

The Right Appeal To The Right Authority

Introduction. 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 am sincere"; "I am always right"; "No one will see me"; "It is a good work"; "The preacher said so"; "God did not say not to"; "God does not mind"; "It is not against the law"; "Most think it is okay"; "My parents and grandparents did it"; "It does not bother my conscience"; "I have done it this way for years"; "It is all right if we do it in God's name"; "God does not expect us to be so technical."

These standards will not please God. Jesus warned that all of these false standards will be swept away on the day of judgment (John 12:48). Because of this, Christians 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 are not Christians hear you appealing to these false standards, they will not respect the truth. We must not only follow the right standard of authority, but we must also make the right appeal to the right authority.

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 know 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 saith the scriptures" 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 "exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (Ephesians 6:17; 2 Corinthians 10:5). Whenever 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.
2. People believe "once saved, always saved" because it makes them feel good. They say, "I believe God would not condemn those who believed 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. 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.

B. Examples:

1. How often do people reject the essentiality of baptism? Ask them, "Do you believe what Jesus said about baptism?" If you believe in Jesus, you have believe what He said about being saved (cf. Galatians 3:27).
2. Have you ever been in an argument with someone over how many true churches exist today (cf. Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4)?

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 2:4-5; 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:6).

B. Examples:

1. Jesus gave us an example of baptism (Matthew 3:14-16).
2. Jesus gave us an example of obedience (Hebrews 5:8).

3. Jesus gave us an example of how to teach others (John 4:7-10).
4. The apostles gave us an example of assembling together (Acts 20:7).
5. The apostles gave us an example of the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
6. The apostles gave us an example of collecting funds (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

V. ***"Go Thou And Do Likewise"***

- A. The right appeal to the right authority has to be applied.
 1. Without proper application, our rightful appeals will not translate into actions by which we will please to 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 one 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. We not only have to obey and follow the right standard, but also have to use that standard in the right way when we try to teach others. In order for anything to be authorized, it has to be found in the Bible.

Is your faith from heaven or from men? May God help us to truly study the scriptures that we might be approved. Seriously investigate the means by which we establish our right to act in the sight of God.