

# Hold Fast The Pattern

Lesson 1



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

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## Lesson 1

Learn about the pattern God has given for your life and why it is important

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Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

**Study Number:** DGW13

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**About the author:** My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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**My plea:** It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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## Hold Fast The Pattern

# Lesson 1

In 2 Timothy 1:13, Paul instructed Timothy: “Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”

True disciples of Jesus Christ are truth-seekers. To some who had believed in Him, Jesus said, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32). Therefore, true disciples of Jesus Christ will hold fast the pattern of sound words. True disciples of Jesus Christ will not be interested in abandoning this pattern or in changing this pattern in any way – for any reason!

The purpose of this two-part study is to focus on some questions we need to be asking ourselves in light of the teaching in 2 Timothy 1:13. It is my sincere hope and prayer that you desire to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ – and will desire to discover and cling to the pattern that God has revealed! Holding fast to the pattern of sound words is the only way that you can be pleasing to God!

In this first lesson, we want to focus on three questions: (1) Is there a pattern to follow? (2) Where do we find the pattern? (3) What is the importance of following the pattern?

## ***Is There A Pattern To Follow?***

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### **A good question!**

The question, “Is there a pattern to follow?” is a good question! If you accept that there is a God and accept that this God has revealed a pattern, you

must follow this pattern in order to please Him. Therefore, it is important to know whether such a pattern exists or not! Is there a specific pattern to follow? Or, can we simply live in whatever way we desire to live?

### **Why a pattern is needed**

Throughout the pages of God’s word, you can read about patterns God has revealed for individuals to follow Him. You see, mankind could not know the mind of God or please Him unless He would reveal His will to mankind. Jeremiah 10:23 says, “O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.” That is, mankind is not capable of knowing how to please God unless God tells us how to do so!

Isaiah 55:8-9 explains why this is so: “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.’” That is, God is so much greater and wiser than mankind that it is simply an impossibility for mankind to know the mind and ways of God – unless God reveals what His will is!

Certainly, there are many times when mankind will simply attempt to live according to His own ideas, thinking that he is “wise” enough to know how to live in a way that is pleasing to God – by himself! However, God said that His “foolishness” is “wiser than men” (1 Corinthians 1:25). Furthermore, God warns: “There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death” (Proverbs 14:12).

Therefore, without a God-given pattern, mankind would simply not know what he needs to do in order to be pleasing to His Creator! Everyone who has ever lived or who will ever live would simply be wandering around trying to find the true meaning of life and trying to find true religion for himself/herself.

Actually, this is an accurate picture of the world today. Although God has given mankind a pattern to follow (as we’ll discuss throughout this study), many have either never looked to this pattern or have rejected this pattern. So, the majority of those

who are living today are attempting to define what “happiness” is, what “success” is, what “virtue” is, what “Christianity” should look like, etc. They are following their own inventions and ideas; but, they fail to realize that these man-made inventions and ideas are leading them to eternal spiritual death!

## Examples of Bible patterns

As I mentioned, God has revealed His will to mankind throughout the history of this world in “patterns” of what He expects from them. Let’s consider some of these.

### (1) God’s law in the Garden of Eden.

Whenever God created man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, God gave him a law to live by (a pattern to conduct his life by). Consider what is recorded in Genesis 2:15-17: “Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’”

The God-given pattern was clear. Adam was permitted to eat of all of the trees in the Garden – *except* the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. This was the recognized standard (pattern) for their conduct – as Eve was even able to identify this pattern to the tempter, in Genesis 3:1-3.

Adam and Eve needed to hold fast to this pattern! This pattern was clearly understood – just as the consequence for violating this pattern was understood. In no uncertain terms, God stated that the consequence for violating His pattern of conduct was death (He said, “in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die”). The only way they could be pleasing to God was to hold fast to this pattern!

**(2) Noah and the ark.** As God saw that mankind was continually wicked on the earth, God saw that Noah was righteous – and Noah found favor in God’s sight (Genesis 6:5-8). As the result, God determined that He would destroy the wickedness of the world by sending a world-wide flood – and that He would save Noah and Noah’s family from this flood by means of an ark.

In Genesis 6:13-16, God gives Noah a definitive pattern for how this ark was to be constructed: “And God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.’”

Consider the pattern God revealed for the ark’s construction. It was to be built out of gopherwood. It was to be covered with pitch on both the inside and the outside. It was to be 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. It was to have one window and one door. And, it was to have three stories, a lower, second, and third story.

Hebrews 11:7 says, “By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.” So, it was in faith and in reverence to God (“godly fear”) that Noah prepared this ark for the saving of his household. Noah recognized that the only way that he and his family would be saved from the destruction God was preparing to bring upon the world was *if* he prepared this ark according to God’s pattern! Noah recognized that he could not make any “improvements” to God’s pattern – or take any “shortcuts” in the construction of the ark! Noah needed to hold fast to this pattern!

Think about it for a moment. What if Noah would have chosen to deviate from the pattern God gave him? What if he had decided to use oak instead of gopherwood (perhaps it would have been easier to come by, perhaps Noah would have thought it would build a better boat, etc.)? What if Noah would have made the ark a little smaller than the pattern specified (perhaps to cut down on the amount of work to prepare the ark)? Would Noah still have been pleasing to God? Would God have spared Noah? I

believe we can correctly assume that He would *not* have been spared!

**(3) The Law of Moses.** After God delivered the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, He gave them a law that would govern them until He would establish a new covenant after His Son would come to this earth. This Law was revealed to Moses when the Israelites were at Mount Sinai (read beginning in Exodus 19).

The Law that was revealed to Moses was the pattern that God expected His people to live their lives by, to keep His people holy (separated from the ways of evil). As they entered this covenant with the Almighty God, they agreed that they would keep these laws – and God agreed to be with and bless them.

Throughout the second half of the book of Exodus as well as the books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, you can read about the Law that God gave to His people to live by. This Law included a pattern for their own moral conduct, how to conduct themselves toward others, how to serve the Lord, how to offer sacrifices that would please God, the construction of the tabernacle and its furnishings, etc.

Therefore, this Law was a complete pattern for how God wanted the Israelites to live their lives – so that they could be pleasing to Him. And, if they desired to please God and receive the blessings that He promised to His people, they needed to follow this pattern. God warned them on many occasions about the consequences of disobeying this pattern (see Leviticus 26 as an example). Furthermore, there are numerous examples demonstrating consequences God gave to those who violated His instructions.

One example of this is found in the story of Nadab and Abihu. Nadab and Abihu were priests (those responsible for offering sacrifices to God on behalf of the people). They were two sons of Aaron, the high priest. They had been instructed in the pattern God had revealed for making sacrifices to Him. However, consider what is said in Leviticus 10:1-2: “Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the

Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.” These two individuals failed to follow God’s pattern – and they suffered the consequence! Rather than following God’s pattern, they offered strange/profane fire to God that He “had not commanded them.”

**(4) The tabernacle and its furnishings.** Part of the Law of Moses included the instructions (the pattern) for the tabernacle and its furnishings (read Exodus 25-40). The tabernacle would be the place God would meet with the people and the sacrifices would be offered. Therefore, everything about this place was expected to be holy and according to the God-given pattern.

Many Bible passages reveal that these instructions represented a pattern. In Exodus 25:8-9, God instructed Moses, “And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.” Exodus 26:30 says, “And you shall raise up the tabernacle according to its pattern which you were shown on the mountain.” Numbers 8:4 says that the lampstand was made “According to the pattern which the Lord had shown Moses.” Acts 7:44 says that Moses had been instructed to make the tabernacle “according to the pattern that he had seen.” Finally, Hebrews 8:5 also makes reference to the command given to Moses to make “all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”

Clearly, then, there was a God-given pattern concerning how the tabernacle was to be constructed. There was a pattern that applied to all of the furniture that would be placed inside of the tabernacle: The ark of the testimony, the table of showbread, the golden lampstand, the alter of burnt offering, the bronze laver, and the altar of incense. There was a pattern for the court of the tabernacle. And, there was a pattern concerning the priestly garments (i.e. the breastplate, the ephod, etc.).

But, what if the children of Israel would have chosen to deviate from the pattern? What if they had used a different type of wood than the wood that was instructed (perhaps for “convenience” sake)? What if they had used a different type of metal than was

instructed (perhaps they would have desired to use the gold, silver, and bronze for something else)? Would God have been pleased with their service and their offerings if they had deviated from the pattern? The children of Israel needed to hold fast to this pattern!

### **There is a pattern today!**

Just as there have been patterns to follow in the past, there is a pattern for us to follow today! Paul said there was! Again, consider 2 Timothy 1:13: “Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”

Now, please consider the fact that Paul is instructing Timothy (an evangelist) to hold fast to the pattern of sound words which Timothy had heard from him. Also remember that Paul was an apostle and wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the words he is referring to are the words of God. In 1 Corinthians 14:37, Paul said, “the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.” In Romans 2:16, Paul said that God will judge men “according to my gospel.” Therefore, if Paul’s words to Timothy formed a pattern – and these words were God’s words, I would affirm that this same statement about holding fast to the pattern of sound words would apply to *all* of the words of God. If not, why not?

Now consider each one of these significant words used in 2 Timothy 1:13. “Pattern” refers to a form or model that is used for imitation. We use patterns in many different areas of life. Blueprints are used in construction. Patterns are used in sewing. Patterns are used in wood crafting. Recipes are used in cooking. We understand, then, how following the pattern in each of these areas is absolutely necessary in order to achieve the desired outcome. In the same way, God has provided a “pattern” for us to follow in order to live in the way that is pleasing to Him and receive the eternal home in Heaven.

Next, Paul uses the word “sound.” This word refers to something that is healthy/well. Then, it implies something that has no mixture of error in it. It refers to something that is perfectly free from injury or disease, free from flaw, defect, or decay. As

used in 2 Timothy 1:13, there is a pattern we have been given that is free from all defect and error!

Then, notice that this sound pattern is a pattern of sound “words.” This, then, helps us to understand how we can learn about this pattern. Some patterns are given in pictures. Some patterns are given in the form of a finished product that must be copied. Some patterns are given in words. This pattern is also given in words! As we recognize this fact, we’ll focus on where these *words* can be found momentarily.

Finally, I want us to notice that Paul instructs that we “hold fast” to this pattern of sound words. This instruction implies that we must keep, cling, and follow this pattern – not letting it go! No matter what comes along or tries to pull us away from following this pattern, we must cling closely to it!

## ***Where Do We Find This Pattern?***

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### **A good question!**

The question “Where do we find this pattern?” is a good question! If there is a pattern that God has given us to follow, we need to know where we can locate it! Now, consider how God has revealed the other patterns we have been studying. He instructed Adam and Eve concerning His law using words. He told Noah about the pattern for the ark using words. He revealed His pattern for the children of Israel to live by to Moses using words. And, He revealed the pattern for the tabernacle and its furnishings using words.

Likewise, God tells us about this pattern using words! No, God does not directly speak to each one of us today in the way He did to Adam, to Noah, or to Moses. However, He does *still* speak to us today – through His *written word*! Consider what is said in Hebrews 1:1-2: “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.”

## **Notice that the pattern is of sound words**

As we have already seen, 2 Timothy 1:13 reveals that the pattern is a pattern of sound *words*! These are the sound (uncorrupt, healthy) words that are found in the pages of the Bible! Consider what is said in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” The Bible, therefore, records the very words of God!

The writers who wrote the various books of the Bible wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 3:3-5 identifies that this is true and that we can understand the will of God whenever we read the things that are written! The passage states: “how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets.”

Furthermore, since these words are the words of God which bring us to an accurate understanding of God’s will for our lives, these teachings/writings are perfect and will equip us to accomplish every good work. James 1:25 refers to God’s word as the “perfect law of liberty.” Then, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 teaches that God’s word completely equips us “for every good work.” That is, God’s word will enable us to live our lives entirely according to His will!

Therefore, we can conclude that the teachings that are contained within the pages of God’s word (the Bible) constitute the “pattern of sound words.”

## **The pattern of NT teaching**

Now, as you consider the fact that the words recorded in the Bible form the “pattern of sound words,” you also must understand that, while all of the words in the Bible are from God, only the words in the pages of the New Testament (Matthew through Revelation) provide the pattern for us to live by today.

**(1) We do not live under the OT Law.** The instructions and examples that are recorded in the pages of the Old Testament (Genesis through Malachi) are from God (they are His word). However, the Bible teaches that we do ***not*** live under the Old Testament Law (pattern) today. The Bible clearly teaches that the Old Testament Law has been taken away and replaced.

Galatians 3:19-25 clearly identifies this to be true – and that God’s pattern regarding the Old Testament Law (the Law of Moses) was only designed to be a temporary law: “What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

As this passage demonstrates, the Old Testament Law was only added “till the Seed should come” – till Jesus Christ would come and establish His new law! Furthermore, the Old Testament Law was only the “tutor” of the Israelites to bring them to faith in Jesus Christ. However, when faith in Jesus Christ came, they were no longer in need of the “tutor” (the temporary system of laws, offerings, and sacrifices that was contained within the Law of Moses in the Old Testament).

Therefore, Colossians 2:14 makes it clear that the Law of Moses was nailed to the cross of Jesus Christ, making way for Christ’s new law to take effect: “having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” As this passage says, the Law of Moses was “contrary to us” – and it has now been replaced with a new and a better law. Consider what

is said about Jesus in Hebrews 8:6: “But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.” Hebrews 8:7-13 goes on to discuss how this new law is much better than its predecessor, namely in that God forgives the sins of the people through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ rather than requiring the people to repeatedly offer sacrifices that could never take away sins (as the Law of Moses required with the sacrifices of bulls and goats).

So, the Bible is clear in that we no longer live under the Old Testament Law. That is, we are no longer obligated to observe its teaching and its commandments. That said, the Old Testament Scriptures *are* still profitable for our study. Romans 15:4 says that the things which were written before (the OT Scriptures) were written “for our learning.” 1 Corinthians 10 discusses the example of the Israelites who had rebelled against God’s instructions and the consequences they faced for doing so. Verse 6 says that “these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.” Verse 11 says, “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.” We can certainly learn great lessons about God, faith, and obedience from the Old Testament that will be helpful in our service of God. Yet, we simply do not live under the Old Testament Law any longer. It has been taken away and nailed to the cross of Jesus Christ, replaced with a new and better law!

**(2) We live under the NT Law.** Now, as we consider the fact that we do *not* live under the pattern of the Old Testament Law (like the Israelites did), it is also important to understand that we *do* live under a law – the law of Jesus Christ that is contained within the pages of the New Testament. This law represents the “pattern of sound words” that we live under today.

Remember that the Old Testament Law was the “tutor” to bring the Israelites to faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:24-25). When that faith in Jesus Christ would come, they would no longer be under the “tutor.” Today, faith in Jesus Christ *has* come and

has been revealed in the pages of the New Testament, Jesus’ new covenant!

Consider that Galatians 6:2 instructs us to fulfill the “law of Christ.” Hebrews 8:13 indicates that in establishing a “new covenant,” God has “made the first obsolete.” Hebrews 9:16-17 says that the death of the testator is necessary in order for a testament to come into effect (i.e. a “last will and testament” is of no use while the individual, the “testator,” is alive). Remember, Colossians 2:14 said that the Old Law of Moses was nailed to the cross of Jesus Christ. Therefore, through Jesus’ death, He brought an end to the *Old* Testament – and would bring in His *New* Testament (which would come into effect in Acts chapter 2).

This New Covenant (New Testament) is revealed in the books of Matthew through Revelation. Therefore, the pattern of sound words that tells us how we must live our lives in order to be pleasing to God is contained within the pages of the New Testament (though the Old Testament Scriptures are still profitable for our learning).

## ***What Is The Importance Of Following The Pattern?***

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### **A good question!**

The question “What is the importance of following the pattern?” is a good question! If we understand that there is a pattern and we understand where we find the pattern, that’s nice – but, it doesn’t tell us anything about *why* we should follow the pattern. Therefore, we need to spend some time to consider the need to follow the pattern.

### **The need to abide in the doctrine of Christ**

Please consider what God says, through the apostle John, in 2 John 1:9-11: “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this



doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.”

The “doctrine of Christ” has reference to the teaching of Jesus Christ. Now, as we have already discussed (to some extent), this refers to the entirety of teaching and instruction in the New Testament (remember that even the words Paul wrote were the commandments of the Lord and will judge us, 1 Corinthians 14:37 and Romans 2:16).

Then, realize the passage demonstrates that *if* we abide in the doctrine of Christ (in the New Testament doctrine/teaching), we have God (are in fellowship with God). That is, *if* we have believed in the pattern of sound words revealed in the New Testament – and *if* we have been obedient to the pattern of sound words revealed in the New Testament.

However, if we do not abide in the doctrine of Christ (in New Testament doctrine/teaching), we do not have God (are not in fellowship with God). That is, if we have not believed the pattern of sound words revealed in the New Testament (or have only believed *part of it*) – and if we have not obeyed the pattern of sound words revealed in the New Testament (or have only obeyed *part of it*).

Therefore, Colossians 3:17 instructs: “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Now, to do all “in the name of the Lord Jesus” is to do everything by His authority (doing only those things which God authorizes). So, everything that we do, think, and say must be according to the teaching (doctrine) or authority of Jesus Christ.

### **This pattern must not be changed**

This has already been demonstrated from the need to abide in the doctrine of Christ (NT doctrine), from 2 John 1:9-11. However, this is also seen in the fact that the Bible contains the words of God that are perfect – and cannot be improved upon in any way (see Psalm 19:7; James 1:25).

However, many people and many religious organizations attempt to change the teachings of the Bible! Yet, the Bible gives specific warnings and instructions about these situations. Take just a few

moments to consider these as you consider the importance of holding fast to the pattern of sound words (the perfect teachings of Jesus Christ in the New Testament).

**(1) Romans 16:17-18.** The passage says, “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”

There would clearly be some who would cause divisions and offenses that were contrary to the doctrine of Jesus Christ (the doctrine they had learned). They would bring about these divisions and offenses by using “smooth words and flattery speech.” Thus, they would manipulate the hearts of the simple (unlearned) to follow after these false and deceptive ways. Therefore, Paul instructs that we note and avoid all those who would cause these divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

**(2) Galatians 1:6-9.** The passage says, “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”

This passage clearly indicates that there were some who were guilty of perverting the gospel of Jesus Christ. Others, consequently, were falling away from the grace of Christ by following this different gospel. However, Paul states, there is not really another gospel! There is really only one faith (one system of acceptable religious belief, teaching, and practice – Ephesians 4:5). Furthermore, Paul says that it doesn’t matter who preaches or promotes the false gospel – it is always unacceptable (even if it is a family member, a close friend, a trusted preacher, a highly educated college professor, etc.). In fact, Paul says that even if an apostle or an angel

from Heaven would preach a different gospel, they would still be accursed!

**(3) 2 Peter 2:1-3.** The passage says, “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.”

This passage warns that there would be false teachers who would bring in destructive heresies, working contrary to the way of truth (even causing the way of truth to be blasphemed). Furthermore, the false teachers would work in deceptive ways – they would “secretly bring in destructive heresies” and would “exploit” individuals using “deceptive words.” Unfortunately, Peter says that “many will follow their destructive ways.”

**(4) 2 Peter 3:15-16.** The passage says, “and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation — as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.”

Specifically, this passage concerns the writings of the apostle Paul. However, Peter says that there would be individuals who would be guilty of twisting/perverting the teachings of Paul “as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.”

**(5) God instructs us not to change His words!** Clearly, from the passages we have just considered, we have sufficient warning about individuals who would be guilty of changing/perverting the pattern (the doctrine of Christ). Furthermore, in addition to these, we also have direct instruction from God that His words must not be changed or altered in any way! Consider what Jesus said in Revelation 22:18-19 (also compare this to the teachings in Deuteronomy 4:2 and Proverbs

30:6): “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; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” So, since we are not permitted to change or alter God’s word in any way (and since there are great consequences if we do), we must simply make sure that we are holding fast to the pattern of sound words!

## **God’s word will be the criteria for Judgment**

Ultimately, as you consider the importance of following the pattern of sound words (contained in the New Testament) in every area of your life, you must recognize that you will be judged according to this pattern!

We will all die and be judged by God some day. Hebrews 9:27 says, “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.” 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

Again, the standard/criteria that we will all be judged by is God’s word (the pattern of instruction that is contained in the New Testament). In John 12:48, Jesus said, “the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.” In Romans 2:16, Paul said, “in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.” In Revelation 20:11-15, the great Judgment scene is pictured – and demonstrates that we all will be judged according to our works, “by the things which were written in the books” (the books containing the pattern, the instructions of God).

Based on the Judgments we receive, we will be punished/rewarded individually. How we have lived our lives on this earth will be individually compared with the instructions God has given (the pattern). If we have been obedient to them, we will be rewarded with eternal life in Heaven (see Matthew 25:46; Galatians 6:8; Revelation 2:10). However, if

we have not been obedient to them, we will be punished with eternal destruction in Hell (Matthew 25:46; Galatians 6:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Therefore, our eternities depend upon whether or not we will hold fast to the pattern of sound words!

## ***Conclusion***

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I plead with you to hold fast the pattern of sound words! I hope that this first lesson has helped you to (1) understand that there is a God-given pattern you must follow during your lifetime, (2) understand that the pattern is a pattern of sound words contained within the New Testament, and (3) understand that you will be judged by this pattern and that your eternal destiny will be impacted by your choice either to hold fast the pattern or not to hold fast the pattern.

In the next lesson, we will discuss the following two questions: (1) How do we follow the pattern? (2) What is the pattern about?

## ***Study Questions***

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What does 2 Timothy 1:13 instruct?

What will be the attitude of true disciples concerning this pattern?

### **1. Is There A Pattern To Follow?**

Why is a pattern needed?

Discuss the importance of the following Bible patterns:

1. God's law in the Garden of Eden –

2. Noah and the ark –

3. The Law of Moses –

4. The tabernacle and its furnishings –

Is there a pattern today? What does 2 Timothy 1:13 teach about this pattern?

### **2. Where Do We Find The Pattern?**

What is the pattern (according to 2 Timothy 1:13) composed of? What is the significance of this?

Where do you find this pattern? Is it found in the Old Testament, the New Testament, or both? Please explain.

### **3. What Is The Importance Of Following The Pattern?**

What is the importance of abiding in the doctrine of Christ? What impact does this have on holding fast to the pattern?

Is it acceptable to change God's word? What impact does this have on holding fast to the pattern? Briefly discuss the following passages:

1. Romans 16:17-18 –

2. Galatians 1:6-9 –

3. 2 Peter 2:1-3 –

4. 2 Peter 3:15-16 –

5. Revelation 22:18-19 –

What will be the criteria of Judgment? What impact does this have on holding fast to the pattern?

**\*What do you now understand about the pattern?**