

Expediency

Introduction:

1. In the religious realm, men have sought to justify a multitude of things by saying “they can be practiced as expediencies.”
 - A. Expediency: *“suitability for a given purpose; appropriateness to the conditions; useful for effecting a desired result; suited to the circumstances or the occasion; advantageous; convenient.”* (Webster’s New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition)
 - 1) The common concept: The end justifies the means, so anything that will accomplish what we think to be good, whether authorized or not, is permissible.
 - a. It is important to note that: “results accomplished” does not authorize anything.
2. In order for a thing to be a **scriptural expedient** it must facilitate in the accomplishment of God’s will and must be in harmony with His word.
3. Expediency in human wisdom involves the right of a choice within the realm of those things included in what God has authorized. Therefore:

For A Thing To Be Expedient: It Must Be Lawful

1. All scriptural expedients are lawful
 - A. They come within the realm of things authorized.
 - 1) As we talked about last week, authority may be established by a direct command, an approved example, or a necessary inference.
 - B. That which is not authorized is unlawful - that is, it is prohibited by divine authority, thus it is sinful.

2 John 9-11 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ **does not have God**. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

- 1) This involves going beyond what is written (2 John 9-11)
- 2) This involves going beyond the realm of faith.

2 Cor 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

Rom 14:23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.

- C. **The point is this:** We have no assurance that a thing is pleasing unto God unless it is authorized in the scripture.
 - 1) Therefore, an expedient must first be lawful.

2. Unlawful things cannot be expedients even if **WE THINK** they facilitate the accomplishment of the Lord's will.

A. Remember: What men say (preachers, elders, or creeds) are not the source of authority. Neither do the desires of the church authorize anything.

B. Examples:

1) Women preachers

1 Tim 2:12 And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.

a. Some think that women can convert more than men – and they may be right. However, this does not make such a practice right in the sight of God. To have a woman preach because she might be able to do more good is not lawful according to God's Word.

2) No doubt David thought the ox cart would make the job of moving the ark of the covenant easier, but this did not make it right.

1 Chronicles 13:7-10;

1 Chronicles 15:2

(Lesson learned well by David when bringing it to Jerusalem later on)

For A Thing To Be An Expedient: It Cannot Be Specified

1. When God specifies, then the only choice for man to do is obey His specific command or disobey the command.
 - A. In matters specified faith demands obedience to the Lord.
Examples:
 - 1) God specified “gopher wood” for the ark (Gen 6:14). By faith Noah did all that God commanded (v22; Heb 11:7).
 - 2) God specified a “male lamb of the first year, without blemish,” as a sacrifice (Exod 12:5). The Israelites chose to obey God’s command.
 - B. Expediency in human wisdom involves the right of choice within the realm of those things included in what God has authorized.
 - 1) Noah could choose which gopher wood to use, whether a large or small log, etc. but he must use gopher wood to obey God.
 - 2) The Israelites could choose which male lamb of the first year, that was without blemish to be offered, but they must offer such an animal in order to obey God.
2. To go beyond that which is specified or authorized is to add to God’s word, not to aid in obedience to His word.
 - A. God commands “singing”

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

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

- 1) Instrumental music is not an aid in “singing” but is an addition” to God’s commandment.
 - a. It is not included in the scope of the command to sing and therefore mechanical instruments cannot be used as an expedient.

B. God commands to dip, submerge, bury in baptism.

Rom 6:4 Therefore we were **buried with Him through baptism** into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

- 1) Since God has not specified the place to baptize, a baptistry may be used in the accomplishment of His will, thus a baptistry is an expedient.
- 2) Sprinkling for baptism is not an expedient because it is not lawful. It does not aid the accomplishment of God’s will. It is a substitution for that which God commanded, thus it is unlawful and sinful.

C. God specified that the oversight and function of elders be restricted to the local church.

Acts 14:23 So when they had **appointed elders in every church**, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Acts 20:28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to 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.

1 Peter 5:1-3

- 1) For the elders of one church to oversee the members, monies or work of another church, is not a matter of expediency. Such is not lawful. It does not come within the realm of that which the Lord has authorized elders to do, thus it is unlawful and sinful.

- D. The church is the organization God authorized for preaching the gospel.

1 Tim 3:15 but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to **conduct yourself in the house of God**, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Ephesians 4:11-13

- 1) A Missionary Society is not an aid because it is not within the scope of that which is authorized.
- 2) The Missionary Society is an addition to the organization which God established – it accepts money from local churches . It is an organization which men have built to do the work God gave the church to do. It is unlawful and sinful.

For A Thing To Be Expedient: It Must Edify

1 Corinthians 10:23-24, 31

1. All things are to be done unto edification

1 Cor 14:26 How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. **Let all things be done for edification.**

- A. If a thing is a matter of choice or expediency, falling into the realm of human wisdom or judgment, and its practice causes division in the body of Christ, it is sinful and wrong.
- B. When God commands something, then it must be done in spite of consequences, even if it divides people. If doing the will of God requires it, then men have no choice but to obey.

1) Example: Preaching the word.

Acts 4:18-20 And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. **For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.**"

Acts 5:29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: **"We ought to obey God rather than men.**

- C. But if it is non-essential - meaning that God has left the choice up to human wisdom, and then we demand or enforce that practice on others that will destroy the unity and peace of God's children, then we sin.

For A Thing To Be Expedient: It Must Not Offend the Conscience of A Brother

1 Cor 10:31-33 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

1. This rule governs only in matters of expediency.
 - A. In matters specified we have no choice but to obey or disobey.
 - B. Where the liberty of a choice by human wisdom has been permitted by the divine will, we must not force “our way” to the offending of a brother, by causing him to violate his conscience in partaking in that which he believes to be wrong.

Conclusion

1. An expedient must first be lawful.
 - A. Every addition or substitution is unlawful. It is relying upon human wisdom for God’s word.
 - 1) Such is not a matter of expediency, but is a transgression of God’s will.

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Things Lawful:

2. These are things authorized in God's word.
 - A. Authority may be established in one of three ways:
 - 1) Direct statement or command, Approved Example, Necessary Inference.
 - B. Authority may be either generic or specific.
 - 1) Generic authority makes everything in that realm lawful.
 - 2) Specific authority makes the thing specified lawful and all other things in that general realm are unlawful.
 - C. In the realm of things lawful, some things will be specified and other things will be expedients.
 - 1) Remember, if there is no authority for them, they are unlawful, and cannot be properly labeled as expedencies.

Things Unlawful:

3. These are things which are not authorized in God's word.
 - A. These are things in which there is no generic or specific authority.
4. These things are "sinful" regardless of what we think of them, or how much we may think they facilitate the work of the Lord.
 - A. If there is no authority for them, they are unlawful, and cannot be properly labeled as expedencies.
5. Remember, expediency involves the right of choice within the realm of that which is authorized in the New Testament, and is not a course of authority within itself.

