

DO WE HAVE A **PATTERN** TO FOLLOW FROM SCRIPTURE WITH REGARD TO NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING?

INTRODUCTION:

1. Increasingly in recent years it is being said in certain quarters that the New Testament was written more as a love letter from God than a blueprint or pattern for Christians of all ages to follow.
2. To be a "patternist, it is said, is to ignore the historical/cultural context of the first century and to attempt to bind practices on later generations and other cultures which were intended only for Christians of the ancient world.
3. What about this? Have we overstepped the Lord's authority by extending biblical commands far beyond their legitimate recipients?
4. Have we no God-given pattern that is timeless in its application?
5. We must freely acknowledge that some New Testament injunctions were culturally oriented.
 - a. Nearly all Christians have recognized that foot washing (*JOHN 13:14-15*) and wearing of the veil to cover the head (*1COR 11:5, 13*) was a cultural thing.
 - b. We recognize for the most part I think that Jesus was teaching his disciples to serve one another when He washed their feet. This lesson is much larger than washing of feet and since this is not our custom today as it was in theirs, we must look to other ways that we can serve which will fulfill this command.
 - c. If Christian women live in the countries that still have the custom of women wearing a veil in public, they should certainly do so to avoid offending the people around them.
6. There are many things however that do not fall under the category of tradition and of which we have definite instruction that would demand following the pattern given in the scripture.
7. Let's look at some of these things.

I. BIBLICAL AFFIRMATIONS OF PATTERNS

A. The classic example of a God-given pattern pertains to instructions given on Mt. Sinai about the construction of the tabernacle and its furnishings.

1. Moses was to make everything according to the pattern given by God.
EXOD 25:40 See that you make them according to the **pattern** shown you on the mountain.
2. This reference is quoted twice in the New Testament.
ACTS 7:44 "Our forefathers had the tabernacle of the Testimony with them in the desert. *It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen.*
HEB 8:5 They serve at a sanctuary that is a *copy and shadow* of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "*See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.*"
3. The Greek word for "**pattern**" is *tupos*. *Pattern* (*tupos*), is the heavenly original, which Moses was to use as the **form, blueprint**, for his work.
 - a. God's orders were **build it according to the pattern** shown you in

- the mountain.** Whatever Moses was given in the mountain was what you saw when the tabernacle was finished.
- b. **Patterns have identity. All things coming from the same pattern look exactly alike.** This was my job as a tool and die maker, to take a blueprint and make a tool that would produce exactly the same part for an airplane, each identical, interchangeable one with another. Every tool I made from that blueprint was checked by an inspector who used the same blueprint to check the tool to see that it was exactly like the blueprint. If the tool differed only minutely, a red tag was placed on the tool; a rejection tag that said this tool did not match the blueprint specifications exactly. It only had to be off the slightest bit to be rejected.
 - c. I would then go to the inspector where we would check our measuring devices (micrometers, etc.) with a standard of measurement. If I was wrong, the tool was rejected and had to be re-worked to fit the pattern. If the inspector's measuring device was off, he adjusted it and passed the tool.
4. The word **tupos** is used to instruct the preacher to be an example of good works, (living according to the teaching of God's Word).
TIT 2:7 In everything set them an **example** by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness. (NIV).
TIT 2:7 In all things shewing thyself a **pattern** of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, (KJV).
 5. Pattern, then, is a design for others to imitate. If we are to be New Testament Christians and reproduce the New Testament church there must be a New Testament pattern to imitate. (Otherwise how could we ever know what God desired His New Testament people to be or do?).

II. EXAMPLES OF NEW TESTAMENT PATTERNS

- A. **The distinct identity of New Testament Doctrine or Teaching.** For us to know that we are doing God's will we must have something to go by, a form, pattern, by which we may check our doctrine. Let's look at some places, which reveal this pattern or form in the New Testament.
- B. **That Form of Teaching.** Paul writes in **ROM 6:17** But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly **obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted.**
 1. This **form(Same Greek word translated pattern) of teaching** is that which was delivered to them from God. They obeyed that very word of God, the word of instruction given whereby they could understand, obey, and be assured that they were, in fact, saved, children of God.
 2. The Galatian Christians were warned not to accept any other doctrine, or gospel.
GAL 1:6. I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a **different gospel-- 7.**
which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we

preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! 9. As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

NOTE: The reason that it was no gospel at all was because it didn't fit the original gospel, the pattern that was preached by the apostles.

