

# Authority

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## **Eight Lessons From God's Word:**

Two Sources of Authority  
Establishing Authority & God's Commands  
Expediencies  
Apostolic Examples  
Inferences from God's Word  
Silence of the Scriptures  
God Desires Mercy and Not Sacrifice  
Questions for Today

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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	ii
Two Sources of Authority .....	1
Establishing Authority and God's Commands .....	4
Expediencies .....	7
Apostolic Examples .....	12
Inferences from God's Word .....	15
Silence of the Scriptures .....	20
God Desires Mercy and Not Sacrifice .....	24
Questions for Today .....	29

## Introduction

God's word is perfect, but men are fallible. If you find any errors in these lessons or have suggestions to improve them, please contact me at [allan@biblestudyguide.org](mailto:allan@biblestudyguide.org).

This series of lessons is not intended to be an exhaustive study of authority. These lessons are in outline form and are, therefore, abbreviated. My intention is for the outlines to present the Scriptures relative to a study of authority and to express a few thoughts. Students should study the Scriptures for themselves and apply the lessons beyond the few suggestions made in the outlines.

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# Two Sources of Authority

## A. Matthew 21:23-27 Two sources of authority:

1. There are two sources of authority - heaven and man (Matt. 21:23-27).
  - a. Authority from heaven is God's doctrine (Rom. 6:17; 16:17; 1 Tim. 6:1; Tit. 2:10). It is revealed in the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17; cf. 2 Jn. 1:9).
  - b. Authority from man is the doctrines of men and demons (Matt. 15:9; Mk. 7:6-9; Col. 2:22; 1 Tim. 4:1; cf. 2 Cor. 11:13-15).
2. "Authority" defined:
  - a. the Greek word *exousia* (translated "authority" in Matt. 21:23, 24, 27) is a noun that comes from the Greek verb *exesti* meaning *it is right, lawful*.
  - b. "authority" is the power to command what is right and lawful.
    1. Jesus has all authority (Matt. 28:18).
  - c. A person conducting himself according to Jesus' commands has authority from Jesus for what he does (Col. 3:17).
    1. This person has authority from heaven.
  - d. A person not conducting himself according to Jesus' commands does not have authority from Jesus.
    1. This person's authority is from man (Col. 2:21-23; cf. Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-9).

## B. Man's authority results in death.

1. Man's thoughts and ways are different from God's (Is. 55:8-9).
  - a. We must go to God's word to know His ways (Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 2:10-16; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
2. Man cannot rely on his conscience to obey God.
  - a. The way that seems right to a man results in eternal death (Pr. 16:2, 25).
  - b. Man is incapable of discerning the truth without God and His word (Jn. 17:17; Rom. 1:16-17; 10:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
  - c. Saul (the apostle Paul) lived in good conscience and sinned (Acts 23:1; 22:1-5).
3. Man cannot rely on human wisdom to obey God.
  - a. **1 Cor. 1:18-31** God saves those who believe (vs. 21) so that no flesh may glory in His presence (vs. 29).
  - b. Our faith cannot be in man's wisdom (1 Cor. 2:5; cf. Rom. 1:16; 10:17; 1 Cor. 4:6; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
    1. If our faith is in man's wisdom, it is demonic (Ja. 3:13-18; 2:19).
  - c. We must avoid worldly wisdom (1 Cor. 2:5; 3:18-23; cf. 1 Cor. 4:6). The result of adhering to worldly wisdom is carnality (1 Cor. 3:1-4) and eternal death (2 Cor. 7:10; cf. Rev. 20:14-15).
4. The majority of people will perish (Matt. 7:13-14).
  - a. Only eight souls were saved in the days of Noah (1 Pet. 3:20).
5. Parents are not a safe guide.
  - a. Paul persecuted the church when living according to his fathers' traditions

(Gal. 1:13-16).

- b. We must love Jesus more than family (Matt. 10:37).

### **C. The Old Testament is not authoritative today.**

1. We must hear and obey Jesus, not Moses or Old Testament prophets (Heb. 1:1-2; 5:9; Matt. 17:5).
2. The old covenant (Ten Commandments) has been replaced with a new covenant (Heb. 8:8-9, 13; 9:11-17; 1 Ki. 8:9, 21).
  - a. The Ten Commandments are a ministry of death (2 Cor. 3:1-8).
  - b. God changed the law (Heb. 7:12; cf. Col. 2:13-14). We must obey the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 9:21; cf. Heb. 5:9; 2 Th. 1:8; 2 Jn. 1:9).
3. If we can be saved by obeying the Mosaic Law, Christ died in vain (Gal. 2:21).

### **D. We live under the law of Christ.**

1. Christ has all authority (Matt. 28:18).
  - a. Jesus is God (Jn. 1:1; 1 Jn. 1:1).
  - b. God (Father) is not subject to Christ (1 Cor. 15:27-28).
2. We must hear and obey Jesus (Heb. 1:1-2; 5:9; Matt. 17:5).
3. Jesus is our Creator and the Sustainer of the creation. He has the right to rule (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:3).
  - a. Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16).
  - b. We must do all in Jesus' name (Col. 3:17). Everything we do must be authorized by Christ.
4. We must obey Christ - His law and gospel (Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 9:21; cf. Rom. 8:2; Heb. 5:9; Ja. 1:25; 2:12; 2 Th. 1:8; 2 Jn. 1:9).
  - a. Jesus' law is the law of liberty (Ja. 1:25; cf. Gal. 2:4; Col. 1:28), the law of the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2, 4).
    1. We will be judged by Jesus (2 Cor. 5:10), by His word (Jn. 12:48).
    2. James says that we will be judged by the law of liberty (Ja. 1:25; 2:12).
    3. Therefore, the law of Christ and the law of liberty are the teachings of Christ (cf. Heb. 5:9; 2 Jn. 1:9; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
5. Everyone who does not obey Christ's gospel will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord (2 Th. 1:8-10; cf. Col. 2:14; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:8).

### **E. Christ is Head of the church.**

1. Jesus purchased the church with His blood (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).
2. Jesus is Head over the church (Eph. 1:22-23).
  - a. All things are under His feet (1 Cor. 15:23-25; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 19:16).
3. The church is subject to Christ (Eph. 5:24).
  - a. Everything the church does must be authorized by Christ (1 Cor. 4:6; Col. 3:17).
  - b. Any unauthorized worship is vain (Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-9).
4. Jesus is the Savior of the body (Eph. 5:23).
  - a. Christ's body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23).

- b. The Lord adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:40-47; cf. Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 12:13).
- c. Anyone who is not a member of Christ's body (the church) is not saved (Eph. 5:23).

## F. Questions:

1. What are the two sources of authority?
  - a. What will happen if we act based on human authority?
2. Who must we obey to be saved?
  - a. Will most people obey God? Why?
3. Can we obey the Mosaic Law and be saved? Why?
  - a. Are the Ten Commandments a ministry of death? Why?
4. Do we live under the law of Christ?
  - a. Must we obey the law of Christ to be saved?
5. Who is Head of the church?
  - a. Do we have to obey the Head of the church to be in the church?
  - b. Is the church subject to Christ?
6. Who is in the church?
  - a. Must we be in the Lord's church to be saved? Why?

# Establishing Authority and God's Commands

## A. Establishing authority is different from hermeneutics.

1. "Hermeneutics" is the study of methodological principles of interpretation (Webster) (i.e., a set of rules whereby the Bible is interpreted).
  - a. "Methodology" is a body of methods, rules, and postulates employed by a discipline.
  - b. Various methods (mystical method, allegorical method, spiritual method, hierarchical method, rationalistic method, apologetic method, dogmatic method, inductive method, deductive method) of Biblical interpretation are in use today.
2. **Matt. 21:24-27** Jesus recognized the need to establish authority.
  - a. Jesus never recognized the need to adopt a hermeneutic.
    1. Jewish hermeneutics led to Israel's apostasy (Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-9; cf. Matt. 23:1f).
  - b. Jesus has not given us a rule book to use in interpreting His word. The Bible is sufficient without any man-made rules of interpretation (cf. Eph. 5:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 4:11).
    1. Today, denominations (e.g., Roman Catholic and Mormon) instruct their members to interpret the Bible based on their creeds, catechisms, and other gospels.
    2. Christians cannot interpret God's word based on man-made methodological principles of interpretation (i.e., rules of interpretation).

## B. God's commands:

1. God's commands are in His word (1 Cor. 2:10-16; 14:37). His word cannot be changed (Deut. 4:2; 1 Tim. 4:11; Rev. 22:18-19).
2. God has spoken through Jesus (Heb. 1:1-2; Matt. 17:5). We must obey Jesus (Heb. 5:9; cf. Gal. 6:2; 2 Th. 1:8; 2 Jn. 1:9).
  - a. Jesus commissioned the apostles (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16).
3. The apostles were ambassadors of Christ. God spoke through them (2 Cor. 5:20; cf. 1 Cor. 2:10-16; 1 Th. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
  - a. God gave commands through the apostles (1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Pet. 3:2).
4. No one is excused from obeying God (Acts 17:30; Rom. 1:20).
  - a. God commands all men to repent (Acts 17:30).
5. We keep God's commandments because we love Him (1 Jn. 5:3).
6. We learn about keeping God's commandments in the Old Testament (Rom. 15:4; cf. 1 Cor. 10:6, 11; Gal. 3:25).

