

So I Did

The apostle Paul, in writing about the way in which Christians are to behave in Christ, reminds readers of later days that “*whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction*” (**Romans 15:4**). He states something very similar as he writes about the Israelites to the Christians in Corinth: “*Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come*” (**1 Corinthians 10:11**). It is clear that God expects peoples of all times to learn from what He has said and of what He has given examples. There is one rudimentary principle that God has established and shown from the beginning—**do what He says, when He says to do it, and how He says it is to be done.**

Creation

Did the things of creation do as God commanded? Obviously He shows this to be true from the start. “*God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light*” (**Genesis 1:3**). Thereafter, repeatedly, the phrases, “*God said*” and “*it was so,*” are used. This gives evidence of the power of His word and also His expectations of all things created, including mankind.

People of Ages Past

A very recognized man God includes in Scripture is **Noah**. He is even known by non-religious people. God uses Noah as a powerful example of the principle under discussion. In preparation for the flood He was about to send, “*God said to Noah ...*” (**Genesis 6:13**). Following the giving of all the specifications for an ark and the life to be contained in it, is the statement, “*Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did*” (**Genesis 6:22**). When it came time to enter the ark, “*The LORD said to Noah ...*” and as expected, “*Noah did according to all that the LORD had commanded him*” (**Genesis 7:1-5**).

Another man of renown is **Abraham**. Just like Noah, what God commanded him, he did—when God said and how God said. God said to him, “*Leave you country.*” He did it. God said to him, “*Leave this new land of your father and go to a land I will show you.*” He did it. God said, “*Go sacrifice your only son as a burnt offering.*” He did it [although God stopped him]. Perhaps one of the most overlooked example from Abraham is related to the establishment of circumcision. After making promises to Abraham, God said, “*Abraham, be circumcised.*” Even though he was ninety-nine years old, he did it—when God said it and how God said it—that very same day (**Genesis 17:23-27**).

Moses is well noted for doing what God commanded. For example, God gave very specific instructions to Moses and the people for the construction of a set apart place for Him to dwell among His people. In **Exodus 40** alone, at least seven times is seen that when God gave instruction, Moses did “*just as the LORD had commanded.*” Before his death, Moses tried to instill this same principle of keeping God’s commands into the hearts of the new generation of Israelites who would enter the land: “*Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it*” (**Deuteronomy 12:32**).

People of the Beginning of the Age of Christ

Jesus, in preparation for His kingdom, taught much about the kingdom and being a proper citizen of that kingdom. A proper citizen is a doer. In introducing His parable of the wise and foolish builders, Jesus said, *“Therefore everyone who **hears these words** of Mine and **acts** on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Matthew 7:24)*. Of course, the parable also shows that there will be those who will not act and the consequences of that choice.

Jewish people gathered in Jerusalem for the feast days were blessed to be the first to hear the message of the ascended Christ. Remember their question? It was, *“What shall we do?” (Acts 2:37)*. They were instructed to repent and be baptized and they acted on those instructions. This continued as more received the word (Acts 2:41).

Cornelius, a man not of Jewish ethnicity, also understood the importance of doing what God instructed. God gave Cornelius a message instructing Him to send for Peter. He did it. He reminded Peter of this very thing: *“Send to Joppa and invite Simon, who is also called Peter, to come to you; he is staying at the house of Simon the tanner by the sea.’ So I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord” (Acts 10:32-33)*. Cornelius continued to hear the commands of the LORD and was baptized.

The Lord gave commands to His **apostles** at the beginning of the age. *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Mathew 28:19-20)*. People are to be taught to observe all that the LORD commands.

People Continuing in the Age of Christ

One of the commands to early Christians was to teach others so that future generations would know God. God has seen to it that His word continues through time having been delivered through those inspired writers of Scripture. Jesus gives encouragement by letting men know that what would be written by inspiration are His words: *“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you” (John 14:26)*.

As a congregation of God’s people, we must hear God’s words and do them. When He says to care for those who are widows indeed, do we neglect, add to, or take from that command, or can it be said, “So they did”? When He says to teach by supporting and/or sending evangelists, do we neglect, add to, or take from that command, or can it be said, “So they did”? When He gives us the pattern for organization of each local church, do we neglect, add to, or take from those commands, or can it be said, “So they did”?

This is not just a collective principle, it is a personal one. When we are instructed to “put aside” or “lay by,” do I neglect, add to, or take from that command, or can I, on that last day, truly say, “So I did”? When we are told to “pray without ceasing,” do I neglect, add to, or take from that command, or can I, on that last day, truly say, “So I did”? When told to “sing” and also “to make melody in my heart,” do I neglect, add to, or take from that command, or can I, on that last day,

truly say, “So I did”? When admonished to “teach,” do I neglect, add to, or take from that command, or can I, on that last day, truly say, “So I did”? When commanded to “keep myself pure,” do I neglect, add to, or take from that command, or can I, on that last day, truly say, “So I did”? When admonished to “love,” do I neglect, add to, or take from that command, or can I, on that last day, truly say, “So I did”? When instructed to “repent and be baptized,” do I neglect, add to, or take from that command, or can I, on that last day, truly say, “So I did”? When told to “remain faithful until death,” do I neglect, add to, or take from that command, or can I, on that last day, truly say, “So I did”?

—S Scott Richardson Sr