

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 2nd Sunday evening
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

Preacher / bulletin editor:

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“For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you,”

— John 13:15

**Servants during January:**

Songleader: Dwight (4), Stanley (11), Larry (18), Dwight (25)

Reading: Mike

Announcements: Stanley

Table: Larry, Marty, Mike

Wednesday Lesson: Larry (7), Stanley (14), Kris (21), Larry (28)

Area Meetings:

Eastside, 2/15-17, Scott Smelser;

Oakland, 2/21-25, Stephen Rouse;

Pepper Road, 2/21-25, Jesse Flowers

Hays Mill church of Christ

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Elkmont, AL 35620

The Bible . Examiner

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

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On Principle and Inference

By Doy Moyer

If you believe in principle, then you accept implication and inference.

A principle is a fundamental truth from which other laws or behaviors are derived. Upon understanding a principle, we recognize a variety of applications that derive from it. Yet the applications themselves might be unstated and we must figure out the specifics. Hebrews 5:14 speaks of the mature who have their senses trained to discern good and evil. Discernment is the ability to see a principle for what it is and make the proper applications from it. Mature people don't need everything spelled out. They can grasp a principle and make applications appropriately. That is, they are able to draw conclusions from the principles about what's right or wrong. To do such requires the ability to infer from what the principles imply.

It is not uncommon, in discussions about authority, to see the concept of “necessary inference” taken to task. Yet the same ones who will take it to

task may also speak of principles guiding their behavior. They don't realize that they are sawing off the legs upon which they wish to walk. There is no living by principle if inferences have no binding power at all, for proper applications of any principle will necessarily involve those pesky inferences. Try stating a principle without making any specific, implied applications and see how that goes over. The principle would just be an empty idea with no real-world application.

Many precepts are stated in a way that leaves us to work through the proper applications. For example, we are told, “love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful,” Lk 6:35,36. Yet how is all of this to be carried out? We can define love and mercy the way we

wish (subjective and self-willed), or we can dig further into Scripture and see exactly how God showed love and mercy. Then, we can see how to make applications in our own age. All of this requires inferring from then to now and from God's actions to ours. Without inference, there is no application.

Once again we see the inescapable principles of authority. What God has told us, shown us, and implied are on every page. We cannot rightly say, "Only commands are binding," for even then we will have crippled our abilities to make modern applications of those commands (again, try applying an ancient

command to a modern context without inferring anything about how that command should be contextualized).

Without a doubt, inferences can be unnecessary and result in an abuse of a text. However, the fact that abuse can take place does not invalidate the point. Such just drives home the need to be careful in drawing conclusions and making applications. The interpretation of Scripture needs to be attended by good reason and great care for context. That is why this particular subject is important. If we care about principle, we'll care about proper reasoning from the principle to the applications. 

Finally, in a tone of voice that can no longer be ignored, mother issues a **command**: "Get up from that couch, turn off the TV, and help me clean up your rooms." Success at last.

Example, necessary implication, statement, and command. What other forms of communication could this mother have used in order to cause these children to understand what she wanted them to do? What other forms of communication are available to all of us as we seek to cause others to understand what we want them to know and do? "Getting the point across" means we must set examples, we must necessarily infer, we must make statements, or give "orders."

A man is reading his Bible, wanting to know what God's will is. His desire is to know what kind of conduct meets with God's approval. But how is this man to know God's will?

As he reads the life of Christ and notices His teaching methods, he soon realizes that Jesus communicated His will to others in various ways. When He wanted to teach about humility He set an **example** of one way in which it

could be demonstrated, Jn 13:15. He used **necessary inference** when teaching important truths about Himself, Mt 22:41-46. When talking about entering the kingdom our Lord made a simple **statement**, Jn 3:3-5. And, when giving the Great Commission to the apostles, He gave **commands**, Mt 28:18-20.

This man also sees that the teaching methods in the epistles are no different. Inspired men urged following of **examples**, Acts 20:35; Phil 3:17; taught by **necessary inference** about the priesthood of Christ, Heb 7:11-17; made **statements** about what baptism does for us, Gal 3:27; and gave **commands** regarding disciplinary action, 2 Thess 3:6.

Examples, necessary inferences, statements, and commands: God communicates His will to us in the same way we communicate ours to others. Thus, understanding God's revelation and establishing authority for religious practices should pose no problem to the man truly desiring to know and do the Father's will.

—via Plain Talk, May 1983 

Conveying the Message

By David Smitherman

It's Saturday morning, the children are watching TV, their rooms are a mess, and mother needs their help in getting things cleaned up. The problem? How to convey that message (and hopefully not incite a riot.)

Mom has an idea. She begins by setting an **example**: doing what she wants them to do in hopes that her example will be followed. No luck.

Another approach is taken. This time mother makes a **necessary inference**. She says, "Children that don't help with cleaning their rooms don't get to go outside and play. You all are not helping clean up your rooms, so..." The kids just change positions on the couch.

But mom doesn't give up. She makes a simple **statement**: "Your rooms need to be cleaned up and I need you to help me." You would think the kids were deaf.

Remember in Prayer

Please continue to pray for **Betty; Carolyn; Deborah and Serenity; Hazel; John, Sylvia, and Paige Pollard;**

Joshua and Kayla V; Pam B, Kaylee, Julie and Violet; and Pam McNatt. 