### C. Three types of commands in the Bible: Specific, General, and a Combination of Specific and General.

1. Specific commands include the specifics of carrying out the command. General commands do not include the specifics of carrying out the command.
  - a. Many commands include some specific aspects and some general aspects. In other words, God is specific about some parts of the command and general about other parts of the command.
  - b. When we have a specific command from God, we must obey God by accomplishing the command as specified by God.
  - c. When we have a general command from God, we must employ lawful expediencies to carry out the command.
2. **Gen. 6:13-22** Noah and the ark:
  - a. specifics:
    1. Gen. 6:14 ark, gopherwood, rooms, cover inside and outside with pitch
    2. Gen. 6:15 length, width (breadth), height
    3. Gen. 6:16 window finished to a cubit, door in the side, three decks
    4. Gen. 6:21 take food for people and animals
  - b. generalities:
    1. Gen. 6:14 make, size of rooms, formula to produce the pitch
    2. Gen. 6:16 the exact size of the window, which side the door was to go in, the height between decks
    3. Gen. 6:21 what kind and how much food
  - c. Noah had to:
    1. employ the specifics of God's command.
    2. make lawful choices (i.e., employ lawful expediencies) to fulfill the general aspects of God's command.
3. **Gen. 22:1-19** God tests Abraham:
  - a. specifics:
    1. Gen. 22:2 son, Isaac, Moriah, burnt offering, a mountain told him by God
  - b. generalities:
    1. Gen. 22:2 take, go, offer
  - c. Abraham had to:
    1. employ the specifics of God's command.
    2. make lawful choices (i.e., employ lawful expediencies) to fulfill the general aspects of God's command.
4. Questions:
  - a. What is faith as demonstrated by Noah and Abraham (Heb. 11:7, 17-20)? Compare your answer to Hebrews 11:1-3, 8; Romans 10:17; 6:17.
  - b. What things could not be changed if Noah and Abraham were to obey God?
  - c. What did Noah and Abraham have to do to complete the generalities of God's command?
    1. Give examples of **lawful** choices (i.e., lawful expediencies) Noah and Abraham could have employed to fulfill the general aspects of God's command.

2. Give examples of **unlawful** choices (i.e., unlawful expediencies)  
Noah and Abraham could not have employed to fulfill the general aspects of God's command.
- d. Give secular examples of people communicating to each other with specific and general commands:
  1. government to citizen (e.g., laws):
  2. employer to employee:
  3. parent to child:
  4. teacher to student:

# Expediencies

## A. We must employ lawful expediencies to obey God's general commands.

1. We learn from the Bible that God requires us to choose the means of accomplishing His general commands. For convenience sake, these choices will be called expediencies.
  - a. An expedient is something that is advantageous and profitable (rf. Vine's).
  - b. The word "expedient" appears in Jn. 11:50; 16:7; 18:14; 1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23; 2 Cor. 8:10; 12:1 in the KJV (Note: The Greek word is not always translated "expedient" in all of these Scriptures in every translation).
2. **1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24** Criteria for expediencies:
  - a. An expedient **must be lawful** (cf. 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2).
    1. It cannot be a sin.
    2. For example, a congregation can buy or rent a place to assemble, but they cannot steal a place to assemble.
  - b. An expedient **must be helpful** (expedient, KJV; profitable, NASB; beneficial, NIV and NRSV).
    1. From among the realm of lawful things, we must choose something that is helpful in accomplishing God's general command.
    2. Everything that is lawful is not helpful in every situation, in accomplishing God's commands (cf. 1 Cor. 9:19-23; 10:23-33; Rom. 14:1-15:4).
  - c. An expedient **must edify** (build-up).
    1. An expedient cannot be something that tears others down (Rom. 14:13, 15, 19-21; 1 Cor. 10:32-33).
  - d. An expedient **must not have control over us** (not our master).
    1. We cannot be addicted to it. A lawful expedient cannot be employed if it has control over us (e.g., caffeine).
  - e. An expedient **must be good for our neighbor** (good for others; cf. Phil. 2:3-4; Rom. 14:1-15:2; 1 Cor. 10:23-11:1).
    1. An expedient that causes a brother to stumble or causes a church to divide cannot be employed (cf. Rom. 14:20-15:3).
3. Questions:
  - a. Why is it necessary for us to employ expediencies to obey God?
  - b. What are the criteria for lawful expediencies?
  - c. If an expedient will cause a Christian to stumble or cause a church to divide, may it be lawfully employed? Why?

## B. 1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24 Lawful expediencies are limited to fulfilling God's general commands.

1. Expediencies must be lawful (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24; cf. 1 Cor. 9:21).
  - a. We cannot claim something to be expedient unless we first have a general command from God.
  - b. Expediencies cannot substitute what has been specifically commanded.
    1. To make a substitution, we add to God's word or take away from God's word (Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18-19).
    2. If we make substitutions for things specifically commanded, we are not abiding in Christ's doctrine (2 Jn. 1:9-11) and we are going beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4:6). We are sinning.
2. For an expedient to be lawful, it must fulfill God's command (be according to His will).
  - a. It could not have been expedient for Jesus to die for the nations unless He had been commanded to do so by God (Jn. 11:50; cf. Jn. 10:18).
  - b. It could not have been expedient for Jesus to leave earth unless He had been commanded to do so by God (Jn. 16:7; cf. Jn. 10:18).
  - c. Eating meat could not be expedient unless God had ordained that man could eat meat (1 Cor. 6:12-13; 10:23-31; cf. Gen. 9:2-4).
  - d. Collecting money to relieve the saints could not be expedient unless God had commanded Christians in one place to relieve the saints in another place (2 Cor. 8:10; cf. 1 Cor. 16:1-2).
  - e. Boasting in the flesh was not expedient for Paul because it was not God's will (2 Cor. 12:1; cf. 2 Cor. 12:7-10; 1:8-14).
3. Questions:
  - a. What is the relationship between an expedient and a command?
  - b. Can we claim something to be expedient if we do not have a general command to first authorize the use of an expedient? Why?
  - c. If someone claims something to be expedient but does not have a general command from God, can it be expedient? Is it lawful or unlawful? Why?
  - d. If someone claims something to be expedient but has substituted what is specifically commanded, can it be expedient? Is it lawful or unlawful? Why?
  - e. What are some things that people claim to be expedient, for which they do not have a general command from God?
    1. What have these people done by claiming that these things are expedient? Why?
    2. Some people claim that organizing a group of churches into a denomination is expedient? Is this true? Why?
  - f. What are some things that people claim to be expedient, which are really substitutions for what God has specifically authorized?
    1. What have these people done by claiming that these things are expedient? Why?
    2. If someone claims that sprinkling or pouring is expedient, is it true? Why?

### C. Examples of lawful and unlawful expediencies.

1. **Gen. 6:13-23** Noah and the ark:
  - a. General aspects of God's command (rf. Lesson Two):
    1. Gen. 6:14 make, size of rooms, formula to produce the pitch
    2. Gen. 6:16 the exact size of the window, which side the door was to go in, the height between decks
    3. Gen. 6:21 what kind and how much food
  - b. Questions:
    1. Did Noah have to employ expediencies to fulfill God's command? Why?
    2. Give examples of lawful expediencies Noah could have employed for each of the general aspects of the command. Why are they lawful expediencies?
    3. Give examples of unlawful expediencies Noah could not have employed. Why are they unlawful?
      - a. Could Noah have built the ark with cedar and claim that it was expedient? Why?
      - b. Could Noah have put two doors in the ark and claim it to be expedient for loading the animals? Why?
      - c. Could Noah have taken additional people and claimed that they were expedient in caring for the animals during the flood? Why?
      - d. Could Noah have taken fish in the ark? Why?
2. **Gen. 22:1-19** God tests Abraham:
  - a. General aspects of God's command (rf. Lesson Two):
    1. Gen. 22:2 take, go, offer:
  - b. Expedients Abraham employed for each of the general aspects of God's command:
    1. command to "take" and "go":
      - a. Gen. 22:3 saddled donkey
      - b. Gen. 22:3 two young men
    2. command to "offer":
      - a. Gen. 22:3 split wood
      - b. Gen. 22:6 fire and knife
      - c. Gen. 22:9 built an altar and something to bind Isaac
  - c. Explain why each expediency employed by Abraham was lawful?
  - d. List and explain expediencies that would have been unlawful.
    1. Would it have been expedient for Abraham to have taken a lamb to offer (cf. Gen. 22:2, 7-8)? Why?
    2. Would it have been expedient for Abraham to have taken a different boy to offer (cf. Gen. 22:2)? Why?
3. **Ex. 12:1-28** Moses and the Passover:
  - a. Two general aspects of God's command:
    1. **Ex. 12:3** speak to the congregation
      - a. Note: At this time, the children of Israel could have numbered in the millions.

