

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

John 8:32 and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

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HOW DO I UNDERSTAND GOD?

by Jim Stauffer

My responsibility is to walk in the paths God has established for His people. This was true in the Old Testament days and their failure was called out by their prophets *“Thus says the LORD, “Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’” (Jer. 6:16) cf. (Jer.18:15)*

Psa. 19:7 says, *“The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.”* The question before us today is whether God only communicates what is necessary for salvation by direct command or not. We are being told by some that biblical examples approved by apostolic authority are not equal to divine authority. If that be true, how much attention should we even pay to the conduct of these men, guided by the Holy Spirit? Why is the Bible so replete with examples from even the Old Testament that provide guidance for us (**Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6**)?

Direct Command or Statement

Just how are we to determine the pathway if we limit ourselves to direct commands only and ignore what Jesus and the disciples actually did or practiced in service to God?

No doubt can be cast on literally obeying the commands of the Lord. He said, *“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” (John 14:15)* Moses repeatedly demanded the Israelites obey the commands of God. For anyone to argue against the established procedure of direct commands of the Lord is both foolish and futile. On this all should agree. The word of the Lord is truth and those who are of the truth will follow Jesus Christ (**John 17:17;18:37**).

But the question comes, “Is there any other way in which God communicates to mankind any message that is mandatory for obedience?”

Example

Biblical accounts of the suffering of Jesus that ultimately led to His violent death on the cross serve to provide visible support for such passages as **1 Pet. 2:21ff** that

teach us to follow in His steps. The example is necessary for us to comprehend what it means to refuse to return evil for evil. The passage says, *... Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps...(vs. 21)*. How can we obey the command to walk in His steps without the example teaching us what that is?

Abraham is our Father when we walk in his steps (**Rom. 4:12 cf. Gal. 3:29**). We are recipients of the promise God made to all nations through Abraham by our obedience to the gospel which entails living a faithful life such as both Abraham and Christ did. By direct statement Scripture teaches me I am to be led by the Spirit of God and Christ (**Rom. 8:9-11**). Then I observe the example of Jesus and learn what that really means. Now, let's address the issue some brethren now seem to have with examples. We learn from direct statement the symbolism of the elements and the observance of the Lord's Supper (**Mat. 26:26-28**). We learn from the apostle Paul the practical application of the Lord's instruction was to be observed in the assembly of the church (**1 Cor. 10&11**). But it is not until we see the example of the assembly of saints in Troas that we learn this was done on the first day of the week. Simply stated, we learn to observe the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week by the example given in the New Testament of the saints who practiced this with the approval of the apostle Paul.

Necessary Inference

Now learning from this example is no different than things we learn and observe in daily life. For instance if we observe an annual event such as a birthday, it requires a specific day of a specific month to do so on schedule. If we observe something monthly like a house payment, it requires a specific day of each month such as the first or tenth. If we are to observe something every week, it simply requires a day of the week. In this case it was the first day of the week which indicates it was a weekly event, not monthly or annually. Exactly the same as we see in the Old Testament with the Sabbath day. No one questions which Sabbath day to

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honor. They honored the Sabbath day; every Sabbath day. We, therefore have learned the frequency authorized for observing the Lord's Supper as weekly upon the first day of the week. And we learn this from Scripture just like we learn how to observe Independence Day on that specific day in July each year. It is inferred to mean every Sunday because they did it on the first day of the week. Not the first Sunday of the month. Not the first Sunday of the quarter, but the first Sunday of the week.

Conclusion: With no intent to attribute motives to any who disagree with this thinking, but to notice with curiosity those who have in the past preached these very principles and now seem to be backing away from them, there seems to be some movement toward an ecumenical peace with brethren who may not be willing to apply Scripture as written, feeling it is harsh or arbitrary.

The God in heaven Who sent His Son to die for all of us who were and are unworthy of His great sacrifice has the inherent right to be arbitrary.

Why have we suddenly become wary of the arbitration of Scripture? It is the word of God. It is the truth. It does not bend for any of us. It is intended to bend all of us to conform to the standard of the Lord Who lived among men and died for them.

For us to shy away from the demands of His word in an effort to find peace with those who seek to bend it to their will is to put us in eternal danger.

This article was taken from Facebook. It was posted the week following the incident in Texas.

Christians and Lethal Force **Warren King**

Much has been said in recent days about the 'church shooting' in Texas last Sunday - the right and wrong of it. The initial shooter was wrong. He was evil incarnate, who's history of bad choices ended in a final bad choice to take innocent human life. God's judicial standard played out in textbook fashion: *Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in His own image.* (**Gen. 9:6**)

Which raises the question, "Is lethal force ever justified?" We are not addressing the war question or whether a Christian can be a cop. Most Christians, I assume, would not object to such, based on **Romans 13** and the role of civil government. But what about individual Christians? Is it ever right for a Christian to take the life of another human being?

