

Testament. So, you must determine to cling to this pattern in everything (2 Timothy 1:13)!

How to establish Bible authority. First, we can establish Bible authority through a direct command or statement in the New Testament. For example, baptism is commanded in Acts 2:38; so we can know God is pleased with such. Second, we can establish Bible authority through an approved example in the New Testament. For example, God shows His approval of an Ethiopian man being baptized in Acts 8:38-39; so we can know God is pleased with such. Third, we can establish Bible authority through a forced conclusion in the New Testament. For example, we are forced to the unmistakable conclusion that the Ethiopian man was immersed in water in Acts 8:38-39; so we can know God is pleased with such. We must have one of these to know God is pleased with something. We do not have Bible authority any other way!

Generic and specific authority. Whenever you establish authority, you must consider whether it is generic or specific. Generic authority is authority for a thing without specifying how it must be accomplished. Consider: A parent instructs a child to “go to the store and buy something for dinner.” Authority is given through a direct command, but it is general in nature (since how to go and what to buy are not specified and are subject to the child’s discretion). A New Testament example is found in Mark 16:15. Authority is given by a direct command to go and preach the gospel but is generic because how to go was not specified.

Specific authority is authority for a thing that is specific in how it must be accomplished. Consider: A parent instructs a child to “walk to the store and buy hot dogs and macaroni and cheese for dinner.” Authority is given through a direct command, but it is specific in nature (since how to go and what to buy are both specified). A New Testament example is found in Ephesians 5:19. The specific action authorized is singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Therefore, it violates God’s authority to add a mechanical instrument to the worship or to sing popular culture songs in worship.

Conclusion

If you want to go to Heaven and fulfill your true purpose of bringing glory to God, you will demand Bible authority for everything you do and obey what God says! This is the only way to know God is pleased with you.

Discovering God’s Word Bible Study Series

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Answers To Life’s Most Essential Questions



You see a copy of the Bible many places you go. You may even own one (or more). But, what is so special about the Bible and makes it different from other books? Is it important and relevant to your purpose in life and to others? If so, how? There is something special about the Bible that makes it different from every other book. In fact, it is essential because it is fully authoritative to tell people what is absolutely right and wrong!

The purpose of this lesson is to learn some basics about the Bible, how it is relevant to our lives, and how to establish Bible authority.

Some Basic Facts About The Bible

“Bible.” The Bible is a collection of 66 books written by approximately 40 different human authors that claims to be Divinely inspired. Each book has then been subdivided into chapters and verses (i.e. Acts 2:38). The 66 books of the Bible are divided into two major sections – the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Old Testament contains 39 individual books (Genesis to Malachi), representing a period covering the beginning of the world through about 400 years prior to the birth of Jesus. This law has now been taken away and replaced with the law of Christ in the New Testament (Colossians 2:14), though it is still useful for our learning and encouragement (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:1-11; Hebrews 11:1-12:4). The New Testament contains 27 individual books (Matthew to Revelation), including books about the life of Jesus, the beginning and history of the church of Christ, and letters written to churches and Christians. These books contain the law we live under today and offers forgiveness of sins through Jesus (Hebrews 8:12)!

The theme of the Bible. In the beginning of the Bible story, God creates man and woman and places them in the garden of Eden (a paradise

on earth). However, as they sin and are cast out of the garden, the story shifts to the need for a Savior. “Christ is coming” is the message of the Old Testament. Then, in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the message shifts to “Christ is here,” as Jesus Christ is born into the world and lives on earth. Finally, after Jesus’s death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to Heaven, the message (Acts through Revelation) becomes “Christ is coming again to judge the world and take His people to Heaven with Him,” giving instructions about following Jesus Christ and being saved from sin. John 3:16 is an appropriate verse that summarizes the theme of the Bible.

The Bible Contains The Revelation Of God’s Will To Mankind

No ordinary book. Everything we know about the Bible indicates that it is no ordinary book! For example, the Bible was written by approximately 40 different human authors, over a period of approximately 1,500 years, in three different languages, on multiple continents, and has been greatly preserved from the first day of writing until now. Yet, it only has one message and no errors or contradictions! Written between approximately 2,000 and 3,500 years ago, only God could have accomplished what the words of the Bible have accomplished. The fact that God’s word has no contradictions and errors demonstrate it has a Divine origin.

It contains the words of God. God has communicated with people in different ways throughout history (i.e. directly, through visions and dreams, through Jesus on earth, through the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit). However, God does *not* communicate these ways with us today. Instead, God speaks to us through His written word – the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17). These words are literally breathed-out by the all-powerful and all-wise God!

How the Bible was written. God inspired the men who wrote the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21). The Holy Spirit revealed God’s message to the apostles and prophets so we can read and understand it (Ephesians 3:3-5). The Holy Spirit was uniquely qualified to do this work of revealing God’s will since He knows the mind of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-11, 16).

The word of God is complete. There will not be a new message from God that reveals what is in His mind and His word is not evolving or changing (Jude 1:3; Galatians 1:6-9). Since God’s revelation is perfect, people must not add to or take away from it (Revelation 22:18-19)! For, the Bible is from God, contains His words, and will endure forever (1 Peter 1:24-25)!

The Bible Provides Us With All We Need For Living Righteous Lives

It tells us about Christ’s life, death, burial, and resurrection. The message of the New Testament is called the “gospel” (good news) of Jesus Christ and revolves around Jesus’s life, death, burial, and resurrection. For, it is only through Jesus that we are capable of a righteous life after we have sinned and have eternal life with God in Heaven.

It tells us all we need to know in order to become Christians. The gospel is God’s power to salvation (Romans 1:16-17). The Bible (specifically the New Testament) tells us what God has commanded us to do to be saved from our sins (Hebrews 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

It tells us all that we need to live faithful Christian lives. Consider 2 Timothy 3:16-17 again. The Bible provides us with all the instruction we need to live in the way that pleases God – in every aspect of our lives (i.e. our character, habits, marriage, parenting, local church membership, national citizenship, employment, struggles, temptations, etc.).

The Bible Will Be The Criteria Used To Judge Us

We will be judged. Although we have free will and God does not force us to obey Him, there are severe consequences if we do not follow Him. God will judge the world through Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). Those who had done what is good will spend eternity in Heaven, while those who had done evil will spend eternity in Hell. Thankfully, God is impartial and fair (Romans 2:5-11) and has given us the standard so we can prepare for this Day!

God has said that His word is the standard. Our lives will be compared to what is taught in the Bible (John 12:48; Revelation 20:12). Specifically, we will be judged by all the words written in the New Testament law, not just the things Jesus spoke while He was on the earth (1 Corinthians 14:37; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). These are all Jesus’s words, revealed through the Holy Spirit (John 16:12-15).

The danger of rejecting His word while we live. If you reject Jesus’s words, you reject the words that will judge you (John 12:48). So, will must choose whether you will obey God’s word or will you disobey God’s word. Severe consequences wait those who reject His word and great reward wait those who obey His word!

Establishing Bible Authority

The Bible is the only sufficient guide in religion. Human teachings, opinions, traditions, family members, friends, peers, majority opinion, etc. are all insufficient standards to guide our lives. Colossians 3:17 instructs us to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. This requires doing everything by His authority. We find this authority from Jesus in the New