

COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS OF FIRST PRINCIPLES AND COMMANDMENTS

	First Principles	Commandments
Reflects:	God's intellect as expressed in His creation — God's plan with His creation. "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." — Galatians 3:8	God's moral character — God's purpose with His creation. "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD." — Numbers 14:21
Manifested By:	Faith (belief)	Works (results, fruits)
Motivated By:	Faith (Trust, Conviction, Confidence)	Grace (Gratitude)
What it Does:	Knowledge of God's principles enlightens one as to one's true position as being "without hope and without God in the world" and activates, convicts and convinces the conscience of sin and makes one aware of the need for repentance and baptism	Provides the opportunity for the expression of gratitude to God for His mercy, longsuffering & forgiveness; and especially in view of the fact that "...God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners...God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh..." (- Rom 5:8; 8:3)
Effects:	The basis of responsibility to resurrection and judgment; through baptism the way to repentance and forgiveness; without baptism the basis of condemnation. No approach to God without knowledge and acceptance of these.	After baptism, the commandments (Divine precepts) provide the basis for character development and spiritual maturity. The awareness of what it is that pleases God and gives glory and honour to his name.
Action Required:	Truths to be accepted; In some cases falsehoods must also be rejected (Doctrines to be rejected)	Moral precepts to be applied in daily life and obeyed. To try and manifest God's character in our daily lives.
Time Required to Learn:	A short time. The greatest obstacles are those that come from false human traditions inculcated in the mind.	A lifetime of development (reading, learning, observance, application, etc) with necessary failures to develop humility, obedience, mercy, patience, righteous judgment and all the fruits of the spirit.
Judgment:	Little beyond the judgment required for ordinary cognition. First principles are fundamental doctrines that are absolute and essential to the Gospel or to upholding the Gospel. No excuse here for the weakness of the flesh. We either understand & accept them, or we do not. Without them there is no approach for Divine forgiveness of sins.	Commandments require us not only to understand them but to rightly apply them, and to judge righteous judgment, and to fully live them (though human nature prevents sinlessness in all except our Lord Jesus Christ). Some commandments require many years of moral growth to get beyond a surface understanding of them. "Refrain utterly from adultery" (#44) — Obvious "Refrain utterly from... uncleanness" (#44) — More difficult and requires growth "Do all to the glory of God" (#45) — Lifetime struggle "Live not to yourselves, but to him who died for you" (#46) — Lifetime struggle God has clearly indicated that responding to human need may sometimes trump commands requiring ritual observance; we need to use judgment on such cases ("Have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?" - these words of Christ demonstrate that he understood that circumstances alter cases and cases should be judged on individual circumstances.) Also requires judgment to decide how far to go and where to draw the line regarding commands that have more than one interpretation among us.
Forgiveness:	Forgiveness plays little, if any, role in first principles.	Forgiveness plays an essential role in commandments for all sin and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).
Effect on Fellowship:	Governs Inter-ecclesial Fellowship - we accept in fellowship all who believe and accept the same essential first principle teachings. Ecclesial Autonomy does not apply.	Administrated - or should be administrated - within the respective ecclesias concerning individual ecclesial membership issues; each issue or problem is dealt with within the ecclesia on the basis of its individual circumstances and merits, exercising and respecting ecclesial autonomy. Such was the practice of early ecclesias until the early 1900s