2. **Ex. 12:7** put some of the blood on the doorposts and lintel
- b. Expedients Moses employed for these two general aspects of God's command:
  1. **Ex. 12:21** Moses called for the elders and communicated to the people through them.
  2. **Ex. 12:22** Hyssop, a basin, and the act of striking were employed to put the blood on the doorposts and lintel.
- c. Explain why each expediency employed by Moses was lawful?
- d. List and explain expediencies that would have been unlawful.
  1. Could Moses and the people have offered a different animal as an expedient? Why?
    - a. What would have happened if they had offered a different animal?
  2. Could Moses and the people have put the blood on something other than the doorposts? Why?
    - a. What would have happened if they had put the blood on something other than the doorposts?
4. **Num. 20:7-12** Moses and the rock:
  - a. Was it expedient (i.e., helpful, profitable, beneficial) for Moses to strike the rock at Kadesh? Why?
    1. Compare the incident at Kadesh (Num. 20:7-12) with the earlier incident at Rephidim (Ex. 17:1-7).
  - b. When God changes His law (cf. Heb. 7:12; Col. 2:13-14), can we act according to the old law and be pleasing to God (cf. Num. 20:7-12; Ex. 17:1-7)? What will happen if we do?
  - c. Can we substitute the specific aspects of God's commands with expediencies? What will happen if we do?
5. **Lev. 10:1-2** Nadab and Abihu:
  - a. Was it expedient (i.e., helpful, profitable, beneficial) for Nadab and Abihu to offer profane (i.e., strange) fire? Why?
  - b. Can we substitute the specific aspects of God's commands with expediencies? What will happen if we do?
6. **1 Sam. 13:1-15** Saul's unlawful sacrifice:
  - a. Was it expedient (i.e., helpful, profitable, beneficial) for Saul to offer the burnt offering? Why?
  - b. If we change (i.e., substitute) the specifics of God's command, are we:
    1. acting foolishly (1 Sam. 13:13)?
    2. keeping what God has commanded (1 Sam. 13:14)?
7. **1 Sam. 15:1-26** Saul spares King Agag:
  - a. Was it expedient (i.e., helpful, profitable, beneficial) for Saul and the people to spare King Agag, spare the best animals, and take the plunder? Why?
  - b. If we change (i.e., substitute) the specifics of God's commands by employing unlawful expediencies:
    1. are we disobeying God and doing evil (1 Sam. 15:19)?
    2. are we vainly worshiping God (1 Sam. 15:22; cf. Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-9)?

3. are we rebellious (1 Sam. 15:23)?
  4. have we rejected the word of the Lord (1 Sam. 15:23)?
  5. will God reject us (1 Sam. 15:23)?
  6. are we sinning by transgressing the Lord's commandment (1 Sam. 15:24)?
8. **2 Ki. 5:1-19** Nathan dips in the Jordan:
- a. Could Naaman have employed sprinkling or pouring as an expedient (2 Ki. 5:10, 14)? Why?
  - b. Could Naaman have dipped in a river other than Jordan as an expedient (2 Ki. 5:10, 12)? Why?
  - c. Could Naaman have dipped more or less than seven times as an expedient (2 Ki. 5:10, 14)? Why?
9. **1 Ch. 13:1-14; 15:1-29** David moves the ark with a cart:
- a. Why was the cart not an expedient for moving the ark (1 Ch. 15:2)?
  - b. David moved the ark with a cart out of ignorance (1 Ch. 15:13). Does God excuse our disobedience if we employ unlawful expediencies out of ignorance?
  - c. What was the result of employing an unlawful expedient (1 Ch. 13:10)?
10. **1 Cor. 10:23-11:1** Eating of meats was not always expedient (cf. Rom. 14:1-15:2):
- a. Under what conditions was eating of meats not expedient (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24; Rom. 14:19-23)?
  - b. Under what conditions may a lawful expedient not be employed (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24; Rom. 14:19-23)? Give examples.

# Apostolic Examples

## A. God commands us to follow the apostles' examples.

1. Apostolic examples are peculiar to the New Testament since the apostles had no authority under the Mosaic Law. Therefore, apostolic examples are limited to apostolic teaching beginning on Pentecost in Acts Chapter Two.
  - a. **2 Tim. 1:13** Sound words establish a pattern (i.e., form, standard, example) by which we must faithfully live (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17), and by which we will be judged (cf. Jn. 12:48).
2. We must follow the apostles' examples because it has been commanded by God.
  - a. Paul commanded the Corinthians to imitate him (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1).
  - b. By imitating the apostles, we imitate Christ (1 Cor. 11:1; cf. 1 Jn. 1:3, 6; 2:3).
  - c. When we practice the things learned, received, and heard from the apostles, the God of peace is with us (Phil. 4:9).
  - d. We must stand fast and hold the apostolic traditions which are taught in God's word (2 Th. 2:15).
  - e. We must withdraw from brethren who do not live according to the apostolic traditions (2 Th. 3:6-15).
3. Since we are commanded to follow apostolic examples and hold the apostolic traditions, we cannot obey or cling to human traditions that contradict God's word (cf. Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-9; Col. 2:21-23; 2 Jn. 1:9).
  - a. Human religious traditions such as sprinkling, pouring, infant baptism, denominationalism, and institutionalism contradict God's commands and apostolic traditions; therefore, they cannot be followed by Christians.
4. Since we are commanded to follow apostolic examples and traditions, we must follow **all** apostolic examples and traditions **except** those excluded by God's word.
5. Questions:
  - a. Why are the apostles' examples authoritative?
    1. Which apostolic examples and traditions are not authoritative? Why?
  - b. Why are religious traditions originating from men not authoritative?

## B. Which apostolic examples are not binding upon Christians?

1. Apostolic examples that were **sinful** are not binding on Christians.
  - a. We are not to sin; therefore, we are not to imitate the apostles in their sin (Acts 17:30; 1 Jn. 1:8-2:2; 3:4-10).
  - b. We do not imitate Paul before he became a Christian, and was chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15).
  - c. We do not imitate Peter when he committed the sin of hypocrisy (Gal. 2:11-14).
2. Apostolic examples in keeping the **Mosaic Law** are not binding on Christians.
  - a. God changed the law under which man lived (Heb. 7:12; Col. 2:13-14). We live under the law of Christ, not the Mosaic Law (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; 2 Cor. 3:1-18; cf. Rom. 6:17; 16:26; Heb. 5:9; 2 Th. 1:8; 2 Jn. 1:9).
  - b. It is impossible to keep the Mosaic Law today since God destroyed the Jewish

- temple (Matt. 24:1f).
- c. Gentiles did not keep the traditions of the Mosaic Law (Acts 15:1-29; 21:15-25; 1 Cor. 9:20-21).
  - d. No one may keep the traditions of the Mosaic Law as a matter of salvation (Gal. 2:21; 5:3-4).
    1. Keeping the traditions of the Mosaic Law is a matter of personal choice and cannot be bound upon others (Rom. 14:1-13; Col. 2:4-8, 16-17, 23).
  - e. Paul kept the traditions of the Mosaic Law when it was expedient. And, he kept Gentiles traditions when they were expedient (Acts 21:24; 1 Cor. 9:19-23).
3. Apostolic examples of performing **miracles** are not binding on Christians.
- a. People today cannot perform miracles; therefore, we are not to imitate the apostles regarding miracles.
    1. Miracles were temporary, and have been replaced with that which is perfect. Today we live by the better way, faith, hope, and love (1 Cor. 12:31-13:13; Ja. 1:25).
    2. Miraculous power can only be passed to a person by the laying on of an apostles hands. Since all the apostles are dead, the power to perform miracles can not be passed to anyone today (Acts 8:14-19; 19:5-6).
4. Apostolic examples that were **cultural** are not binding on Christians.
- a. Note: Jewish cultural traditions were often connected to the Mosaic Law. Some Jewish cultural traditions were erroneously bound as if they were commands from God (Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-9; cf. Matt. 23:1-26; Lk. 11:38).
  - b. Christians should not judge others in respect to cultural traditions, and should not allow others to judge them in respect to cultural traditions (Rom. 14:1-15:6; 1 Cor. 8:1-13; 10:23-11:1; Col. 2:16-23).
    1. Observance of cultural traditions are a matter of personal preference.
    2. Christians may only observe cultural traditions that are lawful (1 Cor. 9:21).
  - c. Paul observed whichever cultural traditions were expedient (1 Cor. 9:19-23).
    1. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is important (Gal. 5:6).
    2. Jews could no longer observe some Jewish cultural traditions after becoming Christians (Acts 10:9-16, 28-29; 11:1-18; Gal. 2:11-16).
  - d. Any lawful cultural tradition may be observed by Christians (Col. 3:17; cf. 1 Cor. 6:12; 9:21; 10:23-24).
5. Apostolic examples of applying **expedients** are not binding on Christians.
- a. Anything meeting the Scriptural criteria of an expedient (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24) may be employed as an expedient by Christians. By nature, expedients today will differ from expedients employed during the first century.
    1. Expedient modes of travel for the apostles will differ from our expedient modes of travel.
    2. Expedient facilities for assembling, for the apostles, will differ from our expedient facilities.

