

WORDS OF TRUTH

A Weekly Bulletin for the Sunrise Acres church of Christ

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Sunrise Acres CHURCH OF CHRIST

Meeting at:
8625 Robert Drive
El Paso, TX 79904

915-525-5794

OUR MEETING TIMES:

Sunday Bible Class: 9:45 AM
Sunday Worship: 10:55 AM

Are You Visiting With Us?

If you are visiting with us, we want to welcome you to the Lord's church (Matthew 16:18 and Colossians 1:18). Our goal is to simply get to Heaven and to help you do the same. We use the Bible as our standard to govern what we do in our work and worship for the Lord (Colossians 3:17, II Timothy 1:13, II Timothy 3:16-17, and I Peter 4:11).

We welcome your questions and would love the opportunity to study further with you. Luke recorded a fascinating statement we all need to consider: *"Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able"* (Luke 13:23-24). We invite you to join us in being one of the few that are saved!

It May Be Lawful, But Is It Expedient?

By: *Brian A. Yeager*

The inspired Apostle Paul wrote the following: *"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not"* (I Corinthians 10:23). Here's the point, we may have permission from God to do something (i.e. eat meats), but it may not be expedient (I Corinthians 10:25-33). Having a liberty [freedom] to do something is not the same as choosing not to obey commands, follow examples, or adhere to necessary implications [inescapable conclusions]. We MUST do what God instructs (II Thessalonians 1:8-9), but we may or may not do what God gives us liberty of choice in. For example, if you are free to marry you may or may not. You will not be judged for remaining unmarried (I Corinthians 7:1-9). On the other hand, if you are lawfully married you cannot marry another (Romans 7:1-3).

In the case of liberties, we often find brethren who make bad choices in when to or not to exercise the liberties they have. Sometimes it's easy to forget the impact we may have on others by saying or doing something that is not wrong in principle, but is wrong in that specific situation. We'll discuss some examples as this article continues forward.

Before we get to those examples, we need to understand how important it is not to cause someone else to err with our liberties. Paul wrote: *"But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak"* (I Corinthians 8:8-9). Don't get confused, our liberties causing someone to stumble is not the same as the truth or our stand for the truth causing someone to stumble (I Corinthians 1:23 and I Peter 2:6-8). Therefore, we can see how a righteous stand may cause one to stumble, but our liberties should never cause another to stumble. Brethren, there are things we can stop doing or saying which are not compromises of the truth. Just because you may say or do something does not mean that you have to! We'll see that now.

Some Liberties We Do Not Have To Exercise When Others May Stumble

I almost hate writing articles such as these, because it is inevitable that someone will get a bright idea that they can stop someone from teaching them by saying it is offensive and causing that person to stumble. While I already covered this briefly above, let me repeat the point by adding that teaching and preaching is not controlled by the conscience of others. Preaching and teaching must be from the word of God (II Timothy 4:2). The word of God is sharp and will often cut and even offend the hearer (Hebrews 4:12). In such a case, one cannot stop preaching and teaching what needs to be taught because someone is offended (Matthew 15:1-14).

Now, as we've hopefully slowed down someone from a stupid thought, let's proceed. When we look into the Scriptures we find some strong terms being used. For example, bastards are those who reject correction from God (Hebrews 12:6-8). While it is fully appropriate to refer to such a person as a bastard, there are times where it is not expedient. If I were to walk up to an untaught person and call them a bastard they would immediately conclude I just insulted them with foul language. In fact, I might even be able to refer to that person as a damned bastard (Mark 16:15-16) and be correct in scriptural terminology, but incorrect in what is expedient since that person will have no idea what I am really saying. It's lawful, but not expedient.

No doubt we have all noticed how some females are walking about with less and less clothing on. Immodest apparel today, as in other times in the past, is the fashionable way to dress. You may even look at some of these young ladies and rightly note that they are wearing the attire of a harlot (Proverbs 7:10). However, what if you were to walk up and say that to such a female? Would it teach her anything? Of course it would not. Most who dress such a way do not consider it immoral. While it may be lawful to say someone is wearing the attire of a harlot, it would be more expedient to biblically instruct such a one on what modesty really is. To just blurt out "you look like a whore" makes you look like the moron. After all, do you really think a worldly person understands why you have not conformed to this world (Romans 12:1-2)? Remember that people who dress immodestly (assuming they are not Christians) are of the world. It should not surprise us that worldly people would act in a worldly way (Galatians 1:4 and I John 2:15-17).

Many congregations today assemble at a set time on the first day of the week and a set time during the midweek. Many of these congregations have met at these times for years without change. They figure, "sometimes members can make it and sometimes members cannot". It is lawful for the church to assemble on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7 and I Corinthians 16:1-2). In fact, we have no authority to assemble on any other day for the Lord's Supper or the collection of the saints. It is lawful for a congregation to assemble at any time on the first day of the week. Yet, what is expedient is often overlooked. For one, brethren ought to wait (tarry) for one another when partaking of the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:23-33). This is an action to be done together. Secondly, any time the saints assemble, it needs to be done when the body can really come together as one (Romans 12:4-5 and I Corinthians 12:14-27). This means the whole congregation may be thinking about what is expedient with the other members. While it is lawful to assemble everyday (Acts 2:46 and Hebrews 3:13; 10:25), it is not always expedient!

Conclusion

We must ask if our liberties are getting in the way of others serving God and if the exercising of our liberties are edifying to others. Sometimes it is a hard look into our lives because we know the Scriptures give us the right to do something, but we must see that the interest in the souls of others must often outweigh what we have the right to do or say. Often people miss the true message of Romans 14 because they are trying to find ways to have unity in diversity. Romans chapter 14 teaches us to put our liberties (things that are lawful, but not required to be done or said) aside if they wound others. Selfishness often prevents the proper exercising of liberties when considering what is truly expedient. We cannot be of that mindset (Philippians 2:1-8)!

What must one do to be saved (Acts 2:37)? Hear and believe the Gospel (Mark 16:15-16 & Romans 10:17), repent of their sins (Acts 3:19), confess Christ (Acts 8:37), and be baptized (immersed) for the remission of sins into the church of Christ (Acts 2:38-41; 47, I Corinthians 12:12-13, and Romans 6:1-6; 16:16). One must then remain faithful (Colossians 1:23).