

The Church

Lesson 5
Establishing Divine Authority

The Church

1. What Is The Church?
2. Nature of The Universal Church
3. Organization and Work of The Universal Church
4. The Only Source of Divine Authority Today
5. Establishing Divine Authority

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The Church

6. Nature of A Local Church
7. Organization and Work of A Local Church
8. Independence Autonomy and Cooperation of Local Churches
9. Institutionalism and The Social Gospel

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The Only Source of Divine Authority Today

1. What is authority and why do we need it?
2. Some unreliable sources of Divine authority
3. The only source of Divine authority today

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Introduction

- When teaching denominational friends, we often lovingly challenge them to search the Bible to see if what they are teaching and practicing is authorized
- Only by honestly comparing what we believe and practice with the apostles' teaching, the only source of Divine authority today, can we ever hope to find and follow the truth

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Introduction

- Also, in this local church and to those who claim to be our brethren in other local churches of Christ, we lovingly call for continual open examining of the apostles' teaching to see if our teachings and practices are based on truth
- Why do many churches of Christ send funds to other churches for purposes other than benevolence, helping needy saints in the receiving church?

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Introduction

- Why do many churches of Christ send funds to so-called “Christian” colleges, benevolent organizations and other institutions?
- Why do many churches of Christ expend funds and provide space for various social and recreational activities?
- Here and among some churches of Christ, we do none of these things

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Introduction

- What is the difference? It comes down to how we establish Divine authority from the apostles’ teaching
- But, when we fail to question ourselves and fearlessly search the Scriptures, we have no way to determine, prevent or correct error
- Let us humbly, lovingly and honestly search the Word of God seeking to learn and follow only the truth

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We Must Be Willing To Examine The Scriptures and Our Application of Them

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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We Must Be Willing To Examine The Scriptures and Our Application of Them

2Ti 2:2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

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We Must Be Willing To Examine The Scriptures and Our Application of Them

Heb 8:4 Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law;

Heb 8:5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN."

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We Must Be Willing To Examine The Scriptures and Our Application of Them

Act 17:11 Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

2Co 13:5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test?

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We Must Be Willing To Examine The Scriptures and Our Application of Them

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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Four Ways of Establishing Divine Authority

1. Direct commands
2. Direct statements
3. Approved examples
4. Necessary inferences

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Direct Commands

Imperative statements that either tell us what we must do or what we must not do

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Example 1 - Direct Command

Eph 4:31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Eph 4:32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

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Example 2 - Direct Command

Col 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,

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Example 3 - Direct Command

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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Direct Statements

Statements of truth that are not commands but reveal truth we should believe and obey

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Example 1 - Direct Statement

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 He was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

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Example 1 - Direct Statement

Joh 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

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Example 2 - Direct Statement

Col 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Col 1:16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him.

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Example 2 - Direct Statement

Col 1:17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Col 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

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Example 3 - Direct Statement

1Co 15:1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand,

1Co 15:2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

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Example 3 - Direct Statement

1Co 15:3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
1Co 15:4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

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Approved Examples

Beliefs and practices of the church under the guidance of the apostles and the Holy Spirit providing a pattern for future generations to follow

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Example 1 – Approved Example

Partake of Lord's Supper on first day of week

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.

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Example 2 – Approved Example

Appointing elders in every local church

Act 14:23 When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

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Example 3 – Approved Example

Preachers have right to marry

1Co 9:5 Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

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Four Ways of Establishing Divine Authority

1. Direct commands
2. Direct statements
3. Approved examples
4. Necessary Inferences

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Establishing Divine Authority

1. Four ways of establishing Divine authority

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Four Ways of Establishing Divine Authority

1. Direct commands
2. Direct statements
3. Approved examples
4. Necessary Inferences

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Necessary Inferences

Necessary or inescapable conclusions we infer from information given in the Scriptures

The given information implies what must be necessarily inferred although not stated in the text

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Example 1 - Necessary Inference

Partake of the Lord's supper every first day of the week

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.

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Example 2 - Necessary Inference

Unleavened bread must be used in the Lord's supper

1Co 11:23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread;

1Co 11:24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

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Example 2 - Necessary Inference

Unleavened bread must be used in the Lord's supper

1Co 11:25 In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

1Co 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

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Example 2 - Necessary Inference

Unleavened bread must be used in the Lord's supper

Mat 26:17 Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"

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Example 2 - Necessary Inference

Unleavened bread must be used in the Lord's supper

Mat 26:18 And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is near; I am to keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.'""

Mat 26:19 The disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

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Example 2 - Necessary Inference

Unleavened bread must be used in the Lord's supper

Exo 12:18 'In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening.

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Example 2 - Necessary Inference

Unleavened bread must be used in the Lord's supper

Exo 12:19 'Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is an alien or a native of the land.

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Example 2 - Necessary Inference

Unleavened bread must be used in the Lord's supper

Exo 12:20 'You shall not eat anything leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.'"

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Example 3 - Necessary Inference

Every local church autonomous, ruled by their own elders

Act 14:23 When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

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Example 3 - Necessary Inference

Every local church autonomous, ruled by their own elders

1Pe 5:2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

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Four Ways of Establishing Divine Authority

1. Direct commands
2. Direct statements
3. Approved examples
4. Necessary Inferences

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Generic and Specific Authority

- Generic authority – general in nature giving us a wide variety of specific options we can take to do what is authorized
- Specific authority – specific in nature where we are limited to following only the specific action that is authorized

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Example 1 – Generic Authority

Authorized to go and make disciples but not specifically told how to go

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,

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Example 2 – Generic Authority

Authorized to teach disciples all things but methods of teaching not specified

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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Example 3 – Generic Authority

Authorized to sing types of songs but no specific song is specified

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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Example 1 – Specific Authority

Authorized to preach only the gospel to the world

Mar 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

Mar 16:16 "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

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Example 2 – Specific Authority

Authorized to contribute money only on the first day of the week

1Co 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also.

