

What Does the Bible Teach About the Silence of Scripture?

Deut. 18:21 - "...You say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'"

The Silence of Scripture

- The scriptures are all sufficient.
 - 2Tim. 3:15-17 - “...From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

The Silence of Scripture

- We must do all things by the authority of Jesus.
 - Col. 3:17 - “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.”
- The scriptures supply us with all we need for salvation.
 - John 20:30-31 - “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

The Silence of Scripture

- And yet there are many things concerning which the Scriptures are silent.
- What are we do to when we do not have explicit permission from God?

Reasons For God's Silence

- Silence is occasionally an indicator of Divine indifference; it leads to liberty.
- In some instances specific or exclusive statements would provide unnecessary limits to our accomplishing God's purposes.

Reasons For God's Silence

- Silence authorizes exclusion.
- When God specifies the voice as instrument
 - Eph. 5:19 - “Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”
- Or the first day of the week for the Lord's Supper
 - Acts 20:7 - “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread...”
- All other practices are excluded because God has been clear about what He wants done and the way He wants it done.

Reasons For God's Silence

- God has not really been silent; He has told us what He wants us to do, and since He expects us to be mature in the faith, He does not see the need to explicitly prohibit all other alternatives..
 - Heb. 5:12 - 6:1 - “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. 6:1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection...”

Reasons For God's Silence

- Nor could He prohibit all alternatives, since people are very good at being “inventors of evil things” (Rom. 1:30).
- It is enough that God has told us what to do, and that it excludes any other alternatives we can imagine.

Reasons For God's Silence

- Do we ever wonder why God has not addressed a particular matter?
 - Is it because God has addressed the matter differently than what we were expecting or wanting?
 - Is it because the matter we are considering is not in harmony with the infinite wisdom of God?
 - Is it because we like to innovate where God established a standard?

Reasons For God's Silence

- Do we ever wonder why God has not addressed a particular matter?
 - Is it because we are trying to plumb the depths of the secret things of God which we really cannot understand?
 - Deut. 29:29 - “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”
 - Isa. 55:8-9 - “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Instruction Is By Commands, Divinely Approved Examples, And Divine Implications

- Some have come to the conclusion that whatever is not specifically condemned is justified, and will re-interpret scripture to justify what is clearly condemned.
 - Christian Church and instrumental music
 - Metropolitan Churches of America and homosexual marriages

Instruction Is By Commands, Divinely Approved Examples, And Divine Implications

- The Bible does not exhaustively list what we are to do and must not to do.
- The Bible does speak of rules.
 - Gal. 5:19-23 - “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

Instruction Is By Commands, Divinely Approved Examples, And Divine Implications

- The Bible does speak of rules.
 - 1John 2:3-5 - “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”
 - 1John 3:4 - “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”

Instruction Is By Commands, Divinely Approved Examples, And Divine Implications

- We respect those rules, avoid the evil, and embrace the good.
 - Rom. 12:9 - “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.”

Instruction Is By Commands, Divinely Approved Examples, And Divine Implications

- God would have us learn not just by direct statement, but also by approved examples and Divine implications from which we draw necessary conclusions.
- We are not called to be Bible lawyers or judges of the law, but disciples of Christ.

Instruction Is By Commands, Divinely Approved Examples, And Divine Implications

- The Bible can be understood and applied by honest folk of every walk of life.
 - Matt. 11:25 - “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.”

Instruction Is By Commands, Divinely Approved Examples, And Divine Implications

- The Bible can be understood and applied by honest folk of every walk of life.
 - Eph. 3:3-4 - “How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery, as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ”
 - 1Cor. 1:10 - “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

Instruction Is By Commands, Divinely Approved Examples, And Divine Implications

- God's silence is not silence
 - While Scriptures are God's revealed words, Jesus is His Living Word; God has revealed Himself in the Son.
 - Heb. 1:1-3 - "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 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; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Instruction Is By Commands, Divinely Approved Examples, And Divine Implications

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 - While Scriptures are God's revealed words, Jesus is His Living Word; God has revealed Himself in the Son.
 - John 14:9 - “Jesus said to him, Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”
 - It is not WWJD (What would Jesus do?), but instead, WDJD (What did Jesus do?).

Instruction Is By Commands, Divinely Approved Examples, And Divine Implications

- What we learn from the life and example of Jesus is authority for our application of general commands absent the specific applications.
 - Luke 6:31 - “And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.”

Instruction Is By Commands, Divinely Approved Examples, And Divine Implications

- Matt. 5:44-48 - “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”
- How Jesus applied those commands becomes authority for our application of the same.

God Has Been Silent About Many Matters

- But that silence is not due to neglect or deficiency, there are reasons behind His silence that we must respect.
- We need to avoid the temptation to impose our own desires and doctrines on God's silence.
- We need to trust that God has given us all we need.
- We need to look to the examples of Jesus and the righteous for guidance in keeping general commands.