

---

# Words of Truth

---

## I Made It Harder Than It Needed To Be

By: Brian A. Yeager

Back in 1999 I started studying through conclusions I had reached concerning the work of the local church. It started by me looking into whether or not it was wrong for the local church to provide dinner to those in attendance after worship services. I started a personal study that took me into many different aspects of the work of the local church. That study took me into whether or not the church could use the treasury to help people of the world. That study took me into whether or not the church could oversee schools of preaching (which exist without authority to begin with). That study took me down all the roads that are often tied to the subject matter of "Institutionalism". It took me a couple of years to complete that study and realize that many things I had taught and practiced were wrong. I had to repent (Acts 8:22).

I then started writing about those conclusions. I published an article titled "Why I Left Institutionalism" (<http://www.wordsoftruth.net/whyileftliberalism.htm>). I wanted everyone I had known and certainly anyone I had taught, to know that my former conclusions were wrong. I had believed the traditions I had been taught. Those were doctrines of men that made my worship and service to God vain (Mark 7:1-9). To this very day I feel terrible about being part of churches of Christ that erred in these things. That leads me to think of those studies and those things regularly.

One conclusion I have come to when I reflect upon those studies I had with myself is that I made those studies much harder than I had to. It was not until the end of those studies that I started to study the matters correctly. Even then, as I can see when I read materials I wrote early in my coming out of that apostasy, I still made those subject matters much more difficult than I needed to. I spent years asking myself what was wrong with potluck dinners or helping someone in need. I did not start by simply stating what there is authority for and allowing that to exclude everything else (Colossians 3:17 and I Thessalonians 5:21).

### Looking At What's Right Excludes All That Is Wrong

When you approach the subject matter of "church potluck dinners" and you search the Scriptures, you find nothing. That conclusion should say all there is to say about it. There is nothing about the subject in the Scriptures therefore it is not a "good work" (II Timothy 3:15-17). I cannot prove it is acceptable to God therefore I should not do it or teach it (Ephesians 5:10). Case closed. Simple!

When you approach the subject matter of the local church assisting non-Christians from the treasury for them to get clothing, food, etc. you find nothing in the Scriptures. Again, case closed. Same thing happens when you study sponsoring church arrangements, preaching schools, religious colleges, benevolence programs, missionary societies, etc. None of these things are discussed in the Scriptures. Therefore they are of men rather than God. That

---

makes them all wrong regardless of who funds them (Colossians 2:18-23).

When we are looking at whether or not something is acceptable to God, we need only find if it is authorized by Him or not. If our question cannot be concluded with realization that our conclusion comes only from the Scriptures, the conclusion is wrong (Leviticus 10:1-2, Numbers 9:1-9, Deuteronomy 4:2, Deuteronomy 12:32, Deuteronomy 29:29, II Samuel 6:6-7, II Samuel 7:1-7, Job 32:8, Proverbs 3:5-7, Proverbs 14:12, Proverbs 16:25, Proverbs 20:25, Proverbs 21:2, Proverbs 30:5-6, Isaiah 8:20, Jeremiah 7:30-31, Matthew 4:4, Matthew 7:21-23, Matthew 12:46-50, Matthew 15:1-9, Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 4:4, Luke 6:46, Luke 11:28, John 14:15, John 14:23-24, I Corinthians 4:6, I Corinthians 4:17, Galatians 1:6-12, II Timothy 1:13, James 1:21-25, James 2:10-12, I John 2:3-6, I John 5:2-3, II John 1:9, and Revelation 22:18-19). It is that simple! Why make it harder than that?

### **We Make It Harder For Dumb Reasons**

Looking back on why I made my studies of these matters so difficult, I have come to conclude it was because I knew the right conclusion but did not want that conclusion to be right. I remember talking to so-called “preachers” about these matters. I wanted them to tell me some Scripture that I had not read. Never happened. I wanted them to show me some line of Scriptural reasoning I had not considered. Never happened. I wanted the errors of my ways, that I knew were wrong, to be right. I had stopped practicing those errors, but had not confessed and repented of them because I wanted them to be right. I was not ignorant of the truth (i.e. Romans 10:1-3), but I wanted to be ignorant of the truth. I didn’t want everyone I knew and loved to be so wrong. I made it harder to come to the right conclusions for those dumb reasons.

Later, when I wrote articles in the past to “disprove” the things I left behind, I felt I had to prove them wrong. In part, guilt of my former actions motivated me to work hard to try and convince others of their errors. Also, I felt I had to answer the common arguments people would give to justify those unauthorized things. Regardless of my motives, I made it way too hard. We are supposed to reason from the Scriptures (Acts 17:2-3). That does not mean we need to reason through human logic and argumentation. In fact, we should avoid those things (I Timothy 1:3-7, II Timothy 2:23, and Titus 3:9-11; cf. Matthew 21:23-27).

I can recall many times thinking about how to reach people who were caught up in the former errors I once was caught up in. I would think, “What can I say or write to help that person see the errors of their ways?” I have come to realize that I cannot say or write anything to help someone in those errors. I did not leave those errors until I wanted the truth and nothing but the truth (Ezra 7:10).

### **Conclusion**

Learn from my errors of the past. Had I died or the Lord come during those times, I would have spent eternity in Hell. I made coming out of my sins way too hard for many dumb reasons. Don’t get caught up in vain logic or conclusions, that will lead you to destruction (Ephesians 5:6). There is simplicity in Christ (II Corinthians 11:3). If some Scriptural subject matter becomes seemingly impossible to you, it is most likely you who is making that subject matter impossible. Don’t make it harder than it needs to be.