4. Questions:
  - a. Which apostolic examples are authoritative today? Why?
  - b. Which apostolic examples are not authoritative today? Why?

### **C. What are some apostolic examples that are binding today?**

1. We observe the Lord's Supper on Sunday because of an apostolic example (Acts 20:7).
2. We should imitate the conduct of the apostles — things seen and heard (Phil. 4:9; 2 Tim. 3:10).
  - a. For example, Paul tells us that he died daily (1 Cor. 15:31). Therefore, we should recommit ourselves to God each day.
  - b. For example, Paul was polite and respectful when preaching the gospel (Acts 24:10; 26:2-3).

### **D. Practice discerning which apostolic examples are binding today:**

1. The apostles did not wear shirts and pants. Why may we wear shirts and pants today?
2. The apostles traveled via foot, ship, and beast. Why may we travel in airplanes and cars?
3. The apostles did not preach on the TV, the radio, or the Internet. Why may we preach on the TV, the radio, and the Internet?
4. The apostles may not have built and paid for church buildings to have a place to assemble. Why may we build and pay for church buildings to have a place to assemble?
5. Paul observed the Lord's Supper in an upper room (Acts 20:7-8)? Why may we observe the Lord's Supper in a lower room, an upper room, or in no room at all?
6. The apostles observed the Mosaic Law and paid tithes to God. Why are we excluded from imitating the apostles in respect to tithing and observing the Mosaic Law?
7. The apostles may not have baptized people in a baptistry. Why may we use a baptistry?
8. The apostles did not use song books or mechanical instruments in the assembly. Why may we use song books, but not mechanical instruments?

# Inferences from God's Word

## A. What do we mean by "inference"?

1. Definitions:
  - a. "Infer" is a verb meaning to make a conclusion by the deduction of facts.
  - b. "Inference" is a noun denoting the result of inferring (i.e., the result of making a conclusion by the deduction of facts).
2. False teachers make erroneous inferences to twist the Scriptures (2 Pet. 3:16).
  - a. To twist the Scriptures, false teachers take part of God's word to construct a false conclusion. They do not take all the facts revealed in God's word.
    1. Therefore, the way of truth is blasphemed and people are exploited with deceptive words (2 Pet. 2:2-3).
  - b. Examples of false inferences constructing false doctrines:
    1. Once saved, always saved.
      - a. This false doctrine is constructed by taking Scriptures such as Jn. 5:24; 10:28-29; 17:1f; Rom. 5:9-10; 8:30; 9:11-16; Eph. 2:8-10 and twisting them to construct a false doctrine.
      - b. This false doctrine ignores Scriptures such as 1 Cor. 15:1-2; Gal. 5:4; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 2:14-26; 4:2-4; Heb. 4:6-9; 10:26-39; 2 Pet. 2:1-3, 18-22; Rev. 2:1-3:22.
    2. We are saved without being baptized.
      - a. This false doctrine is constructed by taking Scriptures such as Lk. 23:42-43; Jn. 3:16; 5:24; Acts 16:31; 1 Cor. 1:14-17 and twisting them to construct a false doctrine.
      - b. This false doctrine ignores Scriptures such as Matt. 28:18-19; Mk. 16: 16; Jn. 3:5; Acts 2:38; 8:12, 26-40; 9:1-20; 22:16; 10:34-48; 16:13-15, 25-34; 18:8; 19:1-7.
3. Questions:
  - a. Give examples of proper inferences.
  - b. Give examples of erroneous inferences.
  - c. Give examples of false doctrines constructed by erroneous inferences. Which Scriptures are used in formulating the false doctrine and which Scriptures are ignored?

## B. Inferences can help us understand the context and the historical narrative.

1. Occasionally, we can make inferences from the historical narrative in the Bible to increase our understanding of the context in which Scripture was written.
  - a. For example, we infer from the Biblical historical narrative that Matthew wrote the first gospel in the Bible. Secular history and the addition of Matthew's name by scribes to early manuscripts agree with inferences from the historical narrative which makes Matthew's authorship more sure.
    1. Similar inferences to authorship are made regarding other books in the Bible. The New Testament book with the most questions surrounding

- its authorship is Hebrews.
- b. Inferences are used to establish an approximate date the books of the Bible were written and therefore an approximate order in which the books were written.
    1. If knowing the date a book was written is essential to understanding a doctrine, God would have included the date of writing in His word (cf. Eph. 3:1-4; 5:15-17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3).
    2. Scriptural knowledge that is partly based on the date Scripture was written is not pertinent to salvation.
      - a. For example, conclusions based on whether John's Revelation was written before or after the destruction of Jerusalem are not pertinent to salvation and should not become contentious issues.
  2. Inferences can help us have a fuller understanding of the historical narrative.
    - a. For example, from Genesis 12:1-5 we infer that Lot had become a member of Abram's household sometime after Haran's death (cf. Gen. 11:28f).
    - b. For example, from Gen. 12:10; 13:1 we infer that Lot went down to Egypt with Abram.
    - c. For example, from Matt. 3:16 we infer that Jesus went down into the water before being baptized since He came up out of the water after being baptized.
      1. Therefore, we learn that a person must go down into water before being baptized and come up out of the water after being baptized (cf. Acts 8:38).
    - d. For example, from Acts 15:22-25:
      1. we infer that people, who taught that the Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the law, claimed authority from the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for their doctrine (Acts 15:2, 22-24). This is the reason that the church in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to consult with the apostles and elders on this question.
        - a. We cannot infer that the church of Jerusalem exercised authority over other churches, and is an example of denominationalism.
      2. we infer that the whole church in Jerusalem neither practiced nor advocated this doctrine (that it was necessary to be circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law to be saved) (cf. Act 15:22-23).
  3. Some inferences from the historical narrative have a degree of uncertainty. These inferences must be viewed within the degree of uncertainty that exists.
    - a. For example, knowing the history of the Caldeans' relationship with the Jews can help us understand the reason that the Caldeans came forward and accused the Jews of disobeying Nebuchadnezzar's command (Dan. 3:8-12). But, these inferences would be merely speculative.

### C. Bible examples of proper inferences from God's word:

1. God's commands infer personal responsibility and due diligence.
  - a. **Gen. 6:13-22** Noah was personally responsible for building the ark since God commanded him to build the ark (Gen. 6:13-14). Noah was responsible for exercising due diligence. For example, he could neither wait three hundred years to begin building the ark nor prolong its completion.
  - b. **Gen. 22:1-19** Abraham was personally responsible for offering his son since God commanded him to offer Isaac (Gen. 22:1-2). Abraham was responsible for exercising due diligence in obeying the command; therefore, he rose early the next morning (Gen. 22:3).
  - c. **Josh. 6:1-27** Joshua was personally responsible for organizing the march (Josh. 6:2-3). He rose early in the morning to begin the march (Josh. 6:12).
  - d. **Acts 10:17-48** Peter was personally commanded to preach to Cornelius (Acts 10:20-22). He could not abrogate his responsibility to anyone else. He had to diligently obey (Acts 10:23-24).
  - e. **Acts 16:31-33** People who hear and believe the gospel must be diligent to obey the gospel (cf. Acts 2:38; 22:16; Heb. 5:9).
    1. God's commands imply due diligence to immediately comply with the command.
2. God commanded Israel to observe the Passover, numerous Sabbaths, and numerous feasts on specified days (Ex. 12:1-28, 43-51; 20:8-11; 23:10-19). God did not specify the frequency (i.e., every week, every year, etc.). Israel properly inferred that the Passover, Sabbaths, and feasts must be observed every time the specified days occurred.
  - a. We learn that we must obey God's command to do something on a specific day, every time the day occurs. Unless, God gives us instructions concerning conditions whereby we are not to observe the command.
    1. Christians assemble every first day of the week. Because, God has not given us any conditions under which we do not assemble on the first day of the week (Heb. 10:24-25; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).
    2. Christians observe the Lord's Supper and take up a collection every first day of the week. Because, God has not given us any conditions under which we do not observe the Lord's Supper and take up a collect on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).
3. **Matt. 4:5-7** Jesus inferred that throwing Himself down from the pinnacle would be tempting God.
  - a. We learn that purposely putting ourselves in a position to challenge God is tempting God.
4. **Jn. 8:58** Jesus confessed His eternal nature and deity by implication (Ex. 3:14).
5. **Acts 10:9-16, 34** Peter inferred (in truth) that God does not show partiality toward men (cf. Gal. 2:6).
  - a. False teachers construct their doctrines by making erroneous inferences which are not based on truth (2 Pet. 3:16).
  - b. Christians must make inferences based on the truth, in perfect harmony with God's word (Jn. 17:17).
6. **Acts 16:6-10** Paul inferred that the reason for the Lord calling him to Macedonia

was to preach the gospel.

