

Walking in the Footsteps of Biblical Examples

As we wind down the application portion of our study, one more issue ought to be addressed. When it comes to the examples we find in the New Testament of God's word, what should we look for? When are they binding? How can we discern what details within those examples are incidental and which ones are significant?

From time to time, it's helpful to rigorously analyze why one example should rightly be understood to be instructive while another is not. Exercises like this can protect us from concluding that we can't expect to find instruction in examples. They may even equip us to recognize some overlooked instructions in New Testament examples.

A Case Study

Consider the description of the disciples' assembly in Acts 20:7-8.

On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered.

Luke has preserved quite a few details for us in just these two sentences.

- ▶ It was the first day of the week.
- ▶ The disciples were gathered together.
- ▶ They had gathered together to break bread.
- ▶ Paul addressed the disciples who were gathered.
- ▶ He intended to depart the next day.
- ▶ He prolonged his speech until midnight.
- ▶ The disciples were gathered in an upper room.
- ▶ There were many lamps in the upper room.

Take the time to carefully think about these details. How should we treat them? How should they be applied today? Should they *all* be applied? If not, which ones should be applied, and how can we know? Here they are again. Which details continue to carry modern significance?

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In the space below, rewrite which details you checked as continuing to carry modern significance. Beside each one, back up your answer using the Bible. Why did you check the details that you did?