

Divine Authority

Lesson 5
Things That Are Expedient

What We Have Learned In The Previous Lesson

Four ways of establishing Divine authority

Direct commands

Direct statements

Approved examples

Necessary inferences

Acts 15 – applying these four kinds of authority

Generic and specific authority

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Introduction

- If we are going to believe or practice something, we should have Divine authority for it
- We should be able to find a command, direct statement, approved example or necessary inference to support our belief or practice
- If we do not have authority, we should never follow it, no matter how popular

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We Must Have Authority For All We Do And Say

Col 3:17 Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

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Introduction

- In this lesson, we will study if we are authorized to use things that are not specified in the New testament
- This may sound strange since we just said we should have authority for all we say and do
- Common example of these things would include church buildings, songbooks, baptisteries and communion trays

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Introduction

- None of these things we mentioned as examples are specified in the New Testament but all are commonly used by many local churches
- The question is, “Are they authorized and why?”

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Introduction

- This lesson is important because many churches of Christ insist we can practice unlawful things because we already do many things for which we do not have authority
- If we can have church buildings, then we can have games and recreation inside these buildings
- Neither church building nor games are mentioned in the New Testament

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Introduction

- As we will see in this lesson, the reason we can lawfully use any of the things in our examples is because they fall under the category of being expedient
- By this we mean, they simply assist us in following the Lord's commands
- Although they are not specifically mentioned, they are authorized as long as they do not take us beyond His commands

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Purposes of This Lesson

- Help us understand what makes something expedient
- Help us be able to distinguish between things that are expedient and things that are unlawful

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Things That Are Expedient

What is expedient?

What conditions make something expedient?

Examples of expedients

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What Is Expedient?

Expedient means to be of advantage, of benefit or profitable

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What Is Expedient?

Joh 11:47 Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs.

Joh 11:48 "If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

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What Is Expedient?

Joh 11:49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all,

Joh 11:50 nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish."

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What Is Expedient?

Joh 16:7 "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

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What Is Expedient?

- An expedient then is something we judge to be to our advantage in helping us carry out a command of the Lord
- Having the expedient is better than not having it
- But, there is more to making something expedient than just believing it is profitable to us

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What Conditions Make Something Expedient?

Must be lawful

Cannot be specified in New Testament

Must edify (build up) local church in Word

Must not offend conscience of weak brother

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Must Be Lawful

1Co 6:12 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.

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Must Be Lawful

- We should never go beyond what the New Testament authorizes by command, example or necessary inference
- For example, those who justify sprinkling as an expedient for baptism are wrong because sprinkling goes beyond the Bible meaning of baptism which is immersion or submersion, being completely placed under the water

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Must Be Lawful

- Therefore, we cannot justify whatever we want to do as an expedient
- If it goes beyond what God clearly authorizes, He will not be pleased with it

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Cannot Be Specified In New Testament

- An expedient is a matter of judgment where we choose between several options to accomplish what God has authorized
- We have the freedom to either use an expedient or not
- We choose to use an expedient because we believe it is to our advantage in carrying out a command

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Cannot Be Specified In New Testament

- If God has specified something, then we must follow it without adding or taking away from it
- The Lord has specified that those who repent and are baptized will be saved

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Cannot Be Specified In New Testament

Act 2:36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified."

Act 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

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Cannot Be Specified In New Testament

Act 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

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Cannot Be Specified In New Testament

- Since method of baptism is immersion, we cannot substitute sprinkling
- Since those who are to be baptized must repent, we cannot baptize infants who are unable to repent
- However since we read of people being baptized in different places, we are not limited to any specific but are free to use a baptistery as an expedient

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Must Edify (build up) Local Church In Word

- Edify means to build up
- This occurs when we learn and apply and mature in the Word of God
- In other words, to be edified means we are growing spiritually by following the Word
- All things must be done with the purpose of edification in mind

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Must Edify (build up) Local Church In Word

1Co 14:26 What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

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Must Edify (build up) Local Church In Word

1Co 10:27 If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience' sake.

1Co 10:28 But if anyone says to you, "This is meat sacrificed to idols," do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for conscience' sake;

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Must Edify (build up) Local Church In Word

1Co 10:29 I mean not your own conscience, but the other man's; for why is my freedom judged by another's conscience?

