

For May 9th

Title: How To Establish Authority Part #3

This is part three in our series of How to Establish Authority.

How does God authorize a practice? There is no chapter in the Bible where God goes into a detailed study of how He authorizes. God doesn't have to do that. The reason for this is that God speaks to us in such a way that is commonly understood by all men in communications. God does not have to give us a special set of rules to follow in studying the Bible. **The same rules that apply in all areas of communication apply here also!** God authorizes by direct statement, example and implication. Let's consider **implication**. This is where God has not spoken by command or example, but where He authorizes by an implication contained in the language used. We sometimes call this "necessary inference." "Implication" is not technically the same as "necessary inference."

1. *Implication* is what God has put in the language. God implies something that may not be expressed by a direct statement or example. *Inference* is what we draw out (or conclude) from the language. The speaker implies; the hearer infers.
2. Before there can be a legitimate inference on the part of man, there must be an implication on the part of God.
3. Not all inferences are legitimate. That is why we must speak of "necessary inference." Many inferences are not necessary and involve only man's imagination. A necessary inference is conclusion that is demanded by the language of Scripture. A case in point is found in Matthew 3:16; though the Scripture never says Jesus went down into the water, it is implied that He did. Thus, it is by necessary inference that we know He did. We know it just as sure as if there was a direct statement that said it!
4. We cannot infer just whatever we want from Scripture. But only what the Scripture demands. Below is some homework for you to do. What means of authority do you find in the following cases? Look at each. Does it involve a **command, example, or implication?**
 1. Acts 20:7: Can you find authority for the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week in this verse?
 2. Hebrews 10:25. Can you find authority for a meeting place in this verse?
 3. Acts 2:38: Can you find authority for baptism in this verse?
 4. Acts 11:29: Can you find authority for sending relief to brethren in another place?
 5. Acts 14:23: Can you find authority for a plurality of elders in this text?

- Benjamin Lee