

## “OUR NEED FOR BIBLICAL AUTHORITY” (#6)

### Introduction

- I. I hope we have been able to see how our lessons continue to build from one week to the next.
- II. Our source of authority is \_\_\_\_\_. He gave all authority then to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. What is the key to true unity today? \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Discord comes when we listen to \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Therefore, we have a choice as to whether we will listen to \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ when it comes to our own authority from day to day.
  - D. In what aspects of life will authority from God apply? \_\_\_\_\_
  - E. How is Bible authority established? \_\_\_\_\_
  - F. Having established Bible authority, we can place such authority into two main categories: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
- III. Having learned how to establish authority, and knowing the two main categories of authority, we now study expediencies.
  - A. “Expediency” may not be a word we use often, but we often make use of those things which are expedient!
    1. Expedient defined: “Something useful in achieving a desired result.” Specifically, these are choices afforded to us to achieve the result we want.
    2. Examples: What might be “expedient” for stirring soup in a pot? Where might an “expedient” place be to set a computer/typewriter when typing a document? When trying to loosen a rusted nut, what might be an expedient tool for loosening it?
  - B. In the Scriptures, we also find “expediencies” allowed by God. However, there are some principles involved which guide us in deciding what is and is not a Bible expedient.

### Discussion

#### **I. AN EXPEDIENT MUST NOT VIOLATE GOD’S LAW:**

- A. II John 9 tells us that we are “fenced in” by God’s word. This is seen when we are told that if we transgress (go beyond) God’s word, then \_\_\_\_\_.
  1. In other words, having a right relationship with God demands that I \_\_\_\_\_.
  2. If I claim to obey God, but use unlawful things to accomplish this purpose, then what is the result? \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Some have the attitude that “the end justifies the means” when it comes to expediencies. (Ex: “If it is for a good cause, and it does good in the community then it must be authorized of God.”) This is wrong.
  1. Paul condemned such while he was alive (Romans 3:8).
  2. How much sense does it make to attempt to follow the will of God by sinning?
    - a. Example: A gambler says he will give half of his (lottery, slot machine, horse betting) winnings to the Lord’s cause.
    - b. Example: A church decides to add on a gym to their building in order to get young people to come and then hear the gospel preached.
- C. *With God, the “getting there” is just as important as the “goal”!!*

#### **II. AN EXPEDIENT MUST NOT BE SPECIFIED:**

- A. Perhaps this point best illustrates why we must first establish Bible authority, then determine whether this authority is specific or general before we discuss expediencies.
  1. When we discuss expediencies, we are talking about options given to us to perform God’s will.
  2. Once God has specified something, though, \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. Therefore, only within the realm of “general authority” can we discuss expediencies.

*Fill in the blanks in this table below. Hopefully, this will help us to better understand what things are true expediencies.*

| <u>General Authority</u>   | <u>Expediencies</u>  | <u>Not Expediencies</u>                                |
|--|--|--|
| “Make thee an ark of gopher wood...”<br>(Genesis 6:14)             | Tools, Scaffolding, Ladders, Hired help                            |  |
| Sing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16)                             | Pitch Pipe, Song books, Song leader, Notes on page                 |  |
| Baptism by immersion (Acts 8:37-38; etc.)                          |  | Sprinkling water, Pouring water, No water              |
| Assembling For Worship (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7)                  |  | Basketball Court, Building a gym/ “family life center” |
| Teaching the Gospel (II Timothy 2:2; Acts 5:42)                    | Classes, Chalkboard, Papers, Charts                                |  |
| Partaking Of The Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-28) | Containers to hold elements, Table to place them, What time of day |  |

**III. AN EXPEDIENT MUST EDIFY THE CHURCH:**

- A. To “edify” means to strengthen or build up. When we talk about “edification” in the church, we are talking about building up in a spiritual manner.
  - 1. I Corinthians 6:12, 10:23
  - 2. Romans 14:19
  - 3. These passages make clear that sometimes things “expedient” ought not be done due to the fact that they do not edify.
- B. Remember, that once we have established general authority, if one expedient will not edify, then we do not have to use it! We could use something else in order to follow the will of God.

**IV. AN EXPEDIENT MUST NOT OFFEND THE CONSCIENCE:**

- A. This relates to point #3. Romans 14-15 speak to this as well.
- B. Remember that we must not force an expediency on folks. If it causes a brother to sin (be offended), then we do not have to use it.
- C. Contrast this with specific authority, where we *must* do it *regardless* of man’s thoughts!

– Jarrod Jacobs

F.E. Wallace, Jr. Torch, vol. 1, # 2

### Under title, COMPENDIUM OF ISSUES

The Rule Of Expediency. Somewhat has been said of a New Testament law of expediency. Where is any such law found in the New Testament? Expediency is not a law. "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient," is the way it reads in 1 Corinthians 10:23. Of course, Paul was not making the blanket affirmation that everything is lawful. Obviously, it means only the things that are lawful can be expedient; but some things that are lawful are not expedient.

Therefore, to prove that anything is expedient, it must first be proved to be lawful. The brethren are in reverse, attempting to prove that a thing is lawful by trying to prove that it is expedient, which is an inversion of the New Testament principle. Nothing is expedient that is not lawful. To assume that anything is expedient before proving it to be lawful is simply begging the question at issue.

But now when authority is wanted for a practice for which no authority exists-presto! The "law of expediency" is invoked! If it can be called a law at all, it is a human law altogether, it is not divine. How can anything be permitted if it is not lawful? How can it be lawful if it is not authorized? Why plead expediency if it is authorized? Take some examples:

- Assembly is authorized, the meetinghouse is expedient.
- Teaching is authorized, arrangement in classes, is expedient.
- Giving is authorized, collection baskets are expedient.
- Baptism is authorized, the baptistery is expedient.
- Singing is authorized, hymnbooks are expedient.

But classes could not be expedient if there were no authority for teaching. Collection baskets could not be expedient if there were no law on giving. A baptistery could not be expedient if there were no command for baptism. Hymnbooks could not be expedient if there were no instructions for singing.

On the same principle, the employment of mechanized music in the church not being authorized, instruments of music are not expedients; and cannot be paralleled with songbooks. Mechanical music is not authorized, therefore instruments for that kind of music cannot be classed with expedients. Anyone who can see through a ladder, can see that, and 'can make the application of these principles to the present issue.'

Before arguing the "law of expediency" or putting colleges in the budgets of the churches, let the authority be cited for the church. to support human organizations and institutions, working through man-made boards, showing such to be lawful, and it will then be time enough to discuss whether it is expedient or not.

The once famous Henry Ward Beecher said, "infant baptism is like an ox yoke, it works," So it is now argued that a thing is expedient if it works! A missionary society works, therefore it is expedient, on that premise. Instrumental music works, Christian Endeavor Societies work, pie-suppers work, and Methodism works (organically), therefore all of these unscriptural things are expedient! The whole institutional proposition has been predicated on a law that does not exist -- the so-called, but non-existent "New Testament law of expediency."