1Co 10:30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks?

1Co 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

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Must Edify (build up) Local Church In Word

1Co 10:32 Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God;

1Co 10:33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved.

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Must Edify (build up) Local Church In Word

- If we insist on doing something that is not required, then these things can cause division rather than unity in a local church
- The Lord desires unity based on His truth
- Expediencies, things not necessary, should not divide us
- But, if the Lord commands us to do something, we must be willing to do it even if it causes division in a local church

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Must Edify (build up) Local Church In Word

Joh 17:17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

Joh 17:20 "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

Joh 17:21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

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Must Edify (build up) Local Church In Word

1Co 1:10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1Co 1:11 For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you.

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Must Edify (build up) Local Church In Word

1Co 1:12 Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ."

1Co 1:13 Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

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Must Not Offend Conscience Of Weak Brother

- We should not insist on doing something that is a matter of judgment if it leads a weaker brother to believe he is sinning if he participates in it
- Offending a weak brother's conscience means leading him to do something he believes is sinful although the action is not sinful

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Must Not Offend Conscience Of Weak Brother

- God gave Paul and all of us the freedom to eat all types of food
- But Paul was willing to give up eating meat in certain situations where he might influence a weak brother to eat that food while he believed it was sinful for him to do

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Must Not Offend Conscience Of Weak Brother

Rom 14:13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this-- not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.

Rom 14:14 I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

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Must Not Offend Conscience Of Weak Brother

Rom 14:15 For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.

Rom 14:16 Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil;

Rom 14:17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

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Must Not Offend Conscience Of Weak Brother

Rom 14:18 For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

Rom 14:19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

Rom 14:20 Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense.

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Must Not Offend Conscience Of Weak Brother

Rom 14:21 It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles.

Rom 14:22 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

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Must Not Offend Conscience Of Weak Brother

Rom 14:23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

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What Conditions Make Something Expedient?

Must be lawful

Cannot be specified in New Testament

Must edify (build up) local church in Word

Must not offend conscience of weak brother

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Examples Of Expedients – Church Building

God commands us to worship together as a local church

Heb 10:24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

Heb 10:25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

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Examples Of Expedients – Church Building

Local churches assembled in a variety of places

Joh 4:24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Act 2:46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

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Examples Of Expedients – Church Building

Local churches assembled in a variety of places

Act 19:8 And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

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Examples Of Expedients – Church Building

Local churches assembled in a variety of places

Act 19:9 But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the people, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

Act 19:10 This took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

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Examples Of Expedients – Church Building

Local churches assembled in a variety of places

Act 20:7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.

Act 20:8 There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together.

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Examples Of Expedients – Church Building

Local churches assembled in a variety of places

Rom 16:3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

Rom 16:4 who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

Rom 16:5 also greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.

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Examples Of Expedients – Church Building

- Since the Lord has not specified the place where we should meet, we are free to choose a place we believe is expedient (to our advantage) in assembling together
- We are free to buy a building, rent a building or meet in someone's home

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Examples Of Expedients – Church Building

- As long as we do not go beyond His command to assemble and worship together, we are free to choose a place we believe is best for us to meet
- However, we sin when we use the Lord's money to acquire a place for assembling and use that for meals, recreation and entertainment activities

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Examples Of Expedients – Church Building

- None of these are authorized for the local church to do from its collection
- These activities should be provided by individual Christians instead of the local church being burdening with them

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Examples Of Expedients – Church Building

Local church should not take over responsibilities of individual Christians
1Ti 5:16 If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, she must assist them and the church must not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.

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Examples Of Expedients – Church Building

Must make distinction between spiritual and social matters
1Co 11:18 For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it.
1Co 11:19 For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you.

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Examples Of Expedients – Church Building

Must make distinction between spiritual and social matters
1Co 11:20 Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper,
1Co 11:21 for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk.

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Examples Of Expedients – Church Building

Must make distinction between spiritual and social matters
1Co 11:22 What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you.
1Co 11:33 So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

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Examples Of Expedients – Church Building

Must make distinction between spiritual and social matters

1Co 11:34 If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment. The remaining matters I will arrange when I come.

