

[1 Peter 4:11] "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

To be the children of God we must give Him the glory, not ourselves. We must go to God for what we need and not to man. When we seek and speak and use the word of God, and not our own words, we glorify God, and not ourselves.

[Acts 20:28] "... to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." God gave this charge to the elders. He is concerned for the church because it's HIS church, bought with the blood of Christ. The church is God's divine institution for the salvation of man, there is no other way that men may be saved:

[John 14:6] "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

We should be concerned for the church for the very same reason – we are bought with the blood of Christ.

Therefore in the church, every question must be answered, every issue must be resolved, and every problem must be settled in the light of God's word.

Through the years that principle has been stated as—We'll speak where the Bible speaks, and we'll be silent where the Bible is silent. We must not ADD to God's word, nor take away.

[Revelation 22:18,19] "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: ¹⁹And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."

On this principle we must stand, if God is to be pleased and our souls are to be saved.

God has revealed his will to man through the scriptures. Things we do then must be in accordance, or harmony with the scriptures. Surely, we must NOT do things that are against what is written in the scriptures. By the scriptures, we mean, of course, the word of God, particularly the New Testament of God's word, the gospel of Christ, the righteousness of God which is revealed therein.

But also, to be in accordance with the scriptures – what we do must be **contained** in the scriptures. Something not found in the scriptures cannot be in accordance with them then and in fact would be contrary to them. We'll see this in a minute. The scriptures were given to us by God, anything else we get from man. Things of man, and not God, will be out of harmony with or not in agreement with the scriptures and with the

righteousness of God as revealed in them and thus are wrong because God has given us everything we need through the holy scriptures he has revealed once and for all to man:

[2 Peter 1:3] According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

[Jude 3] Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

How can we determine whether a thing is contrary to the scriptures?

There are **two** principle ways for a thing to be **contrary** to the scriptures.

1) Where there is a specific prohibition in the word of God that is violated;

[Romans 13:9] For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

2) When there is no scriptural authority for such practice, and doing it requires "going beyond" the word of the Lord.

The Corinthian church had this problem of going **beyond** the word of God by following men:

[1 Corinthians 1:11-13] For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

God has given us His word. We need to use IT and **not** the thoughts and ideas of men – IF we want to be pleasing to God!

It's the principle of stewardship, Paul continued with the Corinthians:

[1 Corinthians 4:1-2] Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

Stewards of the mysteries, the word of God. Faithful how? Using what was provided by God – not mixing it with things provided by someone else – not adulterating God's word!

The apostle continued with this, that he did not judge of himself. He did not rush things, the Lord would judge:

[1 Corinthians 4:3-5] But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

The apostle did not use his own wisdom, or the wisdom of other men for judgment of the right thing, he had faith in God instead. The "counsels of our hearts" our desire and wish must be to follow God, not man, then will we have praise from God.

[1 Corinthians 4:6] And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of *men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

Note that "of men" is in italics, not in original Greek. The ASV renders that verse:

[ASV] that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written;"

He's telling them to follow the example of Apollos and himself in **only** following God, not using their own wisdom or the wisdom of other men.

Why would anyone do this? Follow man and not God – PRIDE!
God bursts that bubble of pride in the next verse:

[1 Corinthians 4:7] For who maketh thee to differ *from another*? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*?

We often speak of someone "puffed up" with pride – so does God:

[1 Samuel 15:17] And Samuel said, When thou *wast* little in thine own sight, *wast* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?

In dealing with the Corinthian brethren's tendency to render judgment upon one another based on the wisdom of men Paul gives a basic principle that needs to be heeded today as much as ever – trust in God's revealed word and not the wisdom of men.

But we must apply ourselves to the study and understanding of God's word.

For things **contrary** to the scriptures, there are many things wrong in the sight of the Lord for which no specific prohibition or injunction has been given in the scriptures. God has not said, for example, "Thou shall not have mechanical instruments of music in Christian worship". Or, "Thou shall not put ice cream and cake on the Lord's table." But either of them would be wrong, and we understand why. There is no divine authority or

authorization for either of them. There is no means of establishing that either is the will of God; therefore both are presumptive, we presume to do them on our **own** cognizance rather than because it is the will of our Father. The Pharisees deluded themselves on this point time and again – to do their own will, thinking it is God's, as Jesus told them:

[John 8:39-41] They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father.

Doing things of our own will in matters relating to the church is wrong because we then are satisfying our own desires, our own **lusts** – we are putting ourselves above God, we are glorifying ourselves – not God.

We can understand this perfectly in our own lives. Say we tell our child to go to the grocery store and get a gallon of milk. They come back with the milk – and Snickers. Would you accept your child's saying, "Well you didn't tell me NOT to get Snickers".

