

Can You Show What The Bible Says?

Introduction. After someone is satisfied with the Bible being the word of God, the issue of how you interpret the Bible arises. Every facet of our lives revolves around authority. Authority is the right to command or direct and enforce obedience or administer punishment. The laws of the land that we live by carry the weight of authority. That's why we have to obey local, state, and federal laws. In divine affairs, however, all authority exists in God.

In the arena of logic and reason, there are a lot of insufficient standards of Bible authority. Some examples of these standards are: "I like ..."; "I feel ..."; "I want ..."; "I think ..."; "They do it"; "It seems right"; "I'm sincere"; "I'm always right"; "No one will see me"; "It's a good work"; "The preacher said so"; "God didn't say not to"; "God doesn't mind"; "It's not against the law"; "Most think it's okay"; "My parents and grandparents did it"; "It doesn't bother my conscience"; "I have done it this way for years"; "It's all right if we do it in God's name"; "God doesn't expect us to be so technical."

These standards don't satisfy God, and furthermore they will be swept away at the judgment (John 12:48). Because of this, you need to be aware of the folly of using these standards. In discussing the scriptures with others, some of these phrases might creep into your speech. If people who aren't Christians hear you appealing to these false standards, they won't respect the truth.

There are six statements used in the New Testament that provide a guide for knowing what God wants. As we continue our series of being able to answer questions (1 Peter 3:15), remember that knowledge is not a weapon to yield; it's a resource to share for the betterment of people's lives.

I. "Speak As The Oracles Of God"

- A. We need to speak and teach the scriptures in the terms of the scriptures (1 Peter 4:11). In each instance "oracles" is linked to God. It is His "word" or revelation. In the past, some have called this, "Let's speak where the Bible speaks, be silent where the Bible is silent and call Bible things by Bible names."
- B. We can sort out error by speaking as the oracles of God and encouraging others to do so.
 1. Isaiah 8:19-20.
 2. Jeremiah 23:21-22.
- C. Examples:
 1. I have known of people who argue that salvation is a miracle. But the Bible never calls salvation a miracle. One of its underpinnings is the miracle of Christ's resurrection, but that does not make salvation a miracle (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
 2. People will argue that members of churches of Christ believe in water salvation. The Bible says that baptism saves us, not the water (1 Peter 3:21). The water is merely the medium of baptism, fulfilling the figure of washing away sins (Acts 22:16).

II. "It Is Written"

- A. This approach automatically excludes latter-day revelations.
 - 1. Jesus appealed to the written word when dealing with the devil (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). The New Testament writers appealed to the Old Testament over 60 times to prove their point.
 - 2. Asking "What does the scriptures say" is the same as asking for "book, chapter, and verse." This is how Jesus dealt with one man who tried to entrap Him, and how Paul dealt with Judaizing teachers (Luke 10:25-28; Romans 4:1-3).
- B. Examples:
 - 1. The written word was given to us as a "sword" to "cast down" everything that "exalts itself against the knowledge of God" (Ephesians 6:17; 2 Corinthians 10:5).
 - 2. When you counter someone who says, "I believe this way," with "I believe that way," you have laid down the sword of the Spirit and picked up an insufficient standard, a standard that is no better or more authoritative than the one to whom you are talking.
 - 3. People believe "once saved, always saved" because it gives them comfort. They say, "I believe God won't condemn those who believe on Him." In fact, denominational creeds call this doctrine "most wholesome and full of comfort." The best reply is, "It is written" (Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 6:4-6; 2 Peter 2:20-22).

III. "Jesus Said"

- A. Can anyone doubt the direct statements of the Lord?
 - 1. He was the mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15-17). Jesus was the end or the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law (Matthew 5:17-18; Romans 10:4).
 - 2. Because of these facts, the Old Law was removed at His death (Ephesians 2:14-15; Colossians 2:14-15).
 - 3. These gave Jesus the ability to supersede what the Law said (Matthew 5:21-48).
- B. Examples:
 - 1. Matthew 8:5-9; 28:18.
 - 2. Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; John 20:22-23.
 - 3. Matthew 16:18-19; John 3:3, 5.

IV. "I Have Given You An Example"

- A. An example or pattern is "a model of behavior to be imitated or to be avoided" (James 5:10; 2 Peter 2:6).
 - 1. Jesus (John 13:15; 1 Peter 2:21).
 - 2. The apostles (1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:6).
- B. Examples:
 - 1. Jesus gave an example of obedience (Hebrews 5:8).
 - 2. Jesus gave an example of baptism (Matthew 3:14-16).
 - 3. Jesus gave an example of how to teach others (John 4:7-10).

4. The apostles gave an example of assembling together (Acts 20:7).
5. The apostles gave an example of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
6. The apostles gave an example of collecting funds (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

V. "By This All Will Know"

- A. When Jesus made this statement in John 13:35, He introduced us to necessary inference.
 1. This method of authority examines the available evidence and then draws a conclusion that we have to respect to please God.
 2. Necessary inference can be likened to jury duty. You have the task of evaluating the evidence and making a judgment or a conclusion based on that evidence.
- B. Examples:
 1. In John 5:39, the scriptures did not testify concerning Christ in direct terms or language, but there were facts that could be pieced together in order to arrive at the conclusion that Jesus was the way to eternal life.
 2. In Matthew 16:12, the disciples, through Jesus' implication and their correct inference, could tell He was warning them about false teaching.
 3. In Acts 15:7-11, Peter correctly concluded that because the Gentiles had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they were able to be saved just like the Jews.

VI. "Go And Do Likewise"

- A. We've spoken to the head; now we need to speak to the heart.
 1. Without proper application, our correct appeals will not translate into actions that satisfy God.
 2. Jesus concluded His lesson on the good Samaritan with the admonition to apply it (Luke 10:36-37; 1 John 4:10-11).
- B. Sometimes we forget to conclude our Bible discussions with this appeal.
 1. We instruct someone in the need for baptism and forget to urge them to be baptized.
 2. We talk about the one church and forget to invite our listener to the services.
 3. We argue against "once saved, always saved" and then go out and live like we have believed it all along.

Conclusion. In order for you to do what God wants, you have to be familiar with authority and how it's established in scripture. We not only have to obey the right standard, but we also have to use that standard in the right way.

May God help us to truly know what He's saying and therefore be approved. Seriously investigate the means by which you establish your right to act in the sight of God. Then remember that knowledge is not a weapon to yield; it's a resource to share for the betterment of people's lives.