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Lakeland Hills Leader

Proving The Practices Of Christianity

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We have learned in this series how important direct commands, necessary inference, and divinely approved examples are to our Christian practices, and I hope to continue this week with more of the same.

Working to evangelize is a priority of God's people [Acts 8:4], and some are especially charged to the task [2Timothy 4:2]. Also, to support those financially is a necessity as well, *I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? For it is written in the Law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel. [1Corinthians 9:8-14]*

In this, Paul not only proves by way of illustration (thus showing by necessary inference), but goes on to directly say the proclaimer of the gospel is to get his living from the gospel. Therefore we conclude that we need to raise money for this need. Of course an individual or individuals could supply that need since it's an approved work, but likewise a church may do so as well. Paul says to the Philippian church that no other church shared with him in giving and receiving but the Philippians alone, indicating the authority for churches to support the preaching of the gospel.

Therefore, we necessarily infer the collection for the needy saints in Jerusalem [1Corinthians 16:1,2], though recorded for that purpose, would also be authoritative for collecting for any other authorized work. Likewise, the method of collection as indicated in this text is authoritative. *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. [1Corinthian 16:1,2]*

Paul, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, directed the churches of Galatia (as he directed the Corinthians) to collect on the first day of the week, by a direct command. To lay it aside (establish a treasury) is a direct command, in order to complete this promised gift. So, we can necessarily infer that the same method applies to other works requiring money. Therefore, any work authorized for a church needs a treasury to do that work effectively as God has given her.

As we have noted, the church is given instruction to take up a collection on the first day of the week to provide for the needy saints, but what about collections for other needy persons? All instances of collection from the church is directed to saints. We conclude this by divinely approved example, since the church is the one practicing the benevolence. Notice Acts 11:27, the prophet Agabus, *"stood up and began to*

indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world.” And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea. [v. 29]

If the church was meant to supply the needs of non-saints, then this would have been an occasion to show us by example. Instead, the text explicitly says that the disciples sent aid to relieve the brethren of Judea and no other. We will add that the pattern for distribution to the needy brethren was directed by the elders of the church [v. 30], which in turn gives a divinely approved example for distribution.

We have divinely approved examples of one church assisting the brethren among themselves [Acts 4:32-36], and as we have seen in Acts 11, one church sending aid to more than one church, and in the collection addressed in 1Corinthians 16, several churches sending aid to one church [2Corinthians 8 & 9]. By divine example, we necessarily conclude that church benevolence is restricted to helping disciples.

* "Better the storm with Christ than smooth waters without Him!"

* "Christ replaced the dark door of death with the shining gate of life!"

* "Christians never see the last of each other!"

* "Christ's return is certain. Don't miss it for the world!"

* "Bibles that are falling apart usually belong to people who aren't!"