

**Leviticus 10: 1-3; “To be Reformed” –“Sola Scriptura – The Scripture Regulates  
Worship”; An Adult Sunday School class prepared by Pastor  
Paul Rendall and Delivered on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014.**

Exodus 30, verses 8 and 9 – “And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations.” “You shall not offer strange incense on it, or burnt offering, or a grain offering; nor shall you pour a drink offering on it.”

Leviticus 10: 1-3 – “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.” “And Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the Lord spoke, saying: ‘By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified.’”

**A Reformed church will use the regulative principle in regard to Worship and Evangelism.**

The regulative principle of Worship, simply stated, is, that whatever the Bible has not commanded, either by way of precept or by way of Apostolic example, we do not attempt to introduce into the worship of the church in order make people happy. We do want people to experience the true and joyful reality of the Lord’s special presence in public worship. And so we use this helpful Biblical principle to keep us from all the worldly and man-centered innovations that people attempt to bring into worship and evangelism.(1) It keeps us from bringing entertainment into worship, but does not exclude the joy of congregational singing. It maintains preaching at the center of worship, so that people will really have their spiritual needs addressed and grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. In our evangelism we declare the gospel to whoever will hear. We will declare what Christ has done for sinners like us, and then we will pray that God would open the heart. (2) This is the Bible way. The Apostles preached, they taught sound doctrine, they gave themselves to prayer, and the Lord saved people and added them to the church. (3)

This is why we do not use decisional techniques in worship or evangelism. We do not try to get people to make decisions for Christ, although we do believe that personal decision of whether to believe or not believe is necessary in responding to the gospel. We do not have altar calls; we do not ask people to come up front, or raise their hand, or sign a card. We do what the Apostles did. They preached, and the Holy Spirit worked in people’s hearts so that they believed. Then they responded in obedience by being baptized and joining the church.

(1) Deuteronomy 12: 28-32 2) Acts 16: 14 Matthew 28: 18-20 (3) Acts 2: 41, 42 Acts 14: 21

**The 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith 1:6** — “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men. . .there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to

human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.”

**The following is taken from the ARBCA position paper on the Regulative Principle of Worship –**

“The circumstances of worship would include place, time of day, length of the service, pews versus chairs, printed order or not, hymnals versus sheets or overhead transparencies, air conditioning versus fans, types of musical instruments, etc.”

“There are 3 positions taken on worship among Christian churches, 1) the inventive principle, which is the Roman Catholic view, 2) the normative principle, i.e. what is not forbidden is permitted, and 3) the regulative principle, i.e. what is not commanded is forbidden.” “God, in His graciousness, has chosen to reveal to man in His word that which is pleasing to Him in worship.” “The regulative principle teaches that God has clearly revealed the elements of worship that will enable His people to worship in spirit and in truth.”

LBC 22: 1-7 — “. . .But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures. . .”

“Commentary: Chapter 22 is the most thorough chapter in the Confession concerning the matter of the regulative principle of worship. Paragraph 1 again states that there is a principle that governs our worship of God and that it is a principle that is instituted by Him in His revealed will made known in His Word. It disallows any practice in worship that is based on human imagination or devices of men that are not found in the Word of God. Paragraph 5 carefully delineates the elements of worship, which are: 1) the reading of the Scriptures, 2) preaching and hearing the Word of God, 3) singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs unto the Lord, 4) prayer with thanksgiving for all things lawful, and 5) the administration of the sacraments. These are the non-negotiable elements of worship. They are to be observed in worship as commanded elements from God, not to be withheld from the church nor expanded by additions from “good and necessary consequence.”

**There are three basic and historical views regarding how God may be worshiped. Though there are variations of those three views within each view, yet they may be grouped together under the three.**

They are:

**1) the Inventive principle of worship.** This is the view of Rome. It says that the church is free to establish the parameters of worship, hence the inventiveness of certain elements, like the mass, etc. The church may invent or create as it pleases. Authority resides in the church. Because Roman Catholicism recognizes the church and church tradition as an equal authority with the Bible, it is impossible to say that this is only careless wording or ignorance. It is most certainly a position that has been established with careful thought. This view cannot coexist with the regulative principle. It is antithetical to the regulative principle.

**2) The Normative principle.** This view, held most notably by Lutheranism and Anglicanism states that you may have in worship whatever God has expressly commanded plus whatever is

not expressly forbidden. Included under this view of worship would be many of the elements of worship found in higher church liturgy, the charismatic movement, modern day contemporary worship, seeker-sensitive worship, etc. Such elements would consist of liturgical ceremonies, drama, dance, performance-oriented music, etc. The statement “God doesn’t prohibit this practice,” justifies many of these practices. That statement is a key to the normative principle. Those churches that hold to such practices in worship often de-emphasize the role of the Word of God in worship. It is not uncommon in such services to hear very little reading of the Word of God and little, if any, exposition of the Scripture. Many of the sermons, rather than being expositions of the Scripture, are topical sermons directed toward “felt needs” of the individual. While one could in charity assume that there are those who have not studied this issue carefully and thus adopt the normative principle, or are inconsistent in their application of this principle, the key would be the response of those individuals when the clear teaching of Scripture is presented as it pertains to the regulative principle. Do they accept the teaching of Scripture in spite of established patterns or preferences or do they reject it? Unfortunately, because of emotional attachment to various worship forms and because of theological error, there are many who consciously reject the regulative principle in favor of the normative principle. Regardless of the reason for the adoption of the normative principle of worship, it is clearly not in agreement with the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 and thus to hold that position would endanger the confessional position.

**3) The regulative principle of worship.** The regulative principle emphasizes the instituted elements of worship as the priority. Scripture reading, significant exposition of Scripture, prayers, congregational singing, the sacraments, etc., mark the priority of worship according to the regulative principle. Worship according to the regulative principle examines the order, elements, priorities, and musical selections from a regulated biblical perspective. It does not reject an old hymn simply because it is old nor does it reject new hymns and songs simply because they are new. Reformed hymnology was “new” when it was instituted. Worship according to the regulative principle does not jump on the bandwagon of high church liturgy, exclusive Psalmody, contemporary music, or normative additions of any kind from the motive of personal tastes. It examines the order, elements, priorities, and musical selections from a regulated biblical perspective. God regulates his worship. Worship is prescribed and commanded, and the elements of his worship are revealed.