

## 3 Levels of Authority

To eliminate much confusion in new churches and avoid many disputes, wise trainers teach new leaders to discern three levels of authority for church activities.

### 1st LEVEL New Testament Commands

Obey God's commands without voting or arguing about them. He is our Supreme Commander. A church is completely planted when it is doing all of the vital ministries that are required by Christ and His apostles in the New Testament.

**Note:** Discern between the underlying intent of a command and the cultural form it takes. Head covering, women keeping silent and foot washing were external forms, related to local culture, of obeying *another* underlying, universally important command.

**Example: Baptize, Love one another.**

### 2nd LEVEL New Testament Practices, not Commanded

A Christian has freedom to heed such practices or not to, since they are not commands. Do not prohibit following them, since the apostles practiced and approved them.

**Example: Baptize immediately.**

### 3rd LEVEL Traditions with no New Testament basis

Never demand blind obedience to traditions. Most traditions are good. Prohibit traditions that hinder obedience to New Testament commands.

Read *Mat 15:1-6*

*[Mat 15:1-6 NKJV] 1 Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, 2 "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." 3 He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? 4 "For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 5 "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me [is] a gift [to God]"-- 6 'then he need not honor his father or mother.' **Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.***

**Roleplay:** Give examples and let them determine which level it is.

Wear robes in the pulpit (3). Wear ties in the pulpit (3). The pulpit (3). The Lord's Supper (1). Have Communion in homes (3). Use one cup (2). Celebrate Communion the first day of the week (2: Acts 20:7). Celebrate Communion the First Sunday each month (3). Let only highly educated, ordained clergy officiate the sacraments (3). Use Sunday School as a method of teaching (3). Require academic degrees for ordination (3). Meet in buildings (3: no chapels were mentioned in history until about 3 centuries after Christ). Do interactive teaching (1: believers are to teach 'one another', Col. 3:16; Rom. 15:14; all should prophesy, 1 Cor. 14:24-26, which means to speak to one another to edify, exhort and console; the Bible requires avoiding teaching only by monologue.)