Well, How may scriptural authority be established? In order for a thing to be in harmony with the scriptures there must be at least 1 of these three things:

- 1) An **express command** or statement; Something God tells us expressly in his word to do.
- 2) An **approved example**; Something we read of Jesus, or the apostles, or other inspired men doing or approving of something being done.
- 3) A **necessary inference**, in the word of God for it. Something necessary for us to carry out a command or follow an example.

For example, in Hebrews 10:25 he says, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together". That's a command. We must assemble. Having a building would be a necessary inference from that command – to meet we have to have a place to meet.

Once authority is established, by Command, Example or Necessary Inference, then we might have some **expedients** – things left to our discretion to provide. Such as the size, shape, or color of a building.

If there is no authority at all in the scripture for a thing then it is contrary to the will of God for it to be practiced by the church of our Lord. It is something for which he has **not** 1) Given a command, 2) Shown an example 3) Inferred that we need to carry out a command or example.

Without any authority, it is unlawful – there is no law for it. Therefore it is sinful because it would be an invasion of the sacred realm of God's silence. God hasn't spoken it, not because He forgot or didn't think of it, but because He did not want it. God has always condemned and cursed doing that which he has not said. It is the sin of presumption caused by man's reliance on his own wisdom, and his lack of respect for the will of God.

Two examples:

[Leviticus 10:1,2] And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

[1 Chronicles 13:9-10] And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God

Presumptuous actions – we're warned of them in Psalm 19:

[Psalm 19:13] Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Let's tie it together with one clear example. Look at your handout

This chart illustrates the authority by the Lord's Supper. We use the Lord's Supper to illustrate the fact that our practice in such worship is divinely authorized. We have in the scriptures an express command for its observance, for Jesus said, **[1 Cor. 11:23,24] "This do in remembrance of me."**

He did not expressly say, though in his word, the specific day, if any, on which this institution was to be, or is to be, observed. We learn that from the **practice** of a congregation assembling for such worship in the New Testament that had inspired men or Apostles present to give them God's word on the matter:

[Acts 20:7] "And on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, ..."

Here we have the church at Troas assembling to break bread, observe the Lord's Supper, on the first day of the week. Paul, an inspired apostle was present and took part in that worship.

This is New Testament example. The church of our Lord under apostolic approval and guidance assembled on the first day of the week to break bread. There is no example of them ever assembling on any other day of the week for this purpose. They assembled only on the first day of the week to break bread. Hence, we learn that breaking bread in the assembly of the saints, in the worship of God, can be done with divine approval on the first day of the week, and **only** on the first day of the week because to do it on any other day is to do that which God has not approved.

But neither the express command nor the approved example tell us how **often** such a practice is to be engaged in. How do we learn the frequency with which we observe the Lord's Supper? The answer is by necessary inference. The clear, unmistakable import

of the language used necessarily **implies** that they observed the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week **as often as that day came**.

Compare the command for the observance of the Sabbath and the observance of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. If "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" [Exodus 20:8], meant **every** Sabbath day as often as it came, then "the first day of the week to break bread" means every first day of the week as often as it comes. The conclusion is inescapable. It is necessarily implied.

Ok, but at what hour on the first day of the week should the church assemble to break bread?" Well, any hour within the first day of the week is **authorized**, that is it comes within the scope of authority, it is scriptural. The particular hour is not specified, either by express command, approved example, **or** necessary inference, hence; any hour within the first day that is expedient can be the hour of assembly and there is scriptural authority for it. Expedients – what we decide to do, can only apply to practices that are authorized by Command, Example or Necessary Inference.

If we practice something for which there is neither command, approved example nor necessary inference, that practice is without scriptural authority and anything without scriptural authority is contrary to the scripture.

And for the church to anything contrary to the scripture is to make the church without God:

[2 John 9] "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God."

And this ought to really get our attention – that we can wind up not having God.
The Lord told us as much:

[Matthew 7:21] Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Are you saying, "Lord, Lord" hoping that he will hear you and accept you?

Have you done what He has said to do?

Believe in Him as the Christ, the Son of God.

To repent, to want to follow Him

To confess His name

To be buried with Him in the waters of Baptism

To walk faithfully after that, not going beyond what He has told us?

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HOW TO ESTABLISH SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY

EXAMPLE: THE LORD'S SUPPER

1) EXPRESS COMMAND - To observe it

[1 Corinthians 11:23,24] " ... this do in remembrance of me"

2) APPROVED EXAMPLES – Time of observance

[Acts 20:7] "And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread"

3) NECESSARY INFERENCE – How often?

[Acts 20:7] "And upon the first *day* of the week "– As regularly as that day comes

[Exodus 20:8] "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" – every Sabbath day

4) EXPEDIENCY – We have to do it, no time given, Any hour of the first day - ok