

1 Thessalonians 4:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

Analysis

For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus—oidate gar tinas paraggelias edōkamen hymin dia tou Kyriou Iēsou (οἴδατε γὰρ τίνας παραγγελίας ἔδωκαμεν ὑμῖν διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, 'you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus'). Paraggelia (παραγγελία) indicates authoritative orders, military commands, not mere suggestions. The phrase dia tou Kyriou Iēsou ('through the Lord Jesus') grounds apostolic commands in Christ's authority—Paul transmits Christ's instructions, not personal preferences. These paraggeliai (commandments) were given during his three-week ministry (Acts 17:2), demonstrating comprehensive ethical instruction even in brief time.

The appeal to 'ye know' indicates Paul reminds rather than introduces—he taught these ethics initially and now reinforces them. This pattern (initial teaching, later reinforcement) models discipleship requiring both foundation-laying and continued instruction. The upcoming commands about sexual purity (vv. 3-8) aren't novel but recall previous teaching. Gospel proclamation includes ethical transformation; evangelism without discipleship produces false converts who 'believe' without behavioral change.

Historical Context

Paul's ethical instruction was countercultural and comprehensive. Greco-Roman society accepted practices Christianity condemned: adultery (expected of married

men), prostitution (legal and common), pederasty (older men with boys, culturally acceptable), homosexual practice (widespread), and sexual exploitation of slaves. Jewish converts knew Torah's sexual ethics; Gentile converts came from paganism permitting what Christianity forbade. Paul's 'commandments by the Lord Jesus' established Christian sexual ethics grounded in Christ's authority, not merely cultural preference.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does understanding ethical commands as 'through the Lord Jesus' affect your obedience compared to viewing them as human tradition?
2. What role does reminding believers of previous teaching ('ye know') play in sanctification versus constantly introducing new content?
3. How do you integrate ethical instruction into evangelism and discipleship rather than treating conversion and sanctification as unrelated?

Interlinear Text

οἴδατε	γὰρ	τίνας	παραγγελίας	έδωκαμεν	ὑμῖν	διὰ	τοῦ
ye know	For	what	commandments	we gave	you	by	G3588
G1492	G1063	G5101	G3852	G1325	G5213	G1223	
κυρίου							
'Ιησοῦ							
the Lord	Jesus						
G2962	G2424						

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 28:20 (Parallel theme): Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Ezekiel 3:17 (Word): Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org