

Lesson 2 – How to Apply Bible Authority in a Local Church
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Introduction: What instructions has God given concerning local churches?

- A. The very first question we must answer is how has God spoken to us?
 - 1. Understanding the role of the apostles is crucial to understand how the Lord provides for us in all things! **(Jn 17:8, 20)**
 - 2. Jesus wanted all to know the men He chose as Apostles. His future work would be done through them. Jesus wrote nothing but His apostles did write!
- B. The church came into existence through the preaching of the apostles! **(Acts 2:14)**
 - 1. They delivered the perfect promises from God to us! **(Acts 2:38-39)**
 - 2. What were these new Christians now to learn and do? They were to steadfastly stay within the apostle's doctrine! **(Acts 2:41-42)**

I. The New Testament is a perfect guide for local churches

- A. The revealed words of God are a perfect and complete revelation. **(2 Tim 3:16-17)**
 - 1. This should be no surprise to us because everything that come from God is perfect for the purpose it is given! **(2 Sam 22:31)**
 - 2. When we believe this, we will carefully listen to God word. **(1 Thess 2:13)**
- B. When we chose to have the Lord as our head, then we have placed ourselves under His apostles and the words that they delivered in the N.T.! **(Eph 4:4-6; Eph 2:20)**
 - 1. We are to take all that has been revealed on a subject and stay within it.
 - 2. This is the essence of what it means for Jesus to be our Lord! **(Lk 6:46)**
 - 3. How we view these words will affect what local churches teach and practice!

II. Jesus taught the apostles how to carefully handle these words

- A. Jesus came to fulfill and teach God's plan that was delivered to Him. **(Jn 17:4-5)**
 - 1. Jesus goal was to glorify the Father. How did He do this?
 - 2. He was given a work that He accomplished. Everything He did pointed to God.
- B. Jesus wanted all to know that to stay within what was revealed would give God glory! He saw God's glory in the application of these words. He is teaching us how to seek God's glory in our lives! **(Jn 7:16-18; 12:23, 27-28)**
 - 1. God's glory is simply a reflection of God's holiness. We must be told what is holy and then pursue that very thing.
 - 2. Men often seek their own ways and thoughts in order to "glorify God."
- C. Jesus prepared His disciples in how they were to handle these words! **(Jn 17:17-19)**
 - 1. They would by this be "sanctified" or "set apart" to God's holy path!
 - 2. What a blessing we can when are found in this path!

III. Churches were established and maintained by the words delivered by the apostles

- A. Jesus worked by the Holy Spirit through the apostles. **(Jn 14:24-26)**
 - 1. The Holy Spirit would give a perfect remembrance of what Jesus spoke to them.
 - 2. The Holy Spirit would teach them additional things from Jesus. **(Jn 16:12-15)**

3. Just like Jesus, the Holy Spirit would only deliver what He received!
- B. Every Christian was to be taught the foundations God has given. **(Eph 2:20; 4:4-6)**
 1. Consider the “one faith!” This involves both the words delivered through the apostles and our attitudes towards them. **(1 Cor 4:6)**
 2. In a local church if either the “one baptism” or the “one faith” is not taught and practiced then one’s fellowship with God is endangered. **(2 Jn 9-11)**
- C. The Apostles simply “handed down” what they had received from Jesus.
 1. Pay attention when you see these words: “tradition, delivered and received” **(1 Cor 11:2, 23; 15:3; Jude 3)**
 2. There was a consistent teaching to be applied to all local churches! How have we received this instruction today? **(1 Cor 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33-37)**
 3. To fail to obey this “tradition” delivered from the apostles is to forsake Jesus Christ Himself. **(2 Thess 3:3-4, 6, 12, 14)**
 4. The early church carefully stayed within the apostle’s doctrine. If they had no instruction from them then they did nothing. **(Acts 15:23-24)**
 5. When an epistle was given to one church it could then be given to other churches and thus to all generations. **(Col 4:16; 1 Thess 5:27; 2 Pt 3:1-2)**

III. How can we stay within the limits of God’s authority?

- A. We must be committed to only acting and teaching when we have positive authority.
 1. Jesus limited Himself in this very way. **(Jn 5:19-21, 30; 8:28-29)**
 2. Jesus expects us to have this same attitude. **(Jn 12:48-50; 17:20)**
 3. This is how we glorify God and stay within His purposes. **(1 Pt 4:11; Col 3:17)**
 4. I then must give scripture (Book, chapter and verse) for my teaching or practice or give up that teaching or practice. We must have agreement on this principle!
- B. These truths represent a foundation from which we can build together!
 1. There is more to applying these truths! Whatever difficulties or inconsistencies men may have in application, let us stay on this foundation!
 2. May God help us to keep our eyes fixed upon His delivered words rather than the inconsistent failings of men. **(Rom 3:4)**

Questions

1. How did Jesus handle the words delivered to Him from the Father? How did the Holy Spirit handle these words?
2. How did the apostles teach local churches how to apply these words delivered to them through the apostles? What is the first question they should ask?
3. What is the difference between those that limit their actions by staying within positive authority and those that are only limited by specific probation?
4. Did the apostles expect local churches to have a uniform practice in their beliefs and worship?
5. Can we agree to give scripture for a teaching or be willing to give it up?
6. How should we react when a man is inconsistent or has a bad attitude? Does that bad attitude give others the right to reject Bible teaching?