

**Schedule of Meeting Times:**

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM  
Study Sunday 10:00 AM  
Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM  
Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM  
*Singing every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday evening*  
Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

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*“Retain the standard  
of sound words which  
you have heard from  
me, in the faith and  
love which are in  
Christ Jesus,”*

—2 Timothy 1:13



# The Bible . Examiner

*“Examine everything carefully...” 1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB*

Volume 7

November 10, 2024

Number 23

# How to Tell What the Lord Requires, Part 2

*By Keith Sharp*

**Servants during November:**

**Songleader:** Larry (3), Dwight (10),  
Stanley (17), Larry (24)

**Reading:** Larry

**Announcements:** Marty

**Table:** Marty, Stanley, Larry

**Wednesday Lesson:** Kris (6), Larry (13),  
Stanley (20), Kris (27)

**Lawn Mowing (week starting):** all done.

**Area Meetings:**

**Midway (Killen),** 9-13, Greg Chandler;  
**Needmore,** 10-12, various; **Vestavia,** 14,  
Sewell Hall & Marty Broadwell;  
**Gardendale,** 17-20, Smelser; **Lacy’s  
Springs,** 17-20, Alan Yeater

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*The New Testament is a binding pattern of authority, 2 Tim 1:13; but how can we tell what details of a passage are authoritatively binding and must be followed and which are not? The previous article noted we must first ask questions: who is speaking; whom is addressed; what is the subject; is the language to be taken figuratively or literally; and why is this said, done, or implied? The author then goes on to describe...*

**Three Kinds of Information**

So far as authority is concerned there are three kinds of material in New Testament passages.

**There is information we must not follow.** It is **negative**, teaching us things it would be sinful to do. The Bible records both false teaching (e.g.,

2 Tim 2:17,18) and sin (e.g., 3 Jn 9-11), and we must not follow either. The Jewish council commanded the apostles not to preach and teach in the name of Jesus, Acts 4:18; 5:27,28,40, and we, as the apostles, must refuse to obey such a command, Acts 4:19,20; 5:29-32,41,42. The apostle Peter denied the Lord three times, Mt 26:69-75, but it would be a sin to follow his example. It is implied that some Christians in Corinth placed their confidence in human wisdom, but we must not do so, 1 Cor 2:1-5; 2 Cor 10:10.

**There is information we may follow.** It is **permissive**, expressing liberties (cf. 1 Cor 7:6,7,25-28,38-40). When the New Testament records

where baptism took place, it was always in an outdoor body of water (e.g., Mt 3:5,6; Acts 8:36-38). I believe these examples are permissive, a liberty, not binding. Paul commanded the brethren at Corinth, "Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called," 1 Cor 7:20. Is it sinful to change occupations, v26? It is implied that the apostles other than Paul refrained from manual labor to fully devote their time to the Lord's work, 1 Cor 9:1-6. Is it wrong for a preacher to have a secular job?

**But there is information we must follow.** It is **authoritatively binding.** The Lord commanded us to eat the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him, 1 Cor 11:23-25, and we must obey this command. The disciples ate the Supper on the first day of the week, Acts 20:7, and we must follow their example. It is implied they did this each first day of the week (Acts 20:7; cf. Ex 20:8), and we must do so.

It is no problem to recognize negative passages, for the inspired writers identify the example, command, or implication as sinful. But how do we tell the difference between permissive passages and those that are binding? How do we differentiate between a liberty and that which we are required to do? Five rules of interpretation, all taught by the Scriptures themselves, enable us to do this.

First is the **Principle of Unity.** This means that the binding of a passage as that which must be followed must not contradict other New Testament

teaching. This principle is true because the Bible is truth, Jn 17:17, and truth is always consistent with itself. Thus, we know that the observance of the Lord's Supper in an upper room is not binding, for Jesus taught that where we worship is irrelevant, Jn 4:19-24.

Similar to this is the **Principle of Uniformity.** For a binding pattern to exist, there must not be variation in essential details. This is for the same reason as the first rule. The Scriptures are truth, Jn 17:17, and truth does not contradict itself. There are many illustrations of this rule. Although the church in Jerusalem met for worship daily, Acts 2:46, we cannot bind this approved example, for it is implied the church in Troas met only on the first day of the week, Acts 20:6,7. Nor can we bind the undivided assembly, 1 Cor 14:23, as the only arrangement for the church to teach, for the New Testament records other approved arrangements (e.g., Acts 20:17; Gal 2:2).

Third is the **Principle of Universal Application.** Unless the teaching is applicable to the whole world until the end of time, it is not binding, because the gospel is for all people everywhere for all time, Mk 16:15. The apostle Paul taught the women at Corinth to wear an artificial head covering as a symbol of their submission to their husbands, 1 Cor 11:2-16. Feminine subjection to male leadership in the family and in the local church is a universal principle, 1 Cor 11:3. But the apostle specifically identified the woman's

head covering as a "custom" in v16 (cf. Jn 18:39). The woman's head covering as a symbol of submission, rather than being universal, was confined to a certain group at a certain time.

Next is the **Principle of Legitimate Extension.** The teaching of a passage must only be applied in situations parallel to its context in essential details. This is true because we must not go beyond the doctrine of Christ, 2 Jn 9. Although the disciples in Jerusalem sold all they had to give to the poor saints, Acts 2:44,45; 4:32,34,35, we need not do this unless we face similar circumstances, where this is required in order to relieve our own needy (cf. Acts 5:1-4, which shows our right to own and control our own property).

Finally, we must apply the **Principle of Spiritual Significance.** It is the spiritual principle of a passage that is binding; thus, if the outward act is only a cultural or incidental expression of that principle, the outward act is a liberty, not a requirement. This is true because the kingdom of heaven pertains to the spiritual rather than the carnal, Jn 18:36; Rom 14:17; Eph 1:3; Col 2:20-23. Although the Lord

commanded His disciples to wash one another's feet, Jn 13:14, this specific act is not bound on us. In a society in which people usually walked where they were going, roads were usually of dirt, and the people wore sandals, washing one another's feet was a welcome expression of service and hospitality (cf. Lk 7:44; 1 Tim 5:9,10). In an urban society in which people drive cars on paved streets and wear shoes, foot washing is simply a meaningless ritual. The Master was teaching us to humbly serve each other, even as He came as a Servant to all. The kiss was a friendly greeting in first century society, Rom 16:16. We should greet other Christians in a sincere, pure, and friendly manner, but we don't have to kiss each other to accomplish that goal.

### **Conclusion**

The application of these principles will help us to be mature Christians, able to distinguish good and evil, Heb 5:12-14. We should study for the knowledge we need to discern between liberties and requirements, 2 Tim 2:15, and pray for the wisdom to make the proper applications, Jas 1:5.

—via [TeachUsLord.com](http://TeachUsLord.com), August 15, 2004 

## *Remember in Prayer*

**Marie** is dealing with chronic illness; **Mike B** continues to recover from heart surgery; **Kathy Mitchell** and **Donise** are both recovering from cataract surgery. **Mark Horton** may begin treatment for prostate cancer in

December. Pray also for **Betty; Carolyn; Hazel; Barbara; Joshua V; Faye;** and **the Pollard Family.** *And remember to **thank God** for his mercy toward our nation!* 