

He Did All that God Commanded Him

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As we study through the first few chapters of Genesis, it's sad to see the degradation of mankind. Those that were servants of God intermingled with those that followed the ways of men. (Gen. 6:1-2) We see that things progress to the point that "*The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of his heart was only evil continually.*" (6:5) What's even more disturbing is that mankind was so far removed from where God would have them be that it says, "*the Lord regretted that He had made man...and it grieved Him to His heart.*" (6:6)

How awful! Man was made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27) and had the ability to submit to the Lord's will yet chose to resist Him. There was though one man left that provided some manner of hope for mankind: "*But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.*" (6:8)

The world was so full of sin that God decided to punish mankind by way of a flood, however God gave some instructions to the righteous Noah in order to preserve mankind. (6:13-7:5)

What did Noah do? For good reason, by inspiration Moses seems to put strong emphasis on one fact of Noah's behavior: "***He did all that God commanded him.***" (Genesis 6:22; 7:5,9,16)

This behavior was a major contrast to the rest of mankind. They did what they wanted, whenever they wanted, and they had no regard for what their Creator desired. However, Noah was a man that was righteous, was blameless in his generation, and who walked with God. (6:9)

Remember, the book of Genesis was written by Moses and it was meant to teach the Israelites and eventually us lessons that would help us faithfully serve God and learn from past mistakes. What do you think the lesson was that Moses by inspiration was trying to get across? It doesn't take a scholar to understand the message here... **it's very important to do as God desires.**

If it is very important to do as God desires, then it's vital for us to seek to know His will. Throughout the history of the world, God has communicated with mankind in different ways. In some cases, we see God communicate directly with man as He did with Noah. In other cases, God used dreams, visions, and the casting of lots to reveal His will. At times, He revealed His will through prophets. He also spoke to us through His Son. (Heb. 11:1-2) Christ taught His apostles God's will and they in turn taught it, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to others. (Matt. 28:19-20) The early church also serves as an example of what it looks like when you devote yourself to this teaching. (Acts 2:42)

For those of us that didn't live during those times, God has through inspiration provided us His word in the scriptures of the Bible. (II Timothy 3:16-17) So for us, we can read His words in the Bible to see what He's trying to communicate to us about His will for us. Therefore, if we seek to know His will the Bible is our only source today.

When we communicate what we desire to others we either (1) tell them, (2) show them, or (3) make implications. Our God communicates His will in the same way. A popular way of describing this is that God expresses His will through (1) commands, (2) examples, and (3) necessary inference.

Noah provides for us a good example to think through some points about **commands** and **necessary inferences**. Let's think through some points about God's instructions to Noah and make some applications.

When God commands something, we should do it. As God did with Noah, He gave him some direct commands on what He wanted Him to do. When God gave a command, Noah wouldn't have been doing *all* that God commanded had he deviated from those commands by doing something that he had decided upon. Had he made something besides an ark or failed to enter with his family and the rest of the animals, Noah and his family wouldn't have been brought safely through the water as I Peter 3:20 describes. As far as communication is concerned, commands are perhaps the most basic and easily understood.

When God is specific, we shouldn't use personal liberty. Notice that within God's commands, there were those with varying degrees of specificity. He directed Noah to specifically use gopher wood. (6:14) He gave Noah specific dimensions. (6:15) He told him specifically that he wanted three decks. (6:16) If God had simply commanded, "Build an ark" then Noah would have been able to use some personal judgment on the material, the size, and the design of the ark itself. Perhaps if Noah were making decisions about the dimensions and material on his own the ark would have come out different. However, we know that where God made specific instructions... Noah submitted to God's will.

God makes certain implications within His instructions where we should use good judgment. As we notice reading through God's commands to Noah, we saw a lot of specific instructions that had to be followed. However, one obvious area to which God gave no instruction was the tools He wanted Noah to use. To make an ark to God's specifications, obviously (*implication*) it had to be put together. Noah could use his bare hands I suppose, but God made no requirement for this and this would have been quite inefficient. God was silent on this part of His instructions which implies that Noah should use good judgment. He would have given some consideration and selected tools and aids that would help him efficiently construct an ark to God's specifications. Also note that those tools wouldn't be anything that would change God's specifications.

We ought to learn from the example of Noah as one who did all that God commanded. We should be sure to seek and follow all of God's commands for us. We should take great care to note where God has been specific and be sure that we don't alter His commands according to our own desires. We should also use good judgment in the cases where God has implied the necessity of a tool or aid without using something that will alter God's instructions.

When it comes to God's plan of salvation we should submit to His will and instructions. When it comes to His design for the home, the organization of the church, the instructions to the church, etc. we shouldn't alter those things where God has given instructions. When it comes to worshipping God, we should pay careful attention to how He wants us to do so. We ought to avoid the temptation to live and act according to our own desires when God has told us to live and act another way.

If we want to be among those that God finds favor in, we need to seek and submit to His will and live righteously as Noah did. If we don't, the Lord will see that our heart is contrary to His will and as a result wicked. If we don't, it will grieve the Lord's heart. Let's seek to please the Lord by doing all that He has commanded us.