

Divine Authority

Lesson 2 Unacceptable Sources of Authority

What We Have Learned In The Previous Lesson

Authority is the power or right to command
Without authority, life would be chaos
The only way we can please God is to
willingly submit to His Divine authority
To rebel means eternal punishment
In both Old and New Testaments, we see
the seriousness of disregarding Divine
authority

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Introduction

- It is not enough to admit we need authority in Christianity
- But, we must submit to authority from the right source
- Before studying what the only true source of Divine authority is, we first look at unacceptable sources of authority

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Introduction

- Often, so many who claim to follow Christ justify their beliefs and practices on totally unreliable sources
- As we study, we will realize claiming we follow the Bible as our authority does not insure we are following what is right
- This is determined by what part of the Bible we are following and how it is applied

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Introduction

- We are reminded again that the chief priests and elders challenged the source of Jesus' authority to teach
- At the same time, they rejected the Divine source of authority of the baptism of John the Baptist and followed the unreliable source of their human traditions and opinions
- This challenge is still for us today

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Introduction

Mat 21:23 When He entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?"
Mat 21:24 Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things."

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Introduction

Mat 21:25 "The baptism of John was from what source, from heaven or from men?" And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?'"

Mat 21:26 "But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the people; for they all regard John as a prophet."

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Introduction

Mat 21:27 And answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." He also said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

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Purposes of This Lesson

- Identify and understand unreliable sources of authority in religion
- Challenge ourselves to see whether our practices are authorized by heaven or men
- Motivate us to seek after the only true source of Divine authority, the apostles' teaching, the New Testament

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Unacceptable Sources of Authority

Personal opinion and emotions
Desires of the majority'
Elders, preachers and other leaders
Local church with whom we assemble
The Old Testament
Unwritten and written human traditions
Good results

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Personal Opinion And Emotions

- Many look for religious authority within their own thinking and feelings
- They feel if they do something sincerely from their heart, the Lord is obligated to accept it
- We are warned that our feelings and opinions are an unreliable sources of authority

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Personal Opinion And Emotions

Jdg 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Pro 14:12 There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

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Personal Opinion And Emotions

Pro 28:26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks wisely will be delivered.

Jer 10:23 I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.

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Personal Opinion And Emotions

Rom 1:21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Rom 1:22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

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Personal Opinion And Emotions

Rom 1:23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Rom 1:24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

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Personal Opinion And Emotions

Rom 1:25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

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Desires of The Majority

- Following majority opinion has always been a threat to our submitting to Divine authority
- A group can influence us to do the wrong thing if we are not careful
- Peer pressure affects all ages
- Examples of majority rebelling against God's authority

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Israel Cries Out For A King

1Sa 8:1 And it came about when Samuel was old that he appointed his sons judges over Israel.

1Sa 8:2 Now the name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judging in Beersheba.

1Sa 8:3 His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice.

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Israel Cries Out For A King

1Sa 8:4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah;

1Sa 8:5 and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations."

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Israel Cries Out For A King

1Sa 8:6 But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD.

1Sa 8:7 The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them."

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Israel Cries Out For A King

1Sa 8:8 "Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day--in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods--so they are doing to you also."

1Sa 8:9 "Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them."

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Saul Pleases The People Instead of Obeying God

1Sa 15:1 Then Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of the LORD."

1Sa 15:3 "Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."

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Saul Pleases The People Instead of Obeying God

1Sa 15:20 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites."

1Sa 15:21 "But the people took *some* of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal."

23

Saul Pleases The People Instead of Obeying God

1Sa 15:22 Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams."

1Sa 15:23 "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from *being* king."

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Jesus' Disciples Fear Jewish Rulers

Joh 12:37 But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him.

Joh 12:42 Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue;

Joh 12:43 for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God. 25

Jesus Warns Against Following The Majority

Mat 7:13 "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.

