

THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

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UNDERSTANDING THE WILL OF GOD

In an effort to justify people believing and teaching contradictory doctrines some people will say (or suggest) that a person cannot understand the will of God. Here are some things to consider.

1. Along time ago Moses said: **"...those things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."** (Dt. 29:29) If the things revealed belonged to the Israelites so they could **"do all the words of this law"** it's obvious that those things could be understood!

2. In Psalms 119 the writer declared: **"Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way."** (v. 104) **"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."** (v. 130) **"...O Lord: give me understanding according to thy word."** (v. 169) NOTE: Without doubt the Psalmist knew the Word of God **could** be understood!

3. If it were not possible for God's Word to be understood, then why did Isaiah say: **"And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for**

the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (40:5) and **"Seek ye out of the book of the Lord and read:..."?** (34:15) NOTE: If the message of God cannot be understood why would Isaiah the prophet write these things?

4. If it is impossible for a person to understand the will of God, then why did Jesus say: **"...Hear, and understand..."** (Mt. 15:10) and **"Whoso readeth, let him understand:..."** and **"But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it: which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."** (See Mt. 24:15; 13:23)

5. Some people hear and do not understand God's Will! They are blinded by the god of this world! (Cf. 2 Cor. 4:3-4) Some have closed their eyes, stopped their ears and have hardened their hearts! (Cf. Mt. 13:13-16)

6. To understand God's Will we must have a love of the truth and a strong desire to know God's Will and to do it! (Carefully study Mt. 5:6; 2 Thess. 2:6-14 and John 7:17.)

7. Not only can we understand

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Editorial ...

DO CHURCHES HAVE A SCRIPTURAL RIGHT TO PROVIDE ENTERTAINMENT, RECREATIONAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES?

Many denominational churches have been providing entertainment, recreational and social activities for both young and old for quite some time. However, not many **churches of Christ** have done so until recent times. In 1944 Floyd A. Decker wrote a tract entitled, "WHY I LEFT THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH", in which he stated as one of the reasons he left was: "**The Christian Church emphasizes society and the physical man by appealing to the carnal nature, with church carnivals, bands, plays, choruses, dramatics, church kitchens, church camps and elaborate fellowship halls; the church of Christ does not.**" (1 Cor. 19:7; Romans 14:17; 1 Cor. 11:22, 34). "NOTE: In 1944 **churches of Christ** (with rare exception) did **not** have kitchens, camps, choruses, carnivals, bands, etc. About 46 years ago when I began preaching, I did not know of a single church (of Christ) that provided such things although many denominational churches did!

Today, it is different! Many **churches of Christ** are providing entertainment, recreation and social activities for the old as well as for the young people.

Churches have gradually become involved in these activities. If it had been otherwise, many Christians who now accept it would, no doubt have rebelled against the idea. This is true of most **unauthorized** innovations. **Gradually** introducing **unauthorized practices** is one of Satan's most effective ways (in my judgment) of influencing many people to **accept** that which they would otherwise **reject**. NOTE: When we are **ignorant** of Satan's devices, then Satan gets an **advantage of us!** (See 2 Cor. 2:11) If we fail to be vigilant we will be "beguiled" and our minds "**corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ**". (See 2 Cor. 11:3).

The Spirit says things to the churches through letters (in the New Testament) written to the churches. (See Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; Rev. 3:6, 13, 22). In other words, churches must follow the **Word of God** as revealed in the Scriptures! The Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures which are complete (Cf. 3 Tim. 3:16-17; James 1:25). If a thing is not **authorized** in the Scriptures, churches have no **right** to engage in such!

Jesus Christ is the **HEAD** of the church! Ephesians 5:23 says: "**For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the HEAD of the church...**" Colossians 1:18 says: "**And He is the HEAD of the body, the church...**" In Eph. 1:22 we read: "**And hath put all things under His feet** (the feet of Christ - CRS) **and gave Him to be the HEAD over ALL THINGS to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.**" NOTE: Since Christ is the **HEAD OVER all things to**

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the church, this would certainly include the **work** of the church! Unless Christ (Who is the **HEAD**) has **authorized** it, churches have no **right** to engage in such!

