

Principles of Authority

1. When God Says Nothing
2. The Difference Between Specific and General Instruction
3. The Difference Between Aids and Alterations, or Aids and Additions

Common element in these practices?

- Observing Christmas and Easter as religious holidays.
- Local churches providing recreation, entertainment for its members.
- Local churches providing secular education for its members.
- Local churches using instruments in worship.

In regard to all these...

- The New Testament says nothing about them.
 - God has nowhere **told** us to do these things (through any of the various ways He issues commands).
 - God has nowhere **shown** us these things being done.
 - God has nowhere even **implied** these things should be done.
- But...God did not specifically forbid them, either.
 - Does this mean we have His permission?
 - **God's silence—does it permit, or prohibit?

Suppose Blake Denton is writing a paper on the causes of the Civil War.

Would he cite an author for supporting a position, if the author never said that?

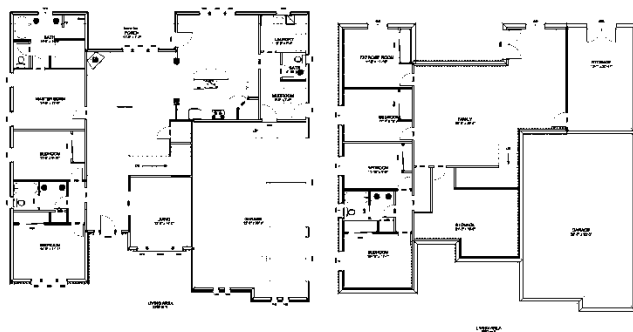
That would be a misrepresentation of the author.



Complete Instruction Manual

- Jesus promised the apostles the Holy Spirit would guide them into **all** truth (John 16:13).
- The “**all** truth” revealed to them—they wrote it down for all generations to read and understand (Eph. 3:1–5).
- Contains “**all** things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3); designed to make us “**complete**, thoroughly equipped for **every** good work” (2 Tim. 3:16–17).
- This all truth (“the faith”) was “**once for all** delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3), so it’s **finished, complete**.

Illustration: Your House Plans



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Would you be upset if your contractor added some things to your house plans?

Is he allowed to add additional rooms to the house if you didn't specifically forbid him to do so?

When given **complete** instructions, is it necessary to be told everything NOT to do?

Do not add to what God has revealed

- “Every word of God is pure...do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar” (Prov. 30:5–6).
- “Be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left” (Deut. 5:32).
- “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take from it (Deut. 12:32).

Do not add to what God has revealed

- “Be strong and very courageous...do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left...you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it” (Josh. 1:7–8).
- “Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son” (2 John 1:9).

Do not add to what God has revealed

- “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18).
- Even Jesus refused to teach anything other than what the Father told Him (John 7:14–18; 8:26–29, 40; 12:47–50; 14:24; 17:8, 14).
- “If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God...that...God may be glorified” (1 Peter 4:11).

From heaven or from men?

- That's the question Jesus asked in Matthew 21:25, and in so doing recognized only two sources of authority for a religious teaching or practice.
- We're specifically warned NOT to teach as doctrine the commandments of men (Matthew 15:9; Colossians 2:20–23).
- How can we tell the difference? How do we know if it's from heaven or men?

Silent and unspecified are not equal

- God doesn't specify we can use songbooks, but He is not silent about them.
- God doesn't specify we can fly on a plane to preach in Kenya, but He is not silent about it.
- God doesn't specify we can build classrooms on to our church building, but He is not silent about them.
- Two principles to consider:
 - The difference between general and specific instruction.
 - The difference between aids and alterations (or additions).

Grocery List—Did I Follow Instructions?

- Grits
- Heinz® ketchup
- Clorox® Lemon Scented Bleach (1 gallon)
- Pillsbury® Hungry Jack Biscuits (10)
- Instant Banana Pudding (6 serving box)
- Cereal (3 boxes)
- Apples (1 doz.)
- Boneless Chicken Breasts
- Le Sueur® English Peas (2 cans)
- Skim Milk (1 gal.)
- Purchased Martha White® instant grits?
- Substituted chicken thighs?
- Bought Rocky Road® ice cream?
- Purchased 6 apples and 6 oranges?
- Pushed a shopping cart through the store? Carried groceries home in plastic bags?
- Purchased 12 yellow apples and 1 watermelon?