**The Law of Expediency** *(Aid or Addition?)*

*1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23*

**Introduction**

1. ***“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient” (KJV – 1 Corinthians 6:12)***.
   1. ***Sympherō*** – “(1.) with a reference to the object, to bring together: τί, Acts 19:19. **(2.) with a reference to the subject, ‘to bear together or at the same time; to carry with other's; to collect or contribute in order to help, hence, to help, be profitable, be expedient’”** (Thayer).
   2. **Expediency** – “(1) the quality or state of being suited to the end in view…(4) a means of achieving a particular end” (Merriam-Webster).
2. The “end in view,” or the “particular end” which we are concerned with achieving is, and must be, that which God has commanded, or authorized.
   1. **When we consider expediencies in spiritual matters, we are considering things which are advantageous, i.e. helpful, in carrying out what God requires and desires.**
3. Problems arise when some try to pass a matter for which there is no authority as an expedient.
4. **The question is: is it really an expediency (aid) in carrying out the command of God, or is it an addition to the command? How can we know? 🡪**
5. For a Thing to be Expedient it Must be Lawful
6. Authorization is Necessary
   1. **Colossians 3:17** – We need authority for everything!
   2. **2 John 9** – God is not with those who go beyond Christ’s doctrine.
   3. **Matthew 7:21-23** – Jesus does not know those who act without law, and will command their departure from Him.
   4. **1 Peter 4:11; Hebrews 7:14** – Silence does not give authority, rather it takes it away. (**Prohibits, not permits.)**
7. Only Lawful Things Can Be Expedient
   1. **1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23** – All things that are lawful are not expedient.
      1. The inverse would have to be true – **All things that are expedient are lawful.** *(Like – “all squares are rectangles, but not all rectangles are squares.”)*
      2. Just because a thing is lawful does not mean it is expedient. **However, a thing MUST be lawful to be expedient.**
   2. ***“All things:”***
      1. All things are lawful that are lawful – not a blanket statement
      2. **Matters of liberty (context):**
         1. **1 Corinthians 6:12-13** – Phrase used by Paul, but abused by the Corinthians – sexual immorality is not lawful.
         2. **1 Corinthians 8:4, 8, 9** – Eating meats offered to idols is lawful.
         3. **NOT A REQUIREMENT:**
            1. **Cf. 1 Corinthians 8:8** – We are not better off when we don’t do what God requires, but we are when we do.
            2. ***“but not all things are helpful” (1 Corinthians 10:23)*** – when is it not helpful to do what God requires?
            3. ***“but not all things edify” (1 Corinthians 10:23)*** – when is it not edifying to do what God requires?
         4. **NOT ALL LAWFUL MATTERS OF LIBERTY ARE HELPFUL:**
            1. **1 Corinthians 8:9-13** – Eating meat is a lawful thing, but it is not helpful to your brother, or yourself if it causes the weak to stumble.
            2. **Cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23** – Eating meat is a lawful thing, and may be helpful if it gains the favor of those who are strong. The liberty of NOT eating may be helpful as well.
   3. **A thing can only be rightly called an EXPEDIENCY if it is lawful.**
   4. **A thing that is not lawful cannot possibly be pleasing to God, nor expedient (helpful) – cf. 1 John 3:4 – for those without law are in sin.**
8. For a Thing to be Expedient it Cannot be Specified, and Must Not Alter the Specified
9. Specific/Generic Authority, and Expediencies
   1. **Specific/Generic Authority:**
      1. **Specific (Exclusive)** – A thing specified by God in a command or authorized action only authorizes that thing. All other things are necessarily unauthorized.
      2. **Generic (Inclusive)** – Whatever is necessary or **expedient** in fulfilling a command or authorized action given by God is included.
         1. **Expediencies fall under generic authority – they can be used, or not used – REALM OF MAN’S WISDOM.**
         2. If something is specified it is required, thus not a mere expediency.
   2. **Expediency** – something which aids the fulfilment of a command, or authorized action given by God.
      1. **If something nullifies, replaces, or changes that specified in a command or authorized action of God it IS NOT an expedient. IT IS AN ADDITION.**
      2. *Something cannot be an aid to fulfilling a command or authorized action of God if it changes the command or authorized action rather than fulfilling it.*
10. Examples:
    1. Moses and the Tabernacle:
       1. **Hebrews 8:5** – instructed to make all according to the pattern.
       2. **Pattern** – *typos* – a model (for imitation). (Strong)
       3. A pattern directs toward a specific end. Anything helpful toward that end, but not specified, nor changing the end can be used to execute it.
       4. **The whole concept of a pattern excludes anything that would change the end result from that of which it was patterned to be.**
    2. Noah’s Ark:
       1. **Genesis 6:14-16** – Noah commanded to make an ark, and specifics were included in the command.
       2. **Gopherwood** – not expedient toward the end product, but essential.
          1. **Any other wood** – would change the form and essence – ***“an ark of [another kind of wood]…”***
          2. **Tools to cut the wood** – saw – still gopher wood, still ***“an ark of gopherwood”***
       3. Same with all other specifications.
    3. Nadab and Abihu Offering Fire and Incense:
       1. **Leviticus 10:1-3** – Offered profane fire.
          1. **Profane** – *zûr* – to be a foreigner, strange, profane. (Strong)
          2. Foreign to God’s command – specifications.
       2. More expedient to get the fire from somewhere else? – No, because that changed the pattern commanded by God.
11. Aid (Expediency) or Addition?
12. Evangelism
    1. **Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15** – Command to evangelize, or preach the gospel.
    2. Aid or addition?
       1. ***“Go therefore”*** – how to go? – walk, run, drive, fly? – What is most expedient? (Aid – not specified)
       2. **Who is to “go” and evangelize?**
          1. **Acts 8:3, 4** – the church.
          2. **1 Thessalonians 1:1, 8** – the church.
          3. Missionary Society?
             1. Is an organization separate from the church a mere expediency?
             2. Evangelism is still being executed, so what is the problem? – **it is not according to the pattern** – the church is to evangelize.
             3. The end does not justify the means – the pattern is changed with such an institution.
       3. **What is to be preached?**
          1. **Mark 16:15** – the gospel.
          2. Philosophical, and anecdotal messages of man’s wisdom? – Might attract more crowds – **cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18, 21; 2:1-5**
          3. A change in message or approach to preaching that is additional to the message of the cross is not authorized – not expedient, but an addition.
13. Baptism
    1. **Mark 16:16** – baptism necessary for salvation.
    2. What is baptism?
       1. *baptizō* – to immerse, submerge; to make whelmed. (**cf. Romans 6:4** – burial; **Acts 8:38** – ***“went down into”***)
       2. Element? – water (**cf. John 3:5** – born of water and Spirit)
    3. Aid or addition?
       1. **Baptistry** – aid toward carrying out command to be baptized. (river, lake, sea, pond)
       2. **Sprinkling/pouring** – changes specification to be immersed. (Addition/alteration)
14. Teaching
    1. **Matthew 28:20** