

Lesson 3

PATTERNS AND PRINCIPLES: AN INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Write the Key Verse from memory.
- Define the word "pattern."
- Define the word "principle."
- Explain what is meant by a "Biblical pattern."
- Explain what is meant by a "Biblical principle."
- Explain what is meant by "Kingdom patterns and principles."

KEY VERSE:

All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern. (I Chronicles 28:19)

INTRODUCTION

When you take up residency in the Kingdom of God you must learn the patterns and principles of Kingdom living. It is similar to learning the lifestyle of a new country to which you have immigrated.

The Bible is the written record of the patterns and principles by which the Kingdom of God operates. Before you study the principles in the following chapters, you must understand their importance.

PATTERNS AND PRINCIPLES

A pattern is an original or model of something created for the purpose of imitation. It is something designed to be copied or imitated. For example, in the western world clothing is created from patterns. A dress pattern is placed on the material and the material is cut according to the pattern. Many dresses can be created from the same pattern and they will all be identical because they came from the same pattern.

A principle is a truth, method, or rule adopted as the basis for action or conduct. It is a general truth composed of other subordinate truths. "Subordinate" truths are related to the general truth. For example, a basic principle of the constitution of the United States of America provides for freedom of expression. The subordinate truths include the rights to write and speak freely, conduct lawful assemblies, express beliefs, etc.

BIBLICAL PATTERNS AND PRINCIPLES

A Biblical pattern is a spiritual model or example given in Scripture for purposes of imitation. For example, the life of Jesus Christ is given as a pattern or model which believers are to follow.

A Biblical principle is a spiritual truth taught in Scripture. Such principles often incorporate additional subordinate principles which apply to many different situations. For example, one Biblical principle taught by Jesus is "Give and ye shall receive." Its subordinate truths apply to giving money, material goods, friendship, etc. In each of these, spiritual benefits are received as a result of the act of giving.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PATTERNS AND PRINCIPLES

Read Ezekiel 43:7-12. This passage stresses the importance of patterns and principles. God established specific patterns for the nation of Israel to follow which included spiritual patterns of conduct as well as material patterns for their places of worship.

But Israel set up their own patterns. This is what God means when He says they have "set up their thresholds by my thresholds" and "their posts by my posts." Because Israel created their own patterns, they erected a wall of separation between them and God which stopped the flow of God's power. It prevented their worship and service from being acceptable to Him.

The prophet Ezekiel told the people to look at God's pattern and measure the pattern of their lives accordingly:

**Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern.
(Ezekiel 43:10)**

When people set up their own patterns of conduct, their own denominational, religious, or cultural rules, they set up a false standard of measurement. They begin to teach as Biblical doctrine things that are nothing but commandments of men.

Jesus said of such people:

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Matthew 15:9)

It is important to understand Biblical patterns and principles because otherwise, your worship of God can be in vain.

There are many worldly standards of measurement. There are different patterns for worldly conduct and success which men pattern themselves after. Men measure themselves by other men instead of by God's standards. The Apostle Paul wrote:

For we dare not make ourselves of the number or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. (II Corinthians 10:12)

When Moses was given instructions for building the tabernacle, he was cautioned to do everything according to the pattern given by God:

According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it...

And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount. (Exodus 25:9, 40)

...as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. (Hebrews 8:5)

King David was careful to follow God's pattern when he planned for the construction of the temple:

All this said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern. (I Chronicles 28:19)

These men were careful to follow the pattern of God in the physical world. How much more careful we should be to follow the spiritual patterns and principles found in the Bible?

EXAMPLES OF BIBLICAL PATTERNS

Jesus was the great example by which believers are to pattern their lives:

For I (Jesus) have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. (John 13:15)

The lives of men and women of God are recorded in the Bible as patterns for us to follow:

Now, these things were our examples... (I Corinthians 10:6)

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition... (I Corinthians 10:11)

The record of the nations in the Bible provides positive examples for other nations to follow and negative examples to avoid:

And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly. (II Peter 2:6)

Christian leaders are to be examples to their followers:

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. (I Peter 5:2-3)

The Apostle Paul wrote:

Brethren, be followers together of me and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (Philippians 3:17)

Not because we have no power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. (II Thessalonians 3:9)

Believers are to be spiritual patterns themselves. They are to provide a positive spiritual example for others to follow:

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. (I Timothy 4:12)

So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. (I Thessalonians 1:7)

In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works... (Titus 2:7)

If you are to provide a positive spiritual pattern for others, then you must understand and incorporate Biblical principles into your life.

KINGDOM PATTERNS AND PRINCIPLES

In our next lesson you will learn patterns and principles of faith which govern life in the Kingdom of God as you study *"The Foundations of Faith."*

These patterns and principles differ from worldly standards and from the patterns and principles of the kingdoms of this world.