

How to Study the Bible  
(Lesson 12)

Introduction:

1. Although God spoke in the past to the fathers by the prophets, Jesus is His spokesman today (Hebrews 1:1-2).
2. According to Hebrews 9:15, the New Testament is the Lord's Word.
3. To rightly divide the Lord's Word (2 Timothy 2:15), we must understand "how the New Testament teaches."

Discussion:

- I. THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHES BY "DIRECT COMMANDS"
  - A. Direct commands are instructions that God has revealed in a direct manner.
  - B. Direct commands may be grouped into two categories.
    1. One category consists of "general commands."
      - a. In general commands we are told what to do, but we are not told exactly how to do it.
      - b. The Great Commission is an example of a general command (Matthew 28:19-20).
    2. The other category consists of "specific commands."
      - a. In specific commands we are told what to do, and we are told how to do it.
      - b. An example of a specific command is found in Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16.
- II. THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHES BY "PRINCIPLES"
  - A. Many subjects or issues are not specifically addressed in the Bible; however, the Bible reveals a number of principles that will settle any issue that may arise in any culture at any time.
  - B. Examples:
    1. Jesus presented a far-reaching principle when He said that His followers must seek God's kingdom first (Matthew 6:33).
    2. Many issues can be settled by the principles revealed in passages such as:
      - a. Matthew 7:12
      - b. Romans 12:1-2
      - c. 1 Thessalonians 5:22.
- III. THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHES BY "EXAMPLES"
  - A. An example is a "pattern" that is revealed in the Bible.
  - B. Caution: Instruction through examples relates to authorized practices.
  - C. To illustrate,:
    1. observing the Lord's Supper is authorized in Matthew 26:26-29 and other passages, but we learn when it is to be observed from the example revealed in Acts 20:7
    2. Jesus washed the apostles' feet in John 13, but the Bible does not authorize this practice in worship.
- IV. WHEN STUDYING THE NEW TESTAMENT WE MUST OBSERVE THE "SIGNIFICANCE OF SILENCE"
  - A. The New Testament is silent on many practices in that it does not specifically condemn them; however, this does not mean that we are free to participate in them.
  - B. God has given us everything we need to know (2 Peter 1:3).
  - C. We need to be concerned with doing that which the Lord has instructed us to do in His Word.
    1. Colossians 3:16-17
    2. James 1:25