
Words of Truth

Can You Be Thankful For It?

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We often discuss how that we need authority from the Lord for everything (Luke 6:46-49). Since the time the disciples of Christ were sent into the world to preach the Gospel, they were to teach those whom decided to be disciples of Christ to observe all things Christ commanded (Matthew 28:18-20). Under both the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ there are to be no additions or subtractions from what the Lord has instructed His followers to do (Deuteronomy 4:2, Deuteronomy 12:32, Proverbs 30:5-6, I Corinthians 4:6, Galatians 1:6-12, and Revelation 22:18-19).

We find God's instructions through His inspired word (II Timothy 3:15-17). It is through the word of God that we find our instructions concerning how to live in this life on earth (Luke 4:4). Those instructions guide us in all things pertaining to life and godliness (John 6:63 and II Peter 1:3-4). The angel of the Lord referred to the preaching of God's word as "the words of this life" (Acts 5:17-20).

We should understand that we find authority to speak or act by following what the Lord directly tells us to do (Luke 11:28, James 1:21-25, and I John 2:3-6). We also find authority to speak or act by following examples that the Lord has approved of (I Corinthians 11:1 and Ephesians 5:1-2) or even examples that show us what not to do (I Corinthians 10:1-12). The Lord also communicates His will by inferring things that could only be understood correctly in one way (Matthew 22:23-33).

Once we find something that is lawful according to the Scriptures, we then must examine our words or actions and be sure they are expedient and edifying (I Corinthians 10:23-33). If you read the Scripture reference I just gave, you find that there are times wherein a Christian must abandon eating certain foods that God has authorized (I Timothy 4:1-5), simply because it is not expedient and edifying to eat those meats. We cannot allow an authorized liberty to become a stumbling-block to someone that is weak (Romans 14:1-23). Therefore, you can see that there are many steps to follow when deciding to do what is pleasing to the Lord. It's not always as easy as saying, "God said to do it, so I am going to do it."

Since finding authority to speak and act is often a deep thought process, sometimes people miss things. To help us all be sure that we are reaching the right studied conclusions on our words and actions, let me help you consider another tool in assuring what you're

doing is right with the Lord. Mostly, it is a question rooted in an instruction that all Christians are expected to be following. We are all expected of God to be thankful in prayer for all things (I Thessalonians 5:18). Consider how that instruction can help you think things through before taking action.

Can I Be Thankful For This?

The word of God says: *“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Ephesians 5:20). A passage we often use in discussing Biblical authority says: *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him”* (Colossians 3:17). Our thanksgiving to God should be something we are always capable of and often engaged in (Hebrews 13:15).

So, if you are doing something that you cannot turn your attention to Heaven and give thanks for, what should that tell you? If I cannot abound in thanksgiving, something is wrong in my life (Colossians 2:7). If I am ashamed to raise my voice to God in praise and thanksgiving for what I am able to do, I should not be considering doing it.

As an example, consider the man who proclaims to be a disciple of our Lord that is unhappy in his marriage. He says that he and his wife have “irreconcilable differences”. He studies through the Scriptures and finds, after reading many different contexts (i.e. Malachi 2:14-16, Matthew 5:31-32, Matthew 19:1-12, Mark 10:1-12, Luke 16:16-18, Romans 7:1-6, and I Corinthians 6:1-7:40), that he has no authority from God to divorce his wife. However, he finds a book by a “church of Christ preacher” (foolish in many ways) that argues from a false position that he can divorce and even remarry if he so chooses. When this man walks out of the courtroom on the day he finalizes his divorce, to whom does he owe thanks for his new found freedom? It is NOT God. He can thank that false teacher, but that’ll not be done through prayer. What should that tell this man?

If we act on our own accord we cannot look toward Heaven and thank God for something He has had NOTHING to do with. There is where you must be able to put the Lord’s will above your own (II Corinthians 5:14-15). If we act in ways only moved by what makes us happy, we will surely fail!

Conclusion

We must know what we are doing is acceptable to God. We must know that our actions are Scripturally lawful, expedient, and edifying. We must know that what we are doing is something we can be thankful for. At the end of our thought process and actions, God should be able to be glorified through what we say and do (I Peter 4:11). Can you say that of the things you say and do? If not, there is only one way to correct that. You must confess your faults (I John 1:9) and repent (Luke 13:1-5).