3. No other **FORM, OR PATTERN** can be preached and still be **THAT FORM**, which the Roman and Galatian Christians obeyed.
- C. **The Truth.** Our Lord says, **JOHN 8:31** To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "**If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**"
1. The "truth" is not truth in general. There is much truth in the Bible. Moses crossed the Red Sea On dry ground. That is truth, but it is not the truth Jesus was speaking of which makes us free.
 2. That truth which makes us free from sin is a distinct body of truth.
 - a. Peter records, **1PET 1:22** **Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth** so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.
 - b. **Here is a truth, which can be obeyed.** Not all truth can be obeyed, but this particular body of truth can be.
 3. Jesus says you shall **KNOW the truth**. You cannot obey what you do not know: therefore, this truth can be known, distinguished from all errors, and obeyed. **This truth has an identity, which will not leave you in doubt.**
- D. **The Faith.** As a fully developed system of religion Christianity is often distinguished in Scripture under the title of "**the faith**". The New Testament speaks of "the faith" as both singular and distinctive. So distinctive is the Christian faith that it can be preached, heard and obeyed with certainty.
1. **GAL 1:23** They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now **preaching the faith** he once tried to destroy."
 2. **ACTS 24:24** And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning **the faith** in Christ.
 3. **ACTS 6:7** So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to **the faith**.
 4. Christians are exhorted to "contend for the faith". **JUDE 1:3** Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to **contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints**.
 5. Paul commanded the church **PHIL 1:27** Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, **contending as one man for the faith of the gospel**.
 6. The New Testament affirms that there is only "**one faith**". **EPH 4:4**. There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- 5. one Lord, **one faith**, one baptism;
 7. If the Christian faith is not one unchanging system of religious truth it is

- absurd to talk about obeying it and contending for it. We could neither contend for it nor obey it if it did not have a ***distinctive doctrinal identity***.
8. The New Testament further teaches that God provided so that we can reach the unity of the faith.
- EPH 4:11***. It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12. to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13. ***until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ***.
- a. It is not merely stated that we are to "attain" (ASV), "reach" (NIV), "the unity of *the faith*" (ASV), "unity *in the faith*" (NIV), *of some sort*, but rather, that we are to "attain", "***reach unity in the faith***."
 - b. In order to attain or reach unity in the faith, which Paul spoke of, one must be able to ***identify the faith*** of which he spoke.
 - c. In order for ***that faith to produce a unity*** for all believers, it must have certain ***distinctive elements***, which are both ***absolute and attainable, and which make the faith essentially what it is***.
 - d. God has never given a command to do something that is not ***clearly defined*** so that men can have a clear view of what He commanded. ***Nor has He given a command that is impossible to achieve***.
 - e. When Christians honestly accept these ***distinctive elements of the faith and practice them as revealed in the Word, they will attain the unity*** of that New Testament faith.
9. What we, as Christians, must do is be able to ***distinguish what the faith is and what opinion is*** so that we ***do not bind our opinions on others and demand that our opinion is the faith***.

III. THE APOSTOLIC PATTERN

A. Looking at the book of 1 Corinthians should convince us that the apostle Paul, who was led by the Holy Spirit in what he said, ***demand that we follow the pattern he laid down for all the churches to follow***.