7. **1 Cor. 15:27** Paul points out an obvious inference quoting Ps.8:6. Christ is subject to God. God is not subject to Christ.

#### **D. Since we are commanded to follow apostolic examples, inferences from authoritative apostolic examples are binding upon us today.**

1. We are commanded to imitate the apostles (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1) and hold the apostolic traditions (2 Th. 2:15; 3:6-7). Therefore, anything inferred by an authoritative apostolic example is binding upon us today.
  - a. These inferences are sometimes referred to as "necessary inferences." These are inferences that are necessary for us to adhere to in order to please God.
2. **Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:24-25** The apostles assembled on the first day of the week to observe the Lord's Supper.
  - a. Since the apostles only assembled on Sunday to observe the Lord's Supper, and since God has not given us an exception for assembling on Sunday, we must infer that it is necessary to assemble every Sunday to partake of the Lord's Supper.

#### **E. Five present-day inferences from God's word that are binding on us today:**

1. We must exercise **due diligence** to carry out God's will.
  - a. Every Bible example of obedience to God infers the exercise of due diligence (cf. section C above).
  - b. Diligence is commanded (2 Pet. 1:5, 10; Heb.11:6).
2. We are **personally responsible** for carrying out God's will.
  - a. Every Bible example of obedience to God infers personal responsibility (cf. section C above).
3. Christians must **assemble on every Sunday**.
  - a. See Old Testament examples (above in section C) of keeping specified days.
  - b. We are commanded to not forsake our assembling together (Heb. 10:25).
  - c. The church assembled on Sunday (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).
    1. God has not exempted the church from assembling on any Sundays; therefore, the church must assemble on *every* Sunday.
4. **1 Cor. 16:1-2** Christians must **lay by in store as they have prospered every Sunday**.
  - a. See Old Testament examples (above in section C) of keeping specified days.
  - b. The apostolic command is to lay by in store as we have prospered on Sunday. The inference is that we must lay by in store *every* Sunday. Because, God has not given us any conditions under which we are not to take up a collect on Sunday.
5. **Acts 20:7** Christians must **observe the Lord's Supper every Sunday**.
  - a. See Old Testament examples (above in section C) of keeping specified days.
  - b. We must partake of the Lord's Supper *every* Sunday since the apostles only assembled on Sunday to observe the Lord's Supper, and since God has not given us an exception for assembling on Sunday.
    1. Many churches assemble and take up a collection every Sunday but do

not partake of the Lord's Supper every Sunday. The result is vain worship (cf. Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-9; Col. 2:20-23).

6. Questions:
  - a. Give secular examples of inferences:
    1. Write a command wherein due diligence is inferred.
    2. Write a command wherein personal responsibility is inferred.
    3. Write a story illustrating a situation where a person in authority, by their example, establishes an authoritative inference of doing something the same day every week. Make sure the story illustrates the authoritative apostolic inference of observing the Lord's Supper every first day of the week.
  - b. Give religious examples of inferences:
    1. Cite and explain an inference from a historical narrative. This is an inference that helps us understand what took place from a historical perspective.
    2. Cite and explain an inference to which it is necessary for us to adhere.
      - a. This type of inference is sometimes called a necessary inference.
      - b. Why is it necessary for us to infer that we are to assemble, take the Lord's Supper, and make a contribution every first day of the week?

# Silence of the Scriptures

## A. What is silence of the Scriptures?

1. God is silent when He has not spoken.
  - a. God has **spoken** if He **has authorized** something with:
    1. a specific command.
    2. a general command requiring an expedient.
    3. an apostolic example.
    4. an inference from a command or apostolic example.
  - b. God is **silent** if He **has not authorized** something with:
    1. a specific command.
    2. a general command requiring an expedient.
    3. an apostolic example.
    4. an inference from a command or apostolic example.
2. The things about which God is silent are not authorized by God (1 Cor. 4:6; Col. 3:17). Therefore, they are unlawful and sinful.
  - a. God was silent about priest coming from the tribe of Judah (Heb. 7:14). Therefore, it would have been sinful for a man from the tribe of Judah to be a priest.
  - b. God has been silent regarding mechanical instruments of music in the church. Therefore, it would be sinful for us to employ mechanical instruments in the church.

## B. God's silence is not authoritative.

1. God has commanded:
  - a. **1 Pet. 4:11** We must speak (and therefore do) what God has instructed us to do in His word (Rom. 3:2; Heb. 5:12).
  - b. **Col. 3:17** Our words and actions must be in the name (i.e., by the authority) of Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 5:9; 2 Jn. 1:9). We can only do the things that are authorized.
    1. E.g., Ex. 5:23. Moses spoke in the name of the Lord. The commands Moses gave Pharaoh were authorized by God.
    2. E.g., Esther 3:12; 8:8, 10. Decrees written "in the name" of the king were authorized by the king.
    3. E.g., Acts 4:7, 10. The miracles performed by the apostles were in the name of Jesus. They were by his authority.
    4. E.g., Acts 4:12. We are saved in the name of Jesus - by His authority and power.
  - c. **1 Cor. 4:6** We cannot think beyond what is written. We cannot do anything that has not been authorized in God's word (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Jn. 1:9).
  - d. **2 Jn. 1:9** If we do not abide in the teaching of Christ, we do not have God - we've gone "too far" (NASB).
  - e. **Rev. 22:18-19** We cannot add to or take from God's word. We cannot do

- anything that has not been authorized in God's word (cf. Deut. 4:1-2).
2. The apostle Paul and the Jews understood that God's silence was not authoritative.
    - a. **Heb. 7:11-14** Paul uses the fact that God's silence is not authoritative to prove that God, of necessity, had changed the law before Jesus became High Priest.
  3. Men understand that silence is not authoritative.
    - a. **Acts 15:24** The apostles and elders wrote a letter to the Gentiles stating that the false teaching regarding keeping the Mosaic Law had not come from them. This was evidenced by the fact that they had given "no such commandment." They had been silent and had, therefore, not authorized the teaching.
  4. Questions:
    - a. List examples in everyday life where a person's silence is not authoritative.
      1. Is a child excused from obeying his parent's command to go to his room if the parent did not say, "do not go anywhere else but your room?"
    - b. List religious examples where God's silence is not authoritative.
      1. What are some things that people do and justify claiming that God has not forbidden the act?
      2. How big would the Bible be if God listed all the "shall not's" associated with every command?

### C. To live by faith, we must respect God's silence.

1. Noah obeyed by faith and built the ark (Heb. 11:7; Gen. 6:22).
  - a. What did God authorize (command, expedient, inference)?
  - b. List some things about which God was silent.
    1. Did Noah do any of these?
    2. Could Noah have done any of these and still have obeyed God? Why?
2. Abraham obeyed by faith and offered up Isaac (Heb. 11:17-19; Gen. 22:1-19).
  - a. What did God authorize (command, expedient, inference)?
  - b. List some things about which God was silent.
    1. Did Abraham do any of these?
    2. Could Abraham have done any of these and still have obeyed God? Why?
3. Moses obeyed by faith and kept the Passover (Heb. 11:28; Ex. 12:1-28).
  - a. What did God authorize (command, expedient, inference)?
  - b. List some things about which God was silent.
    1. Did Moses do any of these?
    2. Could Moses have done any of these and still have obeyed God? Why?

## D. Whenever God's silence is not respected, the transgressors are punished.

1. **Num. 20:7-12** Moses and the rock:
  - a. Had God been silent about striking the rock?
  - b. Why did Moses strike the rock (Num. 20:12)?
    1. Why do people today disobey God by doing things which have not been authorized (2 Th. 1:8, 10)?
  - c. What was Moses' punishment for doing something about which God had been silent (Num. 20:12)?
    1. What will be the punishment of people who do things about which God has been silent (2 Th. 1:8)?
2. **1 Ch. 13:9-10** Uzzah and the ark:
  - a. Had God been silent about touching the ark?
  - b. What was Uzzah's punishment for doing something about which God had been silent?
3. **1 Sam. 13:1-15** Saul's unlawful sacrifice:
  - a. Had God been silent about Saul offering the sacrifice?
  - b. What was Saul's punishment for doing something about which God had been silent?
4. **Jer. 7:31; 32:35** Israel's sacrifice of their children to Molech (cf. Jer. 7:22-24):
  - a. Had God been silent about sacrificing their children to Molech?
  - b. Was this an abomination (detestable), a sin?
5. Questions:
  - a. List other examples of people in the Bible who sinned by doing something about which God had been silent.
    1. What was their punishment?
  - b. What will result if we do things about which God has been silent?

## E. Strict and loose constructionists:

1. Two English terms have been popularized in our society designating man's two distinct attitudes toward interpretation of law.
  - a. These terms are often used legally and politically to discern between the two major views toward interpreting the United States Constitution.
  - b. Whenever a nominee to the Supreme Court is before congress during the confirmation hearing, members of congress will often want to know if he is a strict constructionist or loose constructionist.
2. Strict constructionists:
  - a. strictly interpret the law.
  - b. recognize and adhere to the fact that silence does not authorize action.
3. Loose constructionists:
  - a. loosely interpret the law.
  - b. do not recognize and adhere to the fact that silence does not authorize action.
4. As we have learned in this lesson, Christians must be strict constructionists of God's word (cf. 1 Cor. 4:6; Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11; Rev. 22:18-19).
  - a. Christians must strictly interpret God's law based only on what it says.
  - b. Christians must recognize and adhere to the fact that God's silence does not

authorize action.

