
Words of Truth

Acting First And Enquiring Afterward

By: Brian A. Yeager

Recently, here locally, I was asked some questions about authorized ways to spend the Lord's money. We all know that the way we use the Lord's money is, even in authorized matters, very restricted (I Timothy 5:3-16). If you read the aforementioned Scriptures you will find that even when the church has authority to help a widow indeed, using His money is still the last resort. Individuals need to step up first. That principle should not be looked at lightly.

Consider the usage of the Lord's money when it comes to our place of assembly. First, is it a collective work of the local church to assemble? The answer to that question is "yes" (Acts 15:1-25, Acts 20:7, I Corinthians 5:4, and Hebrews 10:23-25). In fact, we are authorized to come together in one place (I Corinthians 14:23). The church in Corinth, by necessary implication, did not meet in a home or some common area, but one distinct place (I Corinthians 11:18-34). Another question about assembling then arises. That question is concerning what is needed to assemble. Do we need things like lights? The answer to that is also a "yes" (Acts 20:8). Therefore, on these things we have clear authority.

The last article I wrote (<http://www.wordsoftruth.net/wotvol15/wotbulletin06212015.html>) dealt with making sure something is commanded before we talk about it being expedient. A meeting facility clearly expedites the commands, examples, and inferences we have showing we need to assemble in one place. We still have to be careful though. Something can be lawful, but not expedient (I Corinthians 10:23). We've had lessons on these things in the past regarding the Lord's money (<http://www.wordsoftruth.net/wotvol9/wotbulletin05312009.html>). We have to manage His money in a way that we all will feel comfortable and sure in standing before Him on the Judgment Day answering for what we have done (II Corinthians 5:10).

Here is where this article is going to take on the point of the title. I fear, truly, that some of us are not as sure about things as we would let on. I say that because I was caught off guard by the questions on something I thought we all understood. We have to KNOW what we are doing is right (Ephesians 5:10). We cannot act upon things unless we are sure ahead of time that we are doing them right (Romans 14:23 and I Thessalonians 5:21). It is not wrong to question things (Acts 17:10-11). It is wrong to act first and ask latter if that action was correct.

The Presumption Of Right Is Actually All Wrong

How many times have we studied questions of authority and have always seen that human reasoning is wrong (Proverbs 3:5-7, Proverbs 14:12, Isaiah 5:21, Jeremiah 10:23, Mark 7:1-9, I Corinthians 4:6, and II Corinthians 10:12-18)? Our answers must always come from the Scriptures (II Timothy 3:15-17) that we must handle correctly (II Timothy 2:14-18). So where does that put us, individually or collectively, if we are doing things we are not sure of being right? To illustrate this point, Scripturally, take time to consider Saul's errors.

The King Of Israel Learned Initial Obedience Is Better Than Saying Sorry

“Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly. Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night. And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal. And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel? And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king” (I Samuel 15:1-23).

Conclusion

Is the Lord okay with your, mine, our decisions? You'd better know before you act upon them. That's the point! Hindsight is 20/20, but you'll be looking back from Hell. *“It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make enquiry”* (Proverbs 20:25).