

New Testament Church

Lesson 7

How God Communicates His Will to Us

Illustration

- Hired for a new job, told to do the following on your first day:
 1. Load boxes on that truck.
 2. Drivers allowed 30 minutes for lunch.
 3. Drivers expected to abide by the law.
 4. Ride with Fred for the first week; he'll show you the route and how we do things.
- How did you learn to start loading the truck?
- Are you allowed to drive over the speed limit?
- Allowed to stop and get a sandwich? A burrito? Required to do either?
- Why is so important to ride with Fred?

God communicates with us...

- The same way we communicate with one another.
 - He **tells** us what He wants.
 - He **shows** us what He wants.
 - He **implies** what He wants by what He has told us and shown us (leads us to conclusions, which requires us to draw inferences).

God used all three with Peter

- Acts 10
 - God **showed** Peter a vision: the great sheet descending from heaven to the earth, which contained all kinds of different animals (11–12).
 - When the three men from Cornelius' house arrived, God **told** Peter, “Arise therefore, and go with them, doubting nothing, for I have sent them” (20).
 - Peter understood what God had **implied**: “God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean...In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him” (28, 34–35).

Example: Lord's Supper Observance

- How do we know to observe the Lord's Supper?
 - By what God **told** us: "Do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:25).
- How do we know to observe it on the first day of the week?
 - By what God has **shown** us: "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread..." (Acts 20:7).
 - Is any other day mentioned?

Example: Lord's Supper Observance

- How do we know to observe it every first day of the week?
 - By what God **implies** in what He has told us and shown us:
 - Disciples came together from the very beginning to observe the Lord's supper (Acts 2:42).
 - They came together on the first day of the week to observe it (Acts 20:7).
 - Meeting on the first day of the week was a regular, weekly occurrence (1 Cor. 16:2: "on the first day of every week..." (NASV, ESV).

How does God tell us His will?

- He issues **commandments**, in different forms:
 - “Do not lie to one another” (Col. 3:9). “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church...” (Eph. 5:25).
 - “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). “Unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).
 - “How shall we who died to sin live any longer any it?” (Romans 6:2).
 - “He who believes and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).

How does God show us His will?

- Primarily through **examples**—He shows us individuals and churches doing what pleases Him.
 - “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1).
 - “Brethren, join in following my example...” (Phil. 3:17).
 - “He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked” (1 John 2:6).
- Local churches were taught the same thing (1 Cor. 4:17)—the commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:33), so whatever they did in obedience to the Lord is what we must still do today. (See also 1 Thess. 1:6–8.)

How does God imply His will?

- What He **says** and **shows** often carries important **implications**.
 - “The two shall become one flesh” (Matthew 19:3–6); “I am the God of Abraham...” (Matthew 22:22–33); “The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool” (Matthew 22:41–46).
 - Think about all the figurative language in the N.T.
 - Even some explicit commands require some inferences.
 - Safeguard: Often provided a number of passages from which to infer (Lord’s supper, infant baptism).
 - None of N.T. addressed directly to us (e.g., Rev. 2–3).