If killing is motivated by personal hatred, anger, jealousy or revenge, the answer is clearly 'no', for those passions are themselves sinful, and any behavior flowing from them would be sinful as well (**Mat. 15:18-19, Gal. 5:19-21, etc.**).

But note carefully God's reason for justifying the use

of deadly force in **Genesis 9**. *for God made man in His own image.* The reason a murderer deserved to die was not because his life had no value, but because the life of his innocent victim did.

That principle carried forward to the Mosaic age. Though the sixth command said, Thou shalt not kill (**Ex. 20:13**), other laws justified the use of lethal force, both judicially (**21:14**) and individually (**22:2**). The unspoken reason for such provisions was clear; the life of the innocent victim, created in the image of God, had value.

The same principle is true today. We, too, are created the image of God with great worth. No wonder that God, in the NT age retained capital punishment as a just response to evil (**Rom. 13:4; Acts 25:11**).

But what about Christians? Although Jesus condemned the use of armed force to further the kingdom (**Mat. 26:51-54; Joh.18:36**), He actually commanded the apostles to arm themselves (**Lk. 22:35-39**). Those swords were not used to defend against persecution (**Acts 12:1-3**). So, what purpose did they serve? They would have certainly deterred evil threats against their lives in their numerous evangelistic journeys.

Some push back, *Turn the other cheek* (**Mat. 5:39**). But this was spoken concerning vengeance (**vs 38**); and protecting innocent life is not taking vengeance. Others say, *Love your neighbor* (**Mat. 22:39**). To which we reply, Exactly! Is it loving for a man to allow an intruder to kill his neighbor, rape his wife and sell his daughter into slavery? Pity the poor family whose head interprets love this way. **1 Timothy 5:8** is not just about food.

Lethal force does not negate trust in God. David trusted God even as he picked up the stones for his sling. The Psalmist wrote, *Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked* (**Psa. 82:4**). So, let's do that!

God Gives Good Sleep!

I have had occasions in the past due to back injuries to sleep as the result of taking medications. I will say without shame that the sleep induced by medication was preferable to being awake with back spasms. However, as anyone with this problem can attest, it is hardly restful sleep! The Psalmist assures us that sleep is a gift of God. The entire 127th Psalm reads thus: **Ps 127:1** ¶ <<A Song of Ascents, of Solomon.>> *Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman keeps awake in vain. 2 It is vain for you to rise up early, To retire late, To eat the bread of painful labors; For He gives to His beloved even in his sleep. 3 Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. 5 How*

blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They will not be ashamed When they speak with their enemies in the gate.

The second verse assumes the man does all that he does without trusting in God and it's all in vain. However, if you do all that you can do and trust God for the rest, then the sleep at the end of the day will indeed be sweet. God has a way of blessing us when we least expect it! How many times have you wrestled with a care, came to your wits' end, gave it to God and went to bed only to awaken with the answer to the care obvious, or the problem smaller than you thought? To God ALL PROBLEMS are small!

Cleveland Reddinger

(Ladies Bible Study)

There was once a group of women studying the book of Malachi in the Old Testament. As they were studying chapter three, they came across **verse 3**, which says: *He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.* This puzzled the women, and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out about the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible study.

That week this woman called up a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver. As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were the hottest as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot, then she thought again about the verse that he sits as a refiner and purifier of silver. She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined.

The man answered "Yes", and explained that he not only had to sit there, holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left even a moment too long in the flames, it would be damaged.

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?"

He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's easy. When I see my image in it."

If today you are feeling the heat of the world's fire, just remember that God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ are refining you.

Author Unknown; Taken from Facebook posting of Whit Sasser

"We must try by every medical, educational, economic and political means in our power to produce a world where as many people as possible grow up "nice"; just as we must try to produce a world where all have plenty to eat. But we must not suppose that even if we succeeded in making everyone nice we should have saved their souls. A world of nice people, content in their own niceness, looking no further, turned away from God, would be just as desperately in need of salvation as a miserable world - and might even be more difficult to save"

C.S. Lewis; Mere Christianity

The Faithful Few

In every church, in every clime,
When there's some work to do,
It's very likely to be done
By just the "Faithful Few."

Many folks will help to sing,
And some are glad to talk;
But when it comes to doing things;
A lot of them will balk.

"I can't do this, I can't do that;
Excuse me, please, this time.
I'd be so glad to help you out,
But it's just not in my line."

So when brethren look about
For some who'll help to "do",
They nearly always have to go
And ask the "Faithful Few".

They know full well they're busy too,
And always hard at work.
Yet they are sure they'll not refuse
Not any duty shirk.

They never stop to make excuses
But always try to do
The very, very best they can
To smooth the way for you.

God bless, I pray, the "Faithful Few,"
And may their tribe increase.
They must be very precious to
The blessed Prince of Peace.

By Chester Shuler

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."

(Mat. 7:13-14)

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

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Elders Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

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SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS: SEARCHING FOR A KING - RON PECK TEACHER

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: THE BOOK OF JOB - JIM STAUFFER TEACHER

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON: GUARDING THE TREASURE



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10