The church is **SUBJECT** to Christ! Paul declared: **"Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."** (Eph. 5:24). **NOTE:** Since the church is subject to Christ the Head, the church has **no right** to engage in any work unless Christ the Head **authorizes** it. What Christ the Head **authorizes** is revealed in the Scriptures. (Cf. 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:9-11; 1 Timothy 3:15; James 1:25; 2 John 9).

Jesus as **HEAD** of the church has all power! In Matthew 28:18 Jesus said: **"...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth..."** The word **"power"** as used here is equivalent to **"authority."** In fact, the NASV says **"all authority."** Since Christ has **"all authority"** the church has **no authority** to choose its organization, worship or **work**. Jesus authorizes that which pleases Him. We must read His Word to learn what He authorizes. The church has **no right** to act unless Jesus has authorized it to act!

TEACH THE TRUTH

The church is authorized to teach the truth! In 1 Tim. 3:15 Paul declares that the church is the **"pillar and ground of the truth."** It is the support and stay of the truth! The church in Thessalonica **"sounded out the word of the Lord."** (1 Thess. 1:8). The church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas out to preach the Word! (See Acts 13 and 14). Churches paid **"wages"** to the apostle Paul while he preached the

gospel at Corinth. (See 2 Cor. 11:8). **NOTE:** The church is authorized to preach and teach the gospel – the truth – but not error! Neither is the church authorized to make donations from their treasuries to human organizations (societies to enable them to preach the gospel! Such would be an addition to God's Word since He has not authorized such! The introduction of such in the mid 1900's set brethren at variance with one another, causing many heartaches and divided many churches. Ultimately a new denomination was formed.

EDIFY – PERFECT

The church is authorized to edify, i.e., to perfect the saints! (See Eph. 4:8-16; Acts 9:31). A careful study of 1 Cor. 14 indicates that the activities performed in the assemblies are designed to **edify**. When spiritual gifts were in operation, speaking in tongues (other languages) was prohibited in the assembly **unless** an interpreter was present. Otherwise, edification would not be accomplished. Prophets were to speak one by one that others who were present might be edified. **NOTE:** There is no indication that churches may provide food, fun and frolic in an effort to edify (perfect) Christians spiritually. Neither is there any indication in the Scriptures that food fun and frolic will serve to perfect saints spiritually.

RELIEVE DESTITUTE SAINTS

The church is authorized to relieve destitute saints! The church in Jerusalem relieved needy saints, (See Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35; 6:1-7). Other churches helped relieve needy saints. (See Acts 11:27-30; 1 Cor. 16:1-3; 2 Cor. 8 & 9 and Romans 15:24-32). In 1 Tim. 5:16 Paul said: **"...Let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed."** **NOTE:** There is a vast difference in the church relieving destitute

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UNDERSTANDING THE WILL OF GOD

the Will of God but it is imperative that we do so! Paul said: **“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”** (Eph. 5: 17) NOTE: Since we are enjoined to **understand what the will of the Lord is**, we CAN!

8. In order to understand God’s Will we must “give diligence”. We must read and consider **“what is written.”** (Luke 10:26; Eph. 3:2-6; 2 Tim. 2:7 and 2 Tim. 2:7)

There are some things written in the Scriptures that we may not understand, but we can and must understand “the will of the the Lord”! This is required if we would faithfully serve God!

(CRS)

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saints, edifying the saints (spiritually) and preaching the gospel and in the church providing entertainment, recreation and social activities for young people or anyone else! One is **authorized**; the other is **not!**

Unless we can find **authority in the Scriptures** for churches to provide entertainment, recreation and social activities we must NOT encourage such! (To be continued)

GOSPEL MEETINGS

Airport, W. Columbia, SC, Sept. 15-20, 1996
Palmer Rd., Westland, MI, Oct. 13-20, 1996
Griffith, Griffith, IN, Nov. 10-15, 1996

- SENTENCE SERMONS -

Often it is easy for the unformed to be misinformed.

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Opinions, whether home-grown or received from others, are still opinions.

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It better to be best learned than most learned.

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Admitting that you are wrong is an essential step toward getting right.

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The strait and narrow way is never over-crowded.

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