5. Questions:
  - a. Give examples of loose construction of God's word to form false doctrines.
    1. Why are these examples sinful?
  - b. Must Christians be strict or loose constructionists of God's word? Why?

# God Desires Mercy and Not Sacrifice

## A. Introduction:

1. Jesus teaches that God's law is tempered with mercy (compassion). Many Christians understand this principle, although they may not understand the Scriptural background of the principle.
  - a. Laws (religious or secular) are not written to deal with every possible exception which may arise in an emergency situation. For this reason, God has always given His people a law that is tempered with mercy (compassion).
2. The principle of God's desire for mercy (compassion) above sacrifice is obvious in the following commonsense examples.
  - a. If unbelievers were in a car wreck outside the church building, we would use the church's first-aid kit and telephone to help the injured people. Although it is not the church's work to provide medical aid to unbelievers, the necessity of the situation requires us to act out of mercy and use the church's resources to help those who were injured in the accident.
  - b. If we had an unbeliever visiting the church assembly who had a severe sugar problem and needed a drink of grape juice to avoid going into shock, we would give him some of the church's grape juice, purchased for the Lord's Super, to medically attend to his emergency needs. Although it is not the work of the church to feed grape juice to unbelievers, the necessity of the situation requires us to act out of mercy and use the church's resources to help the person.
3. These examples do not authorize us to change the work of the church.
  - a. Because mercy demands us to act in an emergency situation, we cannot change the work of the church. As in the examples above, we could neither take money from the treasury to build a hospital for unbelievers nor could we take money from the treasury to build a food bank for unbelievers. We will learn more about this as we study Jesus' teachings in this lesson.
4. Other examples will be presented later in this lesson. God's law has never been blind to the emergency needs of people.

## B. Jesus teaches this lesson on two separate occasions:

1. **Matt. 9:9-13** It was **necessary** for Jesus to associate with sinners since His mission was to call sinners to repentance.
  - a. **Matt. 9:13** The Pharisees did not understand the principle of mercy (compassion) above sacrifice (Hos. 6:6).
    1. Bible teaching on mercy:
      - a. **Matt. 5:7** The merciful will obtain mercy.
      - b. **Matt. 23:23** Mercy is a weightier matter of law than tithing.

- c. **Ja. 2:13** Judgment is without mercy to those who have shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.
  - b. Jesus could not fulfill His God-given mission without associating with sinners.
    - 1. The Jews were not merciful. Their human traditions prevented them from associating with the lost to call them to repentance.
  - c. This principle in respect to teaching the lost is extended to Christians (Gal. 6:1-2). The spiritually strong are to call the lost to repentance because they are strong enough to associate with sinners (in order to teach them) without being tempted (cf. 1 Tim. 3:6-7; Tit. 1:7-9; 1 Cor. 15:33).
    - 1. Babes in Christ cannot allow themselves to be in positions where they may be tempted. Spiritually mature Christians could place themselves in the position for a short time to teach the lost.
  - d. The necessity for Jesus to associate with sinners in order to call them to repentance, did not justify association with them for other reasons that would be sinful.
- 2. **Matt. 12:1-8** (cf. Mk. 2:23-28) Jesus' disciples were in a position where they found it **necessary** to pluck grain on the Sabbath.
  - a. **Matt. 12:7** The Pharisees did not understand the principle of mercy (compassion) above sacrifice (Hos. 6:6).
  - b. Jesus gives two examples:
    - 1. **Matt. 12:3-4** David (and his men) ate the showbread (1 Sam. 21:1-6). The law specified that the showbread was only to be eaten by the priests (Lev. 24:9).
      - a. David was in a situation where it was necessary for him and his men to eat the showbread.
        - 1. Note that the necessity of this one situation did not authorize David and his men to eat the showbread under normal circumstances.
          - a. The same thing is true today. If we do something based on mercy (compassion) in an emergency situation, that thing is not also authorized in normal situations.
      - b. Likewise, Jesus' disciples were in a similar situation where it was necessary for them to pluck grain in order to eat (Matt. 12:1), though the law forbid this work on the Sabbath.
        - 1. The necessity for Jesus' disciples to pluck grain on the Sabbath one time, did not authorize them to pluck grain on the Sabbath under normal circumstances.
        - 2. Today, whatever is done in an emergency situation because of mercy (compassion) does not authorize the same thing to be done in normal circumstances.
    - 2. **Matt. 12:5** Priests were commanded to work on the Sabbath in violation of the Sabbath law itself.
      - a. The disciples (when plucking grain) were obeying God just as the priests were on the Sabbath. The disciples (in this

- situation) were excused from keeping the Sabbath law as were the priests.
- b. Similarly today, we give unleavened bread and fruit of the vine, which has been purchased from the church's treasury, to unbelievers in our assembly wishing to partake of the Lord's Supper. It is not the normal work of the church to provide food to unbelievers. But because of mercy (compassion), God allows this exception.
  - c. Jesus cites His authority:
    1. **Matt. 12:6** Jesus is greater than the temple. The temple was the dwelling place of Jehovah. Therefore, Jesus declares Himself to be equal to God (cf. Jn. 1:1).
    2. **Mk. 2:27-28** Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. Therefore, He has authority over the Sabbath.
3. Application to Christians:
- a. "Mercy" as used in Matt. 9:13 and Matt. 12:7 defined:
    1. "... is the outward manifestation of pity; it assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it" (Vines).
    2. The principle Jesus teaches is that providing the **necessary needs** of people takes president over sacrifice.
  - b. "Sacrifice" as used in Matt. 9:13 and Matt. 12:7 defined:
    1. "... primarily denotes the act of offering; then, objectively, that which is offered" (Vines).
    2. The word "sacrifice" represented the ceremonial portion of the Mosaic Law which aided the people in their spiritual and moral service to God.
      - a. **Mk. 2:27** The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.
      - b. **1 Sam. 15:22** To obey is better than sacrifice.
      - c. **Matt. 9:13; 12:7** I desire mercy (compassion) and not sacrifice.
  - c. Applying this principle today (*I desire mercy and not sacrifice*):
    1. "Sacrifice" represents the things we use and employ to aid us in service to God.
      - a. These would include the church building and all its furnishings, the treasury, and the expedient means of accomplishing God's will.
    2. "Mercy" demands that the aids we employ in service to God be used to meet the emergency needs of people which cannot be met in any other authorized way.
      - a. If the only way we can meet the emergency needs of people involved in an auto accident is to use the church's first-aid kit, telephone, and building, we must use them to meet the emergency needs. The emergency medical needs of people are of greater importance than a first-aid kit, telephone, or church

building. But, this does not authorize us to change the work of the church to fund, build, and oversee a hospital to care for unbelievers.

3. The word "sacrifice" does not represent the doctrinal issues commanded in Christ's law (Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 9:21; 2 Jn. 1:9).
  - a. For example, we could not deny Christ to save our own life or the life of another person (Matt. 10:32-33; 1 Tim. 6:11-14; Rev. 2:10).
  - a. For example, we could not observe the Lord's Supper on a monthly basis rather than a weekly basis attempting to reach lost souls (Acts 20:7).
  - c. For example, we could not add mechanical instruments of music to try and attract unbelievers to the assembly (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

### **C. Secular examples of *mercy (compassion)* above sacrifice:**

1. Our civil law allows for judicial discretion in cases of necessity. These are situations in which the necessities of a situation deem it necessary to not follow the letter of the law.
2. Secular examples of driving automobiles:
  - a. Speeding in a car to rush someone to the hospital is accepted as a necessary action in light of the circumstances. But, endangering other people by driving recklessly in this situation would not be considered lawful.
  - b. Speeding in a car to enter a lane on the freeway, safely moving into traffic, is considered a necessary and appropriate action unless the driver is reckless. Likewise, speeding to pass a car on a highway to avoid a head-on collision is considered an appropriate action unless the driver is reckless.
  - c. Speeding to get to church, work, or school on time is not considered necessary. Getting up on time and diligently preparing for church, work or school is necessary - not driving fast.

### **D. Religious examples of *mercy (compassion)* above sacrifice:**

1. We live in a prosperous country where there are few situations requiring necessary action, as with David eating the showbread. But, we must be prepared if we are called to live in adverse situations.
  - a. The following are some real examples brethren have experienced. After the examples are some questions to help us think about situations we may face one day.
2. Religious examples:
  - a. One congregation accidentally ran out of communion cups one Sunday morning. They called a brother from another congregation who gave them some of the communion cups from the neighboring congregation.
  - b. Hurricane Andrew devastated parts of Florida. Churches could not contact the Christians and churches in the devastated area to send relief. A congregation near the devastated area collected the benevolent funds and distributed them to needy congregations.

