

Learn Your Bible

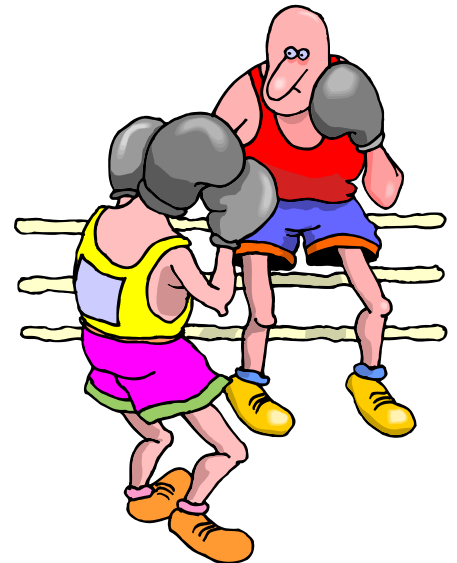
Lesson 14

This study will be a review from a different perspective on how to arrive at the answer to the question of “Is this or that what God wants of us?” Did you know the Apostles, elders, and brethren once had a dispute and had to resolve it?

The manner in which they resolved said disagreement is illuminating. This is one example of Old Testament and New Testament instruction pretty much going hand in hand. It wasn't a brawl... but it did become a textbook authority lesson!

Review II Samuel 7 and lesson 12 before proceeding.

The apostles and the early church in general were regularly having to deal with the issue of how to blend respect for the OT with the fact that Jesus had come in the flesh. Because Jesus has come...we are under the NT.



The authority of Jesus Christ is to be absolutely respected. A pagan centurion displayed his understanding when this man said, **“For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it.”**

9. Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." Luke 7:8-9

My question is, “why should this respect for God and His authority be so rare?” Why was Jesus shocked at the depth of understanding of this man concerning authority? In the Church this mustn't be rare. We are Christians!

Now let's learn from the Apostles in how they dealt with a question of authority and propriety. Read Acts 15:1-32

When we look closely at the method we will see the Apostles using the same three questions God asked of David and Nathan back in II Samuel 7. Do you remember them?

- 1) Is this your job? Does God want **you** to do this? (Is this your turf, the Church's turf, the government's turf etc.?)
- 2) Do you have an example of this? (Is this what they did?)
- 3) Did I ask for this? (Is there some command of God relevant to the question at hand?)

Notice that as each question comes up... We are not only to ask if a thing needs done but if we are the one to do it?



Should the church field an army with guns and bombs and go after the Muslims of the world? NO! Why? “Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." John 18:36

In other words this is not the Church's job. That job falls to a different kind of kingdom. We do have a historical example of a pope doing this (the crusades), but we have no example of the church of scripture doing it or anything like it. The pope wasn't acting on anything Jesus gave him. We also have no command for Christians to wield any weapons in our work beyond the sword of the spirit!

- 1) Look closely at Acts 15:1 What was the issue in front of them? _____ Did they claim to have authority for what they were teaching? _____ Compare I Timothy 1:1-7 Isn't Acts 15:1 a good example of these teachers? _____



2) Paul Harvey reported that some churches are offering communion to parishioner's pets. This would obviously be popular with some. I consider this nonsense but how should we decide whether or not this is actually a good idea?

3) How was it decided for Paul and Barnabas to handle the situation? Vs.2 _____ The apostles decided that dissention was appropriate for this situation. True / False. Since it brings reproach on the church, (and disheartens some of the weaker souls who may witness it), we should sweep doctrinal issues under the rug rather than admit we have them. True / False.

4) Look closely at vs. 6. Did the apostles have an automatic answer to each question as it arose or did they have to practice a similar pursuit of truth as we do? _____

5) Look closely at vs. 7 Note they were "disputing" with apostles until they began the process of asking questions... When Peter spoke note that his first comment is that "God made a choice". Whose "turf" was it to deal with Gentile issues? _____

A. Compare this with I Corinthians 16:1-2. Has God "chosen" how to fund the Church of Christ's operation on earth?



_____ Did He (God) choose garage sales? _____

Did He "choose" a collection on Wednesday? _____

Did He "choose" book sales and raffle tickets? _____ How about Bingo?

_____ Did the apostles ever go out on a so-called "fundraiser"? _____

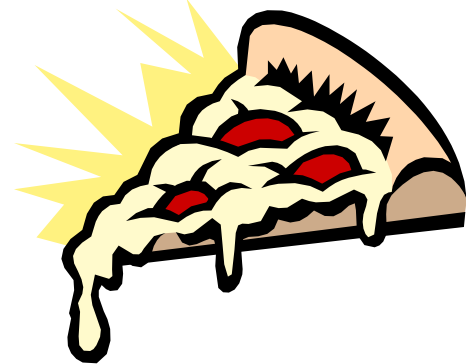
If the instructions to do these things, so common today, didn't come from God... Who did they come from? _____

B. Compare this with I Timothy 2:7-15 Note He ordained a preacher, apostle, and a teacher vs. 7 note the contrast of roles from Vs. 10 (the word "but"). Did God "choose" different roles for men and women? _____ Paul (IE. men) are to

preach **BUT** women are to learn in _____? If God chose men as the preachers and today some choose women anyway... On what basis do we deny the pulpit to practicing Homosexuals? _____

C. Compare this with I Corinthians 1:27-29 Has God purposely “chosen” a direction that He knew would confound many? _____ Why did He make this choice? _____

Please note this directly relates to how He would choose to save men. Compare this to I Corinthians 11:22, 34 Did God make a choice on “how” men would be “brought” to the gospel? _____ Did God “choose” to build banquet halls and “invite” folks for pizza? _____ Is it fair to say that God in fact “choose” not to include banquets as part of **your** means of service to Him? _____



6) Note Acts 15:10 “Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?”

A. Is placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that is not ordained in scripture a case of “tempting God?” _____

B. Can you find in scripture where the church shouldered the responsibility for child-care? _____

C. Can you find in scripture where the church shouldered the responsibility for secular education? _____

D. Can you find in scripture where the church shouldered the responsibility for social entertainment? _____

E. Can you find in scripture (I Timothy 5:7-16) where the church is specifically told not to shoulder the burden of things primarily the responsibility of the home? _____

Considering I Timothy 5:8... if we try to shove our responsibility off onto the “neck of the



D. Does an eldership today have the right to “trouble” the church by bringing in a baseball team as part of the work of the church? _____ Can you find a scripture that would justify the practice? _____
 Can you find a scripture that would justify the church sponsoring a country music group? _____

10) Consider Vs. 28 “For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, **to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.**” Note the phrase “necessary things.”

A. Is it appropriate for the elders or anyone else to lay on the church things that are not “necessary” to the proclamation of the gospel? _____

B. Should the church take on the burden of all the world’s poor? (be sure to check with Jesus, Matthew 26:11) _____ (be sure to note the specific restriction of II Thessalonians 3:6-10) Is it appropriate for the church to take on this burden with no restriction? _____

C. Should the church take on the burden of the world’s aged? (be sure to note the specific restriction of I Timothy 5:16) _____



We live in a world in which virtually everything goes. The dilemma our generation faces is that we must



determine what should go. Generations have arisen that no longer know what questions to even ask! How many churches do you know that have not even studied the mistake of David in II Samuel 7 (we all know of Bathsheba) or the disagreement of the churches in Acts 15.

"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." (Jesus said this in John 7:24)