

Just Do It

Genuine Christianity is not so much subscribing to a philosophy as it is submitting to authority - specifically, the authority of Jesus Christ. Once convinced by the evidence that Jesus is the Christ, that He has all authority in heaven and earth (Matt.28:18), and that His authority is expressed in the New Testament (cf. 1 Cor.14:37; Eph.3:1-5), there only remains one thing to do -- submit to that authority. It is not really a question of whether or not it appeals to us philosophically. It is a question of whether or not, it is the Lord's will. He has all authority. If He says do it -- just do it. If He says not to do it -- just don't do it. If it is within the scope of His authority feel good about doing it, if it is not, then leave it alone, That may seem a bit simplistic to those enamored with the wisdom of this world--but that is basically the way it is.

Once we have become disciples of Christ by submitting to His authority, are baptized by that authority and are committed to "observe all things (He) has commanded (us)" (Matt.28:18-20), we need nothing more than His word to motivate us. If He says do it -- we just do it. If He says do not do it -- we just don't do it.

- by Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

Is The Old Testament Our Law?

Once, when calling on new comers to town, I was greeted "Oh, you're one of those folks who don't believe in the Old Testament." No, I believe all Scripture is inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16, 17), including the Old Covenant (2 Pet. 1:20-21). But we must properly handle Scripture (2 Tim. 2:15). Often, when called upon to produce authority for instrumental music in worship, our friends in various denominations invoke the example of David playing on a harp as proof their practice is justified. I wonder why they don't appeal to David's polygamy or use of animal sacrifices. David lived under the Old Testament. Is that our law today? Can we appeal to it for justification?

Speaking of the "hand writing of ordinances" which included laws pertaining to "meat," "drink," "holy days," "the new moon," and "Sabbaths," Paul declared that Christ look it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14-17). That law is no longer in effect, and no one is to be judged by it. In fact, the law of Moses was never for Gentiles (non-Jews). This covenant was made for Israel alone (Deut. 5:1-3) as a "schoolmaster" to bring them to Christ (Gal. 3:23-25).

Since Jesus abolished it as law by His death on the cross, none can be justified by it. What of one who would try?

"You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by the law; you have fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4, NKJV).

After the Lord died on the cross, he replaced the Old Testament with the New Testament (Heb. 9:15-17), which is better (Heb. 8:6-13; 10:1-10).

Does this mean we are not to believe the Old Covenant? No, I, as Paul, believe "all things which are written in the law" (Acts 24:14). As Paul, I recognize that the Old Testament is profitable for our study (Romans 15:4). But, also as Paul, I understand that I cannot be justified by keeping the Old Testament (Galatians 5:4).

- by Keith Sharp

You Can Start Your Own Church

Yes, you can start your own church if you want to. Many have never thought of doing such a thing and yet others have done this very thing. Why? Because the church we read about in the Bible did not suit them for one reason or another, therefore they started their own. Yes, if others started their own churches, you can too.

(1) You have as much authority to start a church as King Henry VIII had to start the Church of England (cf. Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23.27; Acts 20:28).

(2) You can also call it what you want. After all, you have as much authority as any other man. Call it the church of the devil if you want to; men say names are not important anyway (cf. Romans 16:16; Acts 4:12).

(3) You can have hamburgers and Pepsi (or steak and coffee, it that's your taste) on the

Lord's Table. After all you have as much authority to change the elements as others have for changing the time to monthly or quarterly observance (Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 20:7).

(4) Since it is your church, you may determine the terms of membership as you see fit. Men for some time, have been changing what the Bible says about the forgiveness of sins and becoming members of the Lord's church (cf. Romans 10:17; Acts 3:19; Romans 10:10; Acts 2:38, 47).

(5) You can do all of these things because you are the head of your church, much like the conferences, conventions, and synods which make up the legislative bodies in denominationalism (cf. Colossians 1:18; Matthew 16:18).

Yes, you can start your own church, call it what you want to, have your kind of worship, determine the terms of membership and the kind of organization it will have. But, you must also accept the consequences. We know that such a church is nothing like the church which we read about in the New Testament, and it would be preposterous to try to prove that it is. Since it is your church, it could not hope to have the same reward which the New Testament church has (Ephesians 5:25-27; Colossians 1:5; 2 Timothy 2:10). We know these things...or do we?

- by Ken Cooper

Of Politics and Preaching

We hear it constantly in the news. Let one political candidate offer a single criticism of his opponent's position and the cry goes up, "Negative campaigning!" It has gotten to the point that no substantive discussion of political differences can be undertaken without someone making this objection.

In reality, such discussions are absolutely essential if we are to make a reasonable choice between those running for public office. Obviously, the candidate himself will not discuss his questionable past performance, or his unpopular views on critical issues. If his opponent is not allowed to bring those things up, how can we know? How can we make the right choice?

Please make application of this same principle to the work of preaching the gospel. There are some who are constantly fuming about what they call "negative preaching." Typically, this means that they oppose any teaching that specifies sin in people's lives; anything that says, "you're wrong, you need to do better."

But, think for a moment. If those who teach and preach never deal with such subjects, how will people be informed and motivated to make needed changes in their lives? Can't you see the vital need for "negative preaching?"

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was a 'scorcher!' That church was full of problems, and Paul hit every one of them. It wasn't pleasant, but it had to be done. As a result, the people repented. And Paul wrote: *"For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent... for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner..."* (2 Corinthians 7:8,9).

We need the truth - even when it exposes and rebukes our sins. Let's demand it always!

- by Greg Gwin