1. Paul was led by God to say what he said and so whatever he says, is just what God wanted him to say.

1COR 2:1. When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 2. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. 4. ***My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power. 5. so***

that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

1COR 2:11. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way ***no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God***. 12. ***We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us***. 13. ***This is what we speak, not in words taught us by***

human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

B. Paul speaking by inspiration demanded unity, which could only come from following the same pattern.

1. **1COR 1:10** I appeal to you, brothers, *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.*
 - a. In the name of simply means by the authority of. This carries with it the full force of a command.
 - b. So when Paul gives instructions to the Corinthians or anyone else, it is not merely a good suggestion that can be embraced or rejected, it is a command from God.
 - c. To speak the same thing demands that there must be a guide, a perfect blueprint to go by. **That blueprint is the faith that will bring unity.**
2. Paul points out that he sent Timothy to remind them of his ways which are in Christ, **just as he preached everywhere in every church.**
1COR 4:17 For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.
 - a. Paul preached the same thing in every congregation. **There is no difference in the doctrine for one church and another. It is the same for all. A pattern is therefore established which can be recognized and taught.**
3. **1COR 7:17** Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. **This is the rule I lay down in all the churches.**
 - a. Without getting in to what Paul laid down in all the churches, we see that he demanded the same thing to be taught and practiced in all the congregations. The universal church falls under the obligation to follow the pattern laid down by the Holy Spirit.

IV. THE PREACHER'S CHARGE

A. To the evangelist comes this commandment:

1TIM 1:3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, **stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer**

1. The evangelist is commanded to charge men not to teach a different doctrine.
 - a. **In the name of all that is logical and reasonable, how could one doctrine possibly be as good as another and at the same time have the evangelist to fulfill his God given charge!**
 - b. Unless the evangelist can measure his teaching against the teaching in the New Testament and know that they are the same he cannot obey this command.
 - c. To charge men not to teach a different doctrine, **there must be a pattern by which the preacher can tell the difference.**
 - d. That **pattern is the truth**, which is to be defended against error,

but such a pattern of doctrine insists upon distinctiveness and identity in the gospel.

JUDE 1:3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to **contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.**

GAL 1:6. I am astonished that you are so quickly **deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-- 7. which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!** 9.

As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

V. THE CHARGE TO THE CHURCH

A. Hold to the Pattern.

2TIM 1:13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. (NIV)

2TIM 1:13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. (KJV).

1. The apostle clearly commands the church to hold to the pattern of sound words delivered by the apostles and prophets (EPH 3:3-5).
2. The sound words of the apostles form themselves into a distinct doctrine which can be categorized and identified; Such as the doctrine of atonement, the law of pardon and induction into the church, the organizational structure of the church, the worship by the church, etc.
3. The church is expected to identify these doctrines and hold on to them by practice and preaching.
4. Once again a pattern is obviously revealed as essential to New Testament Christianity.

VI. THE WORD OF GOD IS LIKE A SEED, IT ALWAYS PRODUCES LIKE KIND

A. The parable of the sower, or soils relates the following things about sowing. (LUKE 8:4-15).

1. The sower is to sow on all kinds of soils.
 - a. Along the path.
 - b. Rocky soil.
 - c. On Thorny soil.
 - d. Good soil.
2. The seed sown is the same seed for all kinds of soil, the Word of God. (LUKE 8:11 "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God.)
3. Seed brings forth after it's kind.
GEN 1:11. Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to

their various kinds." And it was so. 12. The land produced vegetation: plants **bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.** And God saw that it was good.

- a. Never have apple seeds brought forth oranges or potatoes they always bring forth apples.
- b. **When the word of Christ is sown into the hearts of men, it will bring forth Christians, not denominationalists.**
- c. **The pattern of New Testament words will produce the true New Testament church.**
- d. **The Word cannot produce two different kinds of Christians, nor many different kinds of churches.**

CONCLUSION:

1. It becomes obvious through Scripture that New Testament Christianity possesses a distinct identity.
2. **It is through study of the identity of the church that recognition and reproduction of that original first century church of Christ can be accomplished at any time anywhere in the world.**
3. We must never be discouraged by the failure of brethren to abide by the **pattern**. This does not mean that there is no pattern; it just means that they have chosen not to abide in that which God has laid down, which will bring God's condemnation! **MATT 15:7.** You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: 8. **"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 9. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."**
4. When the church gets off course, we as Christians need to get it back on course. We must not abandon it or bad-mouth it. It needs help not criticism. **Help comes through teaching the truth, following the pattern, holding to the faith!**