3. Questions:
  - a. In times of utter devastation, could a congregation use their building and money to help Christians? Could the congregation share with unbelievers? Why?
  - b. If all our homes and our neighbors' homes were destroyed, could the members live in the church building? Could the members invite their neighbors to live in the church building? Why?
  - c. If all our homes were destroyed and we lost all our money, could we buy food for Christians from the treasury? Could we buy food for our neighbors living with us in the church building? Why?
    1. In this situation, should we invite unbelievers into the assembly on Sunday morning and serve them the Lord's Supper, then turn them out hungry into the elements while we gather to eat? Why?

# Questions for Today

The purpose of this lesson is to exercise our senses to discern both good and evil (1 Tim. 4:6-8; Heb. 5:12-14). We will take the principles learned from God's word in the previous lessons and apply them to present day issues.

We will review some of the arguments used by people to justify human inventions. In comparing human doctrines to God's doctrine, we will practice earnestly contention for the faith (Jude 1:3) while giving a defense for our hope (1 Pet. 3:15).

## A. Moral and social issues:

1. Many moral issues are resolved by applying the principles relating to lust and licentiousness.
  - a. "Lust" is a *strong sinful desire*.
    1. Lust, sin, and eternal death:
      - a. Sin reigns in our mortal bodies if we obey it in its lusts (Rom. 6:12).
      - b. Those who desire to be rich fall into many foolish and harmful lusts (1 Tim. 6:9).
      - c. We sinfully lust for the flesh (worldly lusts) (Rom. 13:14; Gal. 5:16, 24; Eph. 2:3; 2 Pet. 2:18; 1 Jn. 2:16).
      - d. People who are fulfilling the desires of the flesh are children of wrath (Eph. 2:3; Col. 3:5-7).
      - e. Sinners serve (are enslaved by) various lusts and pleasures (2 Tim. 3:6; Tit. 3:3).
      - f. We are tempted when we are carried away and enticed by our own lusts. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin. And when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death (Ja. 1:14-15).
        1. The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).
    2. Christians:
      - a. put to death (crucified) passion and evil desires (Col. 3:5; cf. 1 Th. 4:5).
      - b. flee lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:22; cf. 1 Tim. 6:11).
      - c. behave properly by putting on Christ and not making provision for the flesh (Rom. 13:13-14).
      - d. do not have evil companions (1 Cor. 15:33).
  - b. "Licentiousness" ("lasciviousness" KJV) is *unbridled lust, excess, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness, and sensual conduct*.
    1. Scriptures:
      - a. **Mk. 7:21-23** Licentiousness (sensuality) proceeds from the heart.
      - b. **Gal. 5:19** Licentiousness (sensuality) is a work of the flesh.

- c. **Eph. 4:19** People who are past feeling (callous) give themselves over to licentiousness (sensuality) to work all uncleanness with greediness.
  - d. **1 Pet. 4:3** Sinners walk in licentiousness (sensuality).
  - e. **Jude 1:4** Ungodly men turn God's grace into licentiousness.
    - 1. They twist the Scriptures (2 Pet. 3:16) to advocate licentious behaviors.
    - 2. The doctrine of once saved always saved exemplifies men turning God's grace into licentiousness.
  - f. **Rom. 13:13** Christians cannot walk in licentiousness (sensuality). They cannot participate in sensuous behaviors.
  - g. **2 Pet. 2:7, 18** Licentiousness is sensual conduct.
    - 1. **2 Pet. 2:7** The Greek translated *licentious* in the NRSV is translated in other versions of the Bible: *filthy conversation* (KJV), *filthy conduct* (NKJV), *sensual conduct* (NASB), *filthy lives* (NIV).
      - a. From the context we understand that homosexuality is licentiousness.
    - 2. **2 Pet. 2:18** The Greek is translated *licentious desires* (NRSV), *wantonness* (KJV), *sensuality* (NASB).
- c. Application:
- 1. "Lust" is the mental desire, "licentiousness" is physically doing that which one lusts after.
    - a. The desire (i.e., lust) precedes the act (i.e., licentiousness) (cf. Mk. 7:21-23; Ja. 1:14-15).
  - 2. "Licentious" (i.e., "sensual") behaviors are sinful acts often displayed to attract lustful attention to oneself.
  - 3. If we obey sin in its lusts, we will die (Rom. 6:12, 23; Ja. 1:15). But if we obey God, we will live eternally (Rom. 6:16-23).
2. By applying the principles associated with lust and licentiousness, answer these questions. What authority do we have for engaging in the following activities? Under what conditions could we engage in the activity (if any), and under what conditions could we not engage in the activity?
- a. work
  - b. school
  - c. recreation activities
  - d. joke telling
  - e. dancing
  - f. swimming
  - g. sunbathing
  - h. smoking tobacco
  - i. drinking alcoholic beverages (wine, beer, mixed drinks, hard liquor)
  - j. using drugs
  - k. pornography
  - l. watching TV and movies
  - m. playing video games

- n. listening to music
  - o. gambling (at home, in a casino, playing the lottery)
3. By applying the principles associated with lust and licentiousness, answer these questions.
    - a. What clothes are not appropriate for Christians to wear? Why?
    - b. What behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate for Christians on a date? Explain.
  4. Think of other moral questions which plague our society and answer them from God's word.

## B. Assembly:

1. Why do we assemble (Heb. 10:24-25)?
  - a. What is authorized by the command to not forsake our assembling together?
    1. What expediencies may be employed to fulfill the command to assemble (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24)?
      - a. May we borrow, rent, or buy a facility to assemble? Why?
      - b. May we furnish and maintain a facility in which to assemble? Why?
    2. What expediencies may not be employed to fulfill the command to assemble (1 Cor. 6:12; 9:21; 10:23-24)?
      - a. Could we buy a cruise ship on which to assemble while cruising various ports of call? Why?
      - b. Could we buy a yacht for the elders and deacons to use while discussing the business of the church? Why?
      - c. Does the church have authority to sponsor (provide and pay for) recreation under any circumstance?
        1. Could the church build a recreation center for members to be entertained before, during, and after the assembly? Why?
2. What are Christians to do when they assemble as a church:
  - a. Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19?
  - b. Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 2:1, 8?
  - c. Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 3:14-15; 4:6-16; 2 Tim. 4:1-2?
  - d. Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-26?
  - e. 1 Cor. 16:1-2?
  - f. Which of these five things are done only on Sunday? Why?
    1. Should these things be done every Sunday? Why?
3. Answer these questions:
  - a. What results from doing what God commands when we assemble (Heb. 10:24-25)?
  - b. Are we authorized to assemble as a church for any other reason? Why?
  - c. Why must we assemble every first day of the week?
    1. When might we be unable to assemble on the first day of the week?
    2. Has God commanded us not to assemble on any first day of the week?

**C. Assembly: Lord's Supper.**

1. What emblems are we authorized to use with the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:17, 26-30; Lk. 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)?
  - a. Has God been silent concerning any other emblems?
  - b. Why are we not authorized to use other emblems than unleavened bread and fruit of the vine?
    1. Why can't we add cookies and milk to the Lord's Supper?
    2. If we added cookies and milk, would we be partaking of the Lord's Supper? Why?
2. Some religions observe the Lord's Supper annually, quarterly, or monthly. Some of them observe the Lord's Supper on various days of the week and to celebrate various occasions.
  - a. When should we observe the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7)? Why?
    1. Has God commanded us not to observe the Lord's Supper on any first day of the week?
    2. Should we observe the Lord's Supper on each first day of the week? Why?
    3. Could we take up a collection on a Sunday but not observe the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2)? Why?
  - b. God has been silent concerning the Lord's Supper on any day other than Sunday?
    1. Does this mean we can observe it on any day we want? Why?
    2. Does this mean that we can only observe it on Sunday? Why?
3. Some people cite Matt. 26:27; 1 Cor. 10:14-22, reasoning that the Lord's Supper must be served in one cup. Is this true? Why?
  - a. Was it possible for first century Christians to observe the Lord's Supper using one cup when there were thousands of them assembled (Acts 2:41-42; 4:4; 5:14)?
    1. Is it proper to infer that first century Christians used more than one cup when observing the Lord's Supper? Why?
  - b. When might it not be expedient to serve the Lord's Supper in multiple cups (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24)? Why?
4. What authority does a church have for serving the Lord's Supper in multiple services on Sunday (1 Cor. 11:18-33)?
  - a. When might it be lawful, and when might it be unlawful?
5. If a couple was getting married on Sunday, could they serve the Lord's Supper as part of the ceremony (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17-26)? Why?

