. Why?

^{NAU} **Hebrews 13:4** Marriage *is to be held* in honor among all, and the *marriage bed is to be* undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

- b. Principle- Because marriage pictures the oneness relationship between Jesus Christ and the church (salvation), and Jesus will never leave/cheat on us, so we must imitate His faithfulness in our marriages. (Eph. 5:22-33)

2. *Evangelism*

- a. Command- Preach the gospel to all nations. Why?

^{NAU} **Matthew 28:19** "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

- b. Principle- God is a redeeming God, seeking and saving people lost in their sin. He brought (and accomplished) this message in Jesus Christ. Now we are to take that message as His ambassadors, as the means through which He accomplishes His work. (Mark 10:45)

^{NAU} **2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. ¹⁸ Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

*** Jesus Christ is the essential "principle" from which all commands flow. He is the perfect man and all that God requires of us. All commands and their proper obedience, therefore, flow from the person of Christ, are defined by the perfection of Christ, accomplished in the work of Christ, and reckoned to the believer in Christ. Christ is the "principle" from which God instructs perfect humanness.



II. Discovering the Principles of the Bible

- a. Should we look for the governing principles of the Christian life? As opposed to being satisfied with commands only? both
- b. Where do we find the governing principles for the Christian life? Bible
- c. How do we find the governing principles for the Christian life? diligently

III. Applying the Principles of the Bible to Everyday Life

- a. Obey the commands of Scripture, identifying the underlying principles behind them.
- b. Where no *commands* are given, identify and apply the *principles* found in the text.
 - i. Pay attention to context, surrounding verses, and the overall argument the author is making.
 - ii. Pay attention to cultural expressions of a principle, identifying its application in your own culture.
- c. Identify the Realms of Conscience (neither right nor wrong)
 - i. Make decisions based on known Biblical principles.
 - ii. Understand there will be differences among believers.
- d. Identify Your Place in Redemptive History (Old Covenant or New Covenant)
 - i. Principle- sin brings death, God requires life in exchange for life; without blood there is no forgiveness

^{NAU} **Hebrews 9:22** And according to the Law, *one may almost say*, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

- ii. Application
 1. *Old Covenant*- perpetual, specific, frequent, bloody, animal sacrifices; the Jews under the Old Covenant were commanded to continue the sacrifices
 2. *New Covenant*- single, atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross; Christians are commanded to believe in the one sacrifice of Christ for the full, final forgiveness of their sins

^{NAU} **1 Peter 3:18** For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

IV. Difficulties/Dangers of Misusing Biblical Principles

- a. Principles into Commands- Pressing a Biblical Principle too far, too narrowly.
 - i. Order in the Church as a Principle vs. Extra-Biblical Order Commands (1 Cor. 14:39-40)
 - ii. Bible Reading/Study as a Principle vs. Extra-Biblical Commanded Schedule (2 Tim. 2:15)
- b. Principles in Place of Commands- Using a principle to disobey a clear command/principle of Scripture.

^{NAU} **John 15:12** "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

- i. Love and Leadership (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9)

ii. Love and Homosexuality (Lev. 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:8-10)

- c. Principles Over Contextual Commands- Commands we will most likely disobey, while still holding to the intended Biblical principle.
- i. Head coverings (1 Cor. 11:1-16)
 - ii. Greeting with a holy kiss (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26)
 - iii. Shaking the dust off your feet (Matt. 10:14)

• **Example/Exercise- The Commands/Principles Surrounding Marriage in Ephesians 5**

Very little is specifically commanded in the Bible regarding marriage and how a man and a woman are to treat each other. Sufficient principles are given in Scripture, however, so that a man and woman studying their Bible's will find plenty of instruction for building a marriage that is pleasing to God.

^{NAU} **Ephesians 5:22** Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. ²⁴ But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. ²⁸ So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹ for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, ³⁰ because we are members of His body. ³¹ FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. ³² This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband.

Instructions- Read through the following sections of this context and pick out the commands and principles. Then make appropriate applications in each category.

^{NAU} **Ephesians 5:22** Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. ²⁴ But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.

1. Observation (What does this text say?)

Commands _____

Principles _____

Christ _____

2. Application (How should we respond to this text?)

Commands _____

Principles _____

Christ _____

Commands, Principles, and Conscience

Supplement

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

3. Observation (What does this text say?)

Commands _____

Principles _____

4. Application (How should we respond to this text?)

Commands _____

Principles _____

Christ _____

²⁸ So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹ for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, ³⁰ because we are members of His body. ³¹ FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.

5. Observation (What does this text say?)

Commands _____

Principles _____

Christ _____

6. Application (How should we respond to this text?)

Commands _____

Principles _____

Christ _____

³² This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband.

7. Observation (What does this text say?)

Commands _____

Principles _____

8. Application (How should we respond to this text?)

Commands

Principles

Christ
