

Should I or Shouldn't I?

This article has been adapted from an article in the Christian Courier written by Wayne Jackson entitled, "The Silence of the Scriptures: Permissive or Prohibitive?"

It has been evident of late that there are a great many in the world of Christianity who have expressed their opinions as it relates to the authority of the scriptures and how we are to apply them in our worship to God. One of those issues deals with the matter of whether or not the "silence" of the Scriptures must be respected or disregarded. Some folks assert that things not expressly *forbidden* are allowed in religious practice, while others contend that anything not *authorized* is not permitted.

We should begin by asking, does the Bible itself endorse the principle that the silence of the Scriptures is prohibitive? There are numerous examples found in the Bible that sufficiently demonstrate that one is not acceptable to God if engaged in religious practices for which there is no scriptural authority.

The difference between Cain and Abel was the difference between them respecting what God had authorized and what he had not. Cain offered the produce of the field; Abel offered the firstlings of his flock (Gen 4:3-4). Abel offered "by faith" (Heb 11:4)—which comes by hearing what the Lord has spoken (Rom 10:17). Cain's offering was apparently of his own decision and so the Lord rejected his offering. The character shown in Cain's action is still being reflected by many today.

Nadab and Abihu offered "strange fire" and they were destroyed by God. Why was their worship rejected by God? Leviticus 10:1 tells us that they offered "that which [God] had not commanded them".

In 1 Corinthians 1:12-13 the apostle Paul said, "...that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written."

Another inspired apostle wrote, "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9). We can know from scripture what constitutes "the teaching of Christ." To go beyond it, whether practicing things specifically forbidden or things unauthorized from silence, is to disobey the will of God.

When faced with a decision to participate in or promote a means of worship that causes you to ask "should I or shouldn't I", take a moment to reflect on God's will and His word and then decide based on divine scriptural authority.

For the elders,
Gregg Woodall