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Examples Of Expedients – Song Books

Commanded to sing spiritual songs

Eph 5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

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Examples Of Expedients – Song Books

- We are commanded to sing but God says nothing about using song books
- Therefore, we are free to arrange and collect songs in a way we believe is expedient for carrying out the command to sing
- To add instruments to our singing is to go beyond the command to sing

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What We Have Learned In This Lesson

Expedients are matters of judgment we use to carry out Lord's commands

An expedient must

Be lawful

Not be specified in New Testament

Edify local church

Not offend conscience of weak brother

Examples of expedients include church buildings, song books and baptisteries

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Divine Authority

Lesson 5 - Things that are Expedient

Various passages and material from Lesson 5 outline

For each of the following questions, please circle the letter by the correct answer. Find the choice that is a lawful expedient.

1. Baptism.
 - A. Sprinkling.
 - B. A Baptistery.
 - C. Baptizing for the remission of sins.
 - D. Baptizing infants.

2. First day of the week collection.
 - A. Having various fund raising activities for the local church such as bake sales.
 - B. Collection basket to hold the money collected.
 - C. Collecting from only members of the local church.
 - D. Collecting to help needy members of the local church.

3. The Lord's supper.
 - A. Using any type of bread we can find.
 - B. Partaking on any day that is convenient for members.
 - C. Using a table and containers to hold the bread and the fruit of the vine.
 - D. Remembering the Lord's death as we partake of the supper.

4. Singing.
 - A. A song leader.
 - B. Singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.
 - C. Using instruments to aid in our singing.
 - D. Having only those we believe sing well do the singing while the rest of the church does the listening.

5. Preaching.
 - A. Preaching political messages.
 - B. Preaching schools supported by many local churches.
 - C. Preaching the gospel.
 - D. A pulpit.

6. Assembling on first day of the week.
 - A. Local church providing for a kitchen, fellowship hall and meals from its funds.
 - B. Local church providing recreational activities from its funds.
 - C. Worshipping and edifying one another.
 - D. A church building provided from local church funds.

7. Provide for needy saints from local church funds.
 - A. Determine whether money, food or clothing is needed by the saints and distribute it.

- B. Provide for the needs of all people whether they are members of the local church or not.
 - C. Send church funds to the Red Cross.
 - D. Send church funds to a relief organization supported by local churches of Christ.
8. Teaching the Word of God in a local church.
- A. Providing snacks for children who attend Bible classes.
 - B. Having psychology oriented seminars for members.
 - C. Arranging Bible classes for all ages.
 - D. Sending church funds to support a Bible college that teaches some Bible classes.
9. Rule of elders in a local church.
- A. Qualified elders serving along with qualified deacons.
 - B. The specifics involved in carrying out their oversight of the local church such as when they will meet and what decisions need to be discussed.
 - C. Elders from a larger local church overseeing the work of several smaller local churches.
 - D. One elder serving and overseeing a local church.
10. Supporting a preacher.
- A. Sending local church funds to a college that trains preachers.
 - B. Sending local church funds to another local church that conducts a school designed to train preachers.

- C. Providing wages to a preacher from local church funds.
- D. Determining the exact amount of wages to be given to a preacher.

For each statement, circle True or False.

- | | | | |
|------|-------|----|---|
| True | False | 1. | Expedient means profitable or advantage. |
| True | False | 2. | Everything God has authorized us to do is specified within the New Testament. |
| True | False | 3. | To offend the conscience of a weak brother means we hurt his feelings. |
| True | False | 4. | For something to be expedient, it must not be sinful. |
| True | False | 5. | Singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is not an expedient. |
| True | False | 6. | All expedients are specified within the New Testament. |
| True | False | 7. | An expedient that divides a local church is acceptable to the Lord. |
| True | False | 8. | Local churches sending funds to an evangelistic program supervised by the receiving local church is an acceptable expedient to efficiently preach the gospel. |
| True | False | 9. | Determining the specific times we worship on the first day of the week is a matter of expediency. |

For each question, please provide statements that clearly answer each question.

1. What is the meaning of expedient.
2. Explain the four conditions that an action must meet before it can be an authorized expedient.

3. List some examples of lawful expedients relating to a local church.

4. List some examples of unlawful expedients that some local churches practice.

5. If there is much disagreement among members about an expedient, what should be done?

6. Explain how we can know whether an expedient is unlawful or not.