Mat 7:14 "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. 26

Elders, Preachers And Other Leaders

- God has given qualified elders the responsibilities of overseeing the work of a local church , teaching the flock the truth and defending against error
 - He has charged preachers with preaching the truth and standing against error
 - Elders and preachers have no right to go beyond the written Word
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Elders, Preachers And Other Leaders

Act 20:28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Act 20:29 "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 28

Elders, Preachers And Other Leaders

Act 20:30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Act 20:31 "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. 29

Elders, Preachers And Other Leaders

Act 20:32 "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 30

Elders, Preachers And Other Leaders

1Ti 5:19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.

1Ti 5:20 Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.

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Elders, Preachers And Other Leaders

2Ti 4:1 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

2Ti 4:2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

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Elders, Preachers And Other Leaders

2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,

2Ti 4:4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

2Ti 4:5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

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Elders, Preachers And Other Leaders

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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Elders, Preachers And Other Leaders

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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Elders, Preachers And Other Leaders

1Co 4:6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.

Gal 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

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Local Church With Whom We Assemble

- Authority is not obtained from the local church with which we worship
- Authority resides in the New Testament
- Whatever the New Testament authorizes one local church to do, it authorizes all to do
- Whatever the New Testament forbids one local church to do it forbids all to do

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Local Church With Whom We Assemble

Mat 28:18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Mat 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Mat 28:20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

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Local Church With Whom We Assemble

1Co 4:16 Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me.

1Co 4:17 For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.

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The Old Testament

- Although we can learn much from the Old Testament, it is not our standard of authority when it comes to working and worshipping with a local church
- By His death, Jesus fulfilled and set aside the Law of Moses so that both Jew and Gentile could receive forgiveness of sins through Him, submitting to the same plan of salvation and following the same standard, the apostles' teaching

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The Old Testament

- If we seek to justify any part of our worship by the Old Testament, then we are obligated to observe all the Old Testament
- But if we should do this, we make the death of Jesus and the New Testament void and useless

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The Old Testament

Rom 15:4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

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The Old Testament

Mat 5:17 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

Mat 5:18 "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

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The Old Testament

Eph 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

Eph 2:15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,

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The Old Testament

Eph 2:16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

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The Old Testament

Gal 5:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

Gal 5:2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you.

Gal 5:3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.

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The Old Testament

Gal 5:4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Gal 5:5 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

Gal 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

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The Old Testament

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

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Unwritten And Written Human Traditions

- Over time, denominations have written down their teachings and practices so that all may know how to become and live as a Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic and so on
- Danger – people follow these written “creeds” as if they are authoritative and they end up violating authoritative Scriptures

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Unwritten And Written Human Traditions

- Even if they are not written, the honoring of human traditions (that which has been handed down) above Scriptures is displeasing to God
- Often, people follow family traditions and refuse to openly search the Scriptures for what is true

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Unwritten And Written Human Traditions

Mat 15:1 Then some Pharisees and scribes *came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said,
Mat 15:2 "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."
Mat 15:3 And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"

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Unwritten And Written Human Traditions

Mat 15:4 "For God said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,' and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH.'
Mat 15:5 "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God,"
Mat 15:6 he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. 52

Unwritten And Written Human Traditions

Mat 15:7 "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you:
Mat 15:8 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.
Mat 15:9 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'"

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Unwritten And Written Human Traditions

Luk 14:26 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.
Luk 14:27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

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Good Results

- Many justify a practice as being authorized purely on the basis of the good results it produces
- However, good results do not make something authorized if it is not authorized by the New Testament
- Notice the tragic consequences of Israel moving the ark

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Good Results

1Ch 13:2 David said to all the assembly of Israel, "If it seems good to you, and if it is from the LORD our God, let us send everywhere to our kinsmen who remain in all the land of Israel, also to the priests and Levites who are with them in their cities with pasture lands, that they may meet with us; 1Ch 13:3 and let us bring back the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul."

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Good Results

1Ch 13:4 Then all the assembly said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

1Ch 13:6 David and all Israel went up to Baalah, that is, to Kiriath-jearim, which belongs to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, the LORD who is enthroned above the cherubim, where His name is called.

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Good Results

1Ch 13:7 They carried the ark of God on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart.

