

Express Command

Acts 22:16 “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”

The command in the passage above was given to Saul of Tarsus by Ananias after he had gone to Damascus to wait for the Lord to tell him what to do. In Acts 2:38, Peter commanded those who were gathered on the Day of Pentecost *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* In Acts 10:48, Peter who was speaking to Cornelius and other Gentiles *“commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.”* These three passages make it clear that the Lord commanded men to be baptized for the remission of their sins in the name (by the authority) of the Lord. It is vitally important as human beings, that we understand what the Lord has commanded us to do. In this lesson, we want to consider the **express command** aspect of Bible authority.

Some commands in scripture were given to specific individuals and those commands only applied to them. Other commands, such as the one regarding baptism in the first paragraph, universally apply to all men. The key is if God commanded it, men are expected to follow it. In 1 John 5:3 we are told, *“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”* The Lord gave us commands that we are able to follow and while they may not always be easy, they can always be accomplished if we decide to do so.

Sometimes it is difficult to understand which commands apply to specific people and which commands apply to all men, including us today. To help us to determine which commands apply to all men (us), a few important questions should be asked. For instance:

- **Was the command given to a specific individual and therefore only applicable to him?** Naaman was commanded by Elisha to wash in the Jordan seven times to cure his leprosy. That command was meant for him and would not apply to anyone else.
- **Does the command apply to all men?** For example, in Colossians 3:20 *“Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord”* and Colossians 3:16 *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”* These are examples of commands that were given to all men and apply in all ages.
- **Was a command that applied to all men fulfilled and therefore no longer applicable? Was an older command replaced by a newer command?** The Israelites were told in Exodus 20:8 to *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”* We know that when Jesus died on the cross, that covenant (Old Law) was fulfilled and a new covenant (New Law) replaced the older covenant (Hebrews 9). So, because we are no longer under that old covenant, those commands no longer apply to us or anyone else (Galatians 5:1-4). However, the commands that replaced it (Law of Christ), do apply to all men today.

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE BIBLE STUDY

Often times, we will see a pattern in scripture that helps us to understand when a command is universal. Going back to the command we looked at where men were commanded to be baptized, we see in Acts 2:38 the people were told to, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized...” and in Acts 3:19 we see the same command was given to a different group of people. We also see in passages like 2 Peter 3:9 that the Lord “*is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*” The pattern of these and other scriptures help us to reasonably conclude that all men should repent and be baptized. A careful examination of scripture will often help us to determine if the express command given applies to us today.

1. How would you define the term command? After you write your answer, look up a definition of command in the dictionary and document how it is defined there.

2. How can we tell if a given command applies to us today?

3. Give two examples of commands that were given that only applied to the people they were given to?

4. There were commands given regarding the use of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 14:26-33? Do those commands apply to us today? Why or why not? _____

5. Read John 13:34-35. Does this command apply to us today? If so, give some examples on how we can fulfill this command?

6. In Matthew 22:36 Jesus was asked “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law”? In verse 37 he answered “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” How do we fulfill this command today? _____

7. Read Mark 7:1-13 and explain what the Pharisees were doing with the commandment of the Lord?

8. Do the Ten Commandments apply to us today? Why or why not? Give scripture to support your answer.

9. Give two examples of commands that were given in scripture that do apply to us today? _____

10. Thought question: Do you have to follow all of the commands of your parents? Are there any exceptions? Give passages to support your answers. _____
