

Question Night
October, 2011
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Introduction: Tonight I will be examining questions relating to Bible authority.

I. At the church that I attend, we have 4 workgroups which is essentially a sub-dividing of the congregation into 4 groups. Each group has a month where they are assigned to carry out the work of the church (ie. Transportation for needy, respond to visitors cards). I am beginning to have a problem with this. First of all, I think much of the work being done is the individual's responsibility first and foremost. Secondly, where is the authority (either generic or specific) to break off into sub-divisions (just like the Methodist churches do) to perform such work?

- A. In the scriptures Bible Authority is required for us to teach or take action!
 - 1. Basic reverence for God causes us to stand only in what He teaches.
 - 2. Consider what Jesus taught about handling God's word. **(Mt 4:4; Jn 5:19, 30; 8:28)**
 - 3. It is basic reverence to God that we do nothing when God's word is silent!
- B. Elders may delegate work to deacons and others while still overseeing the flock!
(Acts 20:28)
 - 1. While Elders are to be capable teachers, they can also have others teach the flock.
 - 2. One of the early shortcomings of Moses was his failure to delegate. **(Ex 18:13-26)**
 - 3. The Apostles also delegated work without a compromise of authority! **(Acts 6:1-4)**
- C. These sub-groups would become wrong if they substituted for things God specified.
 - 1. If the Elders surrendered their oversight to these groups then they would be wrong.
 - 2. If the groups acted as a separate organization from the local church (oversight, collection, work)
- D. We often see both individual responsibility and collective responsibility overlap.
 - 1. One should never let their participation in a group effort cause them to stop there in their work! (Ex. Praying in services)
 - 2. In my experience groups like this are vehicles for communication.

As a footnote to this question, I want to briefly address the "Truth Seekers" student group mentioned in our bulletin.

- A. We plan to use this recognized student group as a means of obtaining rooms for Bible Studies and speakers on campus.
 - 1. The work we have been doing with small groups will continue as before.
 - 2. This "group" is not a functional body with oversight and a treasury apart from the church. (This is similar to incorporation in order to do business)
 - 3. We are simply meeting the requirements of the University in order to meet on Campus.

II. I have recently been given an academic paper written by a Theology Major at the "Harding school of Theology" where the "Deuteronomic History" theory is used in a non-critical way.

Should a Christian ever take a neutral stance on such a theory?

- A. This theory has other writers either writing or rewriting most of the Old Testament history books hundreds of years after the events. Here are some of the implications of the theory:
 - 1. The authors named as writing the books did not actually write them (Moses).
 - 2. The precise "prophecies" in the books were not prophecies at all. **(Deut 30:1-6)**
 - 3. Jesus was wrong when He quoted from these books as being from Moses.
(Mt 8:4; Deut 24:8)

B. I am not sure how a Christian could ever attend a theology school much less create one and have churches support it!

1. In these schools under the banner of “scholarship” many atheistic “models” are introduced to the young mind. (Ex. Samford University)
2. What does Peter teach us about how the Bible was written? **(2 Pt 1:16-21)**
3. How can a Christian passively look on these things as “possibilities?”

III. I have a question that I think you can help me with. What is the difference between psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs from Eph 5:19?

A. These are different categories of the kinds of songs used to praise God.

1. The Psalms of David were sung by the early Christians **(Mt 26:30)**
2. A "hymn" is properly a song or ode in honor of God.
3. Odes or songs relating to spiritual things.

B. These songs should be tested and should be sung from the heart! **(1 Cor 14:15)**

IV. Do we have the liberty to listen to so-called Christian music, which has instrumental accompaniment? Or, if we do not do this, do we have the right to judge others who do?

A. In the study of our praises to God, the verses deal with anytime we sing to Him.

(Eph 5:19; James 5:13)

1. If I sing I will do it with reverence for God and in God’s way.
2. Do I really understand this issue by taking pleasure in those who are doing wrong?

Is it wrong to play a hymn or spiritual song (for example, a Christmas carol about Christ) on an instrument without singing?

A. No – but I would not play and have another sing!

Can we suppose that someone like David praised God while playing his instrument himself, while he was watching sheep for example (since he was known to be a musician from 1 Samuel 16)? Did people ever praise God on an instrument in their own homes? Why would that be wrong (evil) now if it wasn't wrong then?

A. We want to be very careful about mixing the covenants! **(Gal 5:1-4; Rom 7:1-4)**

1. We are not given the instruction in the Old Testament you mention.
2. Many today are using instruments by Old Testament authority alone! What are the consequences?

B. We need to re-teach many foundation issues such as these.

Ultimately, some of these issues go further than just the use of instruments to knowing how to apply Biblical authority to everyday matters. ..As an example, we have added extra services during the week which are not mentioned in Scripture...where is the line between Biblical and man-made authority?

A. Something does not have to be specifically named in order to be authorized.

1. The authority for numerous assemblies is found in the command to teach, to sing and to assemble. **(Heb 10:23-25)**
2. When we use PowerPoint projectors, multiple cups, electric lights and e-mail bulletins, we are acting under authority and can give book, chapter and verse for our practices.

B. Do you understand how to establish Bible authority?