1Ch 13:8 David and all Israel were celebrating before God with all their might, even with songs and with lyres, harps, tambourines, cymbals and with trumpets.

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Good Results

1Ch 13:9 When they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, because the oxen nearly upset it.

1Ch 13:10 The anger of the LORD burned against Uzza, so He struck him down because he put out his hand to the ark; and he died there before God.

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Good Results

1Ch 13:11 Then David became angry because of the LORD'S outburst against Uzza; and he called that place Perez-uzza to this day.

1Ch 13:12 David was afraid of God that day, saying, "How can I bring the ark of God home to me?"

1Ch 13:13 So David did not take the ark with him to the city of David, but took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

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Good Results

1Ch 15:1 Now David built houses for himself in the city of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it.

1Ch 15:2 Then David said, "No one is to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for the LORD chose them to carry the ark of God and to minister to Him forever."

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Good Results

1Ch 15:13 "Because you did not carry it at the first, the LORD our God made an outburst on us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance."

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What We Have Learned In This Lesson

We cannot depend on unreliable sources for our authority in religion

Personal opinion and emotions

Desires of the majority'

Elders, preachers and other leaders

Local church with whom we assemble

The Old Testament

Unwritten and written human traditions

Good results

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Divine Authority

Lesson 2 - Unacceptable Sources of Authority

Various passages and material from Lesson 2 outline

For each of the following questions, please circle the letter by the correct answer.

1. Prov. 28:26. If we trust in our selves to determine what is authorized in religion, then we are
 - A. Wise.
 - B. Following what is right.
 - C. Being drawn closer to God's way.
 - D. Fools.

2. 1 Sam. 8:1-9. Which was not one of the reasons the people gave Samuel when they demanded a King?
 - A. Samuel's sons were unrighteous in their actions.
 - B. God would be pleased that they wanted a king.
 - C. They wanted to be like all the other nations.
 - D. Samuel was old.

3. 1 Sam. 15. God commanded Saul to punish the Amalekites by
 - A. Destroying all Amalekites except for the ruling class.
 - B. Destroying all Amalekites including the king and all their animals.
 - C. Destroying all Amalekites including the king but leave the best animals alive to offer sacrifices to God.
 - D. Destroying all Amalekites except for the king and all their animals.

4. Which one of these practices is not authorized by the New Testament?
 - A. Partaking of the Lord's supper.
 - B. Collecting money on every first day of the week.
 - C. Tithing.
 - D. Baptism for the remission of sins.

5. Which one of these practices is authorized by the New Testament?
 - A. Singing.
 - B. Playing instruments in worship.
 - C. Burning incense.
 - D. Circumcision.

6. Which one of the following practices are authorized by human traditions instead of God's Word?
 - A. Appointing elders in local churches.
 - B. Confessing sins to one another.
 - C. Caring for brethren who are in need.
 - D. Infant baptism.

7. 1 Chron. 15. God was angry with Israel because
 - A. They tried to build a better ark of the covenant.
 - B. They substituted their own way for carrying the ark instead of following God's way.

C. They were worshipping idols.

D. They were worshiping David.

For each statement, circle True or False.

True False 1. We are wise if we follow our hearts to lead us in knowing how to serve God.

True False 2. God turned away from the Gentile world because He hated them.

True False 3. Samuel was in favor of Israel having a king.

True False 4. Saul completely obeyed the Lord in the matter of the Amalekites.

True False 5. Elders and preacher are sources of Divine authority.

True False 6. What God authorizes changes based on the country where a local church meets.

True False 7. We can learn nothing of any value from the Old Testament.

True False 8. Jesus abolished the Law of Moses in His death.

True False 9. If something does a lot of good, then it is authorized by God.

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

1. What is the danger of being guided by our emotions and opinions as we seek to serve God?

2. Please explain why something is not authorized simply because it is followed by the majority of people.

3. Please give examples of when elders and preachers should be challenged.

4. Please give examples of practices people try to authorize from the Old Testament.

5. Please give some examples of denominational practices that are based on the writings of people rather than the Word of God.

6. Why is it wrong for us to decide whether something is authorized by looking at the possible results of a specific practice?