

Biblical Examples

1Corinthians 11:1 PATTERN YOURSELVES after me [follow my example], as I imitate and follow Christ (the Messiah). AMP
Much of our activity as followers of Christ is learned from the examples found in Scripture. Often emphasize Bible examples

Authorized by approval of apostles giving force of command

Yet care should be exercised in application

Not every example is to be followed. Not every detail is binding

Consider principles needed in dealing with Bible Examples

Distinction Between Two Covenants

Two major covenants

Hebrews 10:9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first in order to establish the second.

First with Israel; Law of Moses - Old Testament

Hebrews 8:8-9 For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, When I will effect A new covenant With the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers ON the day when I took them by the hand TO lead them out of the land of Egypt; For they did not continue in MY covenant, And I did not care for them, says the Lord.

New covenant promised even before the old ended

Jeremiah 31:31-32 Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord.

This covenant replaced the old

Examples of old covenant have no authority under the new

Using old as authority for action under new is reckless and dangerous

Useful in learning how God deals with people and His expectations

Help establish principles and better understand relationship with God

1Corinthians 10:6-11 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play." Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 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.

Hebrews 12:25 See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.

Hebrews 2:2-3 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

Hebrews 4:11 Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.

James 5:10 As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Jude 7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

They provide warnings against sin, understanding of punishment, and examples of patience in trial, which are all needed today.

They provide no demonstration of being "born again," no guidance regarding worship or organization in the Body of Christ

Abel's sacrifice, David's song worship, nor the thief on the cross illustrate anything but broad moral principles. They cannot direct our worship or salvation under a new and different covenant.

Though Jesus is an example in suffering and obedience, His sabbath keeping and temple worship belong to another covenant.

1Peter 2:21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

Hebrews 5:8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

Distinction Between Incidental & Essential

Even in new covenant examples, not all details are binding

Incidental - occurring merely by chance or without intention or calculation

Essential - of the utmost importance

Apostles baptized in Jerusalem, must we?

Incidentals vary between examples; essentials remain the same

Baptism - in Jerusalem, Philippi, Ephesus; always water, immersion, confessing believer

Symbolic act requires all things necessary to the symbol

Lord Supper - Body symbol >> unleavened bread, Blood symbol >> fruit of vine; upper room? cup?

Incidentals cannot be bound while essentials must be bound

Distinction Between Permanent & Temporary

Some new covenant examples involved things which God clearly demonstrates to be temporary

Keeping such examples today would show little respect for God's boundaries

Some examples involve customs which were temporary or tied to a certain civilization

Extending hospitality via foot washing was certainly welcome in a society that travelled mainly by foot via unpaved roads.

Greetings have changed since the apostles urged a "holy kiss"

Some examples are a result of temporary world conditions

The needs of thousands of new believers away from home in Jerusalem at Pentecost are much different than our needs today

Acts 2:44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;

Acts 4:32 And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them.

Paul's advice to the unmarried was due to present conditions

1Corinthians 7:26 I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is.

Certainly, the miraculous was temporary

Acts 15:12 All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.

Such signs proved God's involvement & authority

Yet Paul said they would pass away

1Corinthians 13:8-10 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.

Even the apostles were temporary

Requirements limit office to time of Christ

Acts 1:21-22 Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us— beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection."

Must exercise care with Bible examples

Some feel everything in Bible is temporary and 'new and better ways' have been found.

Men of old, with such ideas suffered the consequences

Leviticus 10:1-2 Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.

2Samuel 6:6-7 But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it. And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God.

The principle shown by God's instruction to Moses helps us here:

Hebrews 8:5 "See," He says, "that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain."

Yet blindly following any example detracts from their authority

Ignoring the incidental and temporary nature or the covenant of any example makes a burden that cannot be lifted.