1Co 16:2 On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.

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Example 3 – Specific Authority

Authorized only to sing in worship and not to play instruments

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

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Generic And Specific Authority

- If God has generally authorized something, we should not limit ourselves to specifics
- If God has specifically authorized something, we should not widen His authority to include things not specified

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Things That Are Expedient

- Many argue that since we use pulpits, microphones, song books, baptisteries and church buildings, we can do many things not specified in the Scriptures
- This calls for us to understand things that are expedient, matters of judgment we view as profitable to only carry out the commands of the Lord
- We should never use these things to justify unauthorized actions

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What Does Expedient Mean?

Expedient means to be of advantage, of benefit or profitable

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What Does Expedient Mean?

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 Does Expedient Mean?

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.

Joh 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

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What Does Expedient Mean?

- 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 for us

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Must Be Lawful

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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Cannot Be Specified In The 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
- But if God has specified something, then we must follow it without adding or taking away from it

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Cannot Substitute The Sinner's Prayer For Repentance and Baptism

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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Things That Are Expedient

1. What does expedient mean?
2. What conditions make something expedient?

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Establishing Divine Authority

1. Four ways of establishing Divine authority
2. Generic and specific authority
3. Things that are expedient

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Things That Are Expedient

1. What does expedient mean?
2. What conditions make something expedient?

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Must Edify (build up) The Local Church In The Word of God

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 Not Offend The Conscience of A 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 The Conscience of A 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 The Conscience of A Weak Brother

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.

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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Examples of Expedients

1. Church building
2. Song books
3. Chairs
4. A baptistery
5. Microphone
6. The Lord's supper plate and tray
7. Setting times of service on the first day of the week and other times

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Examples of Unlawful Expedients

1. Church funded recreational facilities
2. Musical instruments in worship
3. Church funded social meals and entertainment activities
4. Churches contributing to colleges and other institutions

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Things That Are Expedient

1. What does expedient mean?
2. What conditions make something expedient?
3. Examples of expedients

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Respecting The Silence of The Scriptures

- What does the Lord mean when He is silent on a subject?
- Does His silence give us permission to act as we choose?
- Or, does His silence forbid us to act as we think is best?
- These two attitudes dictate how we apply Divine authority

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Respecting The Silence of The Scriptures

- Denominational view – God's silence is permissive
- We can do whatever we want if God has not specifically forbidden it
- Many churches of Christ have now adopted the same attitude
- But, the Scriptures teach God's silence is restrictive, we sin if we go beyond what He has specifically revealed in His Word

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What Does It Mean When God Is Silent?

- The only way we can know anything about the will of God is, He must communicate it to us
- If He has not communicated to us about a particular matter, we cannot know anything about that matter
- God's silence does not authorize us to act in whatever way we please but restricts us to following what He has revealed to us

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What Does It Mean When God Is Silent?

1Co 2:10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

1Co 2:11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

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What Does It Mean When God Is Silent?

1Pe 4:11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

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What Does It Mean When God Is Silent?

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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God's Silence In The Old Testament Is Restrictive

Num 4:15 "When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy objects and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is to set out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry them, so that they will not touch the holy objects and die. These are the things in the tent of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry.

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God's Silence In The Old Testament Is Restrictive

Exo 25:13 "You shall make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold.

Exo 25:14 "You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to carry the ark with them.

Exo 25:15 "The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be removed from it.

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God's Silence In The Old Testament Is Restrictive

2Sa 6:3 They placed the ark of God on a new cart that they might bring it from the house of Abinadab which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart.

2Sa 6:6 But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset *it*.

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God's Silence In The Old Testament Is Restrictive

2Sa 6:7 And the anger of the LORD burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God.

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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God's silence in the New Testament is restrictive

Act 15:1 Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

Act 15:2 And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

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God's silence in the New Testament is restrictive

Act 15:23 and they sent this letter by them, "The apostles and the brethren who are elders, to the brethren in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles, greetings.

Act 15:24 "Since we have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you with their words, unsettling your souls,

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God's silence in the New Testament is restrictive

Act 15:28 "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials:

Act 15:29 that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell."

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Denominational Examples of Disrespecting God's Silence

Instrumental music

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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Denominational Examples of Disrespecting God's Silence

Infant baptism

Mar 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

Mar 16:16 "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

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Denominational Examples of Disrespecting God's Silence

Infant baptism

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?"

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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Denominational Examples of Disrespecting God's Silence

Infant baptism

Act 8:12 But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.

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Churches Of Christ Examples of Disrespecting God's Silence

Local churches providing money and space for social meals, entertainment and recreation

1Ti 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

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Churches Of Christ Examples of Disrespecting God's Silence

Local churches providing money and space for social meals, entertainment and recreation

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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Churches Of Christ Examples of Disrespecting God's Silence

Local churches providing money and space for social meals, entertainment and recreation

1Co 11:33 So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

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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Churches Of Christ Examples of Disrespecting God's Silence

Local churches contributing to churches for reasons other than helping needy saints

Act 24:17 "Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings;

Rom 15:25 but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.

Rom 15:26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. ⁹¹

Respecting The Silence of The Scriptures

1. What does it mean when God is silent?
2. God's silence in the Old Testament is restrictive
3. God's silence in the New Testament is restrictive
4. Denominational examples of disrespecting God's silence
5. Churches of Christ examples of disrespecting God's silence

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Establishing Divine Authority

1. Four ways of establishing Divine authority
2. Generic and specific authority
3. Things that are expedient
4. Respecting the silence of the Scriptures

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