**D. Assembly: Music in the worship of the church.**

1. Why do we sing when we assemble as a church (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19)?
  - a. What type of music has been commanded by God (acappella, instrumental, both)?
    1. Since God has been silent about instrumental music, are we authorized to use mechanical instruments when we assemble as a church? Why?
  - b. Why are song books expedient?
    1. If we use song books to help us sing, are we still singing to one another and God, accompanied with our hearts? Is it still acappella music?
2. Why are mechanical instruments not authorized?
  - a. Why is adding mechanical instruments to the worship of the church the same as adding cookies and milk to the Lord's Supper?
    1. If we add mechanical instruments to the worship of the church, would our singing still be acappella?
  - b. Some people claim that accepting song books and rejecting mechanical instruments is a hypocritical double standard. Is this true? Why?
3. Are choirs and solos authorized? Why?
  - a. If you answered that they are authorized, give the Scripture commanding (specific or general) choirs or solos.
  - b. Has God been silent concerning choirs and solos?
4. Can a Christian listen to religious music with instrumental accompaniment when not assembled with the church - all?, some?, none? Explain.
  - a. Make a list of secular songs that mention something about God or religion.
  - b. Can a Christian sing religious music accompanied by mechanical instruments outside the church? Explain.
    1. If not, can he sing secular songs that mentions something about God while being accompanied by mechanical instruments?
  - c. Can a Christian play religious music on a mechanical instrument outside the church? Explain.
    1. If not, can he play secular songs that mention something about God on a mechanical instrument outside the church?

**E. Work of the church:**

1. What are we to do when we assemble (see notes above, "B")?
2. What work does the church do in respect to evangelism (Matt. 28:18; Acts 11:22-30; 13:1-4; 15:22, 27; 2 Cor. 8:23)?
  - a. When a church sends a man to preach or supports a man to preach, what relationship does the church have with the man (Phil. 1:5, 7; 4:10, 14-16; cf. 1 Tim. 5:17-18)?
  - b. What benefit does a church receive by supporting a man to preach the gospel (Phil. 1:5, 7; 4:17-18)?
  - c. What does God do for Christians who help support preachers (Phil. 4:18-19; cf. 2 Cor. 9:6-11)?
3. To whom is the church to be benevolent (1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 9:1)?

- a. Do we have authority (command, example) for the church to be benevolent toward unbelievers (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37; 6:1-6; 11:27-30; Gal. 2:9-10)?
  1. Is the church's benevolence limited to believers?
- b. To whom are individual Christians to be benevolent (Gal.6:1-10; Ja. 1:18-27; 2:14-17)?
  1. Are there some people to whom individual Christians have a responsibility to be benevolent and to whom the church is not to be benevolent (1 Tim. 5:8-16)?
4. Toward whom is the church to exercise corrective discipline (1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Th. 3:6, 14; 1 Tim. 1:18-20; Tit. 3:10-11)?
  - a. What is the purpose of exercising church discipline (1 Cor. 5:5, 6)?
  - b. What will happen to a church that does not exercise discipline (1 Cor. 5:6-8)?
5. What type of worship results from a church accomplishing its work (Jn. 4:24; cf. Jn. 17:17; Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-9)?
6. If a church does the work God has ordained, will it be edified (built up) or torn down (Eph. 4:11-16; Heb. 10:24-25)?

## H. Questions regarding the work of the church:

1. Church buildings:
  - a. What authority do we have to borrow, rent, or build a church building with all its furnishings (Heb. 10:24-25)?
    1. When would a church building not be expedient (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24)?
    2. Why is it expedient to furnish teachers with a place to study (Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 4:11-12; 2 Tim. 2:2)?
  - b. Is God silent about churches building kitchens, fellowship halls, and providing entertainment to members?
    1. In what extreme circumstances might building a kitchen be expedient? Why?
    2. Is social fellowship a work of the church or an individual responsibility (Acts 2:46; 1 Cor. 11:22; Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:10; Tit. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:9)?
      - a. Did the apostles and Christians in Jerusalem have their social fellowship in the same place where they assembled as a church (Acts 2:42, 46)?
  - c. When is eating and drinking in the church building lawful (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)? Why?
    1. When is eating and drinking in the church building unlawful (Acts 2:46; 1 Cor. 11:22)? Why?
  - d. Could we ever use the church building:
    1. for social meetings of church members? Why (give Scripture for the specific or general command)?
    2. for secular club meetings? Why (give Scripture for the specific or general command)?
    3. for election polling? Why (give Scripture for the specific or general command)?

4. for national emergencies? Why (give Scripture for the specific or general command)?
2. Church buses:
  - a. Some people reason that church buses are aids to teach the lost and edify the saints? Is this true? Why?
  - b. When might church buses be expedient? Why?
  - c. When are church buses not expedient? Why?
3. Church incorporation:
  - a. Some people argue that a church must incorporate to obey the civil government (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17). Is this true?
  - b. What authority does a church have to incorporate? Why (give Scripture for the command or apostolic example)?
    1. If we incorporate a church, is it changed into a human institution? Why?
    2. If there was a civil law requiring churches to incorporate, would there be a difference between obeying civil laws such as zoning and obeying a civil law to incorporate the church into a human institution? Explain.
      - a. If the church is incorporated into a human institution, is it still the Lord's church? Why?
      - b. If a church obeys zoning laws is it still the Lord's church? Why?
  - c. If a church had to incorporate to receive tax exempt status, what should the members do? Why?
4. Church interest bearing checking accounts and fund raising:
  - a. Are interest bearing checking accounts expedient? Why?
  - b. If a church may profit from usury (i.e., collecting interest), may it use the treasury to engage in other fund raising activities? Why?
  - c. What authority does the church have for raising money (1 Cor. 16:1-2)?
    1. Does this eliminate all other fund raising activities? Why?
5. Women and leadership roles in the church:
  - a. Women in the first century had to wear a head covering when praying and prophesying (1 Cor. 11:1-16). Why is it lawful for women to not wear a head covering in the church today?
    1. When would it not be lawful for a women to have her head uncovered in the church (Rom. 14:23; 1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24; 11:13-16)?
  - b. Some people cite the same reason that a women may have her head uncovered in the church today as the reason that women may teach or have authority over a man in the church today. In this true? Why (1 Cor. 11:16; 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:12-14)?
    1. When is it lawful for women to take leadership roles in the assembly? Why?
      - a. Could a woman preach a sermon? When and why?
      - b. Could a woman lead public prayer or serve the Lord's Supper? When and why?
      - c. Could a woman hold the office of elder or deacon? When and

- why (1 Tim. 3:1-15; Tit. 1:5-9)?
2. When is it lawful for women to baptize people? Why?
  - c. Why may women ask questions and make comments in Bible classes, but not speak in the general assembly of the church (1 Cor. 14:34-35)?
6. Practice establishing authority for the following questions:
- a. Can a church make a contribution to a human institution such as a children's home, retirement home, or college?
    1. If no, why?
    2. If yes, cite the Scripture giving the specific or general command. Or, cite the Scripture of the apostolic example.
  - b. How should a church send money to a preacher to financially support his work:
    1. Should it be sent directly to the man?
      - a. If no, why?
      - b. If yes, cite the Scripture giving the specific or general command. Or, cite the Scripture of the apostolic example.
    2. Should it be sent to a church that will send it to him?
      - a. If no, why?
      - b. If yes, cite the Scripture giving the specific or general command. Or, cite the Scripture of the apostolic example.
  - c. For what reason may a church send money to another church?
    1. Cite the Scripture giving the specific or general command. Or, cite the Scripture of the apostolic example.
  - d. Can a church allow its building to be used for weddings?
    1. If no, why?
    2. If yes, cite the Scripture giving the specific or general command. Or, cite the Scripture of the apostolic example.
  - e. Can a church allow its building to be used for funerals?
    1. If no, why?
    2. If yes, cite the Scripture giving the specific or general command. Or, cite the Scripture of the apostolic example.
  - f. Can a church employ hand clapping during the service?
    1. If no, why?
    2. If yes, cite the Scripture giving the specific or general command. Or, cite the Scripture of the apostolic example.
  - g. Can a church hand clap after someone has been baptized?
    1. If no, why?
    2. If yes, cite the Scripture giving the specific or general command. Or, cite the Scripture of the apostolic example.
  - h. What names are we authorized to employ in designation of the church?
    1. Cite the Scripture giving the specific or general command. Or, cite the Scripture of the apostolic example.
  - i. Can we pray to Jesus and the Holy Spirit?
    1. Cite the Scripture giving the specific or general command. Or, cite the Scripture of the apostolic example.
  - j. Should we fast? Do we have to practice fasting to be saved?

1. If no, why?
2. If yes, cite the Scripture giving the specific or general command. Or, cite the Scripture of the apostolic example.

### **I. Denominationalism:**

1. Some religious teachers claim that denominationalism is expedient; therefore, it is lawful. Is this true? Why?
  - a. Is denominationalism (i.e., wearing other names) forbidden by God (1 Cor. 1:10-13)? Is denominationalism the result of carnality (1 Cor. 3:1-4)?
  - b. For denominationalism to be expedient, there must be a command (specific or general) to denominate the church. Is there any such command?
    1. If so, what is the Scripture? Explain.
2. Some religious teachers cite Acts 15:1-29 as an example of one church exercising authority over a number of churches as authority for denominationalism. Is this true (see notes, "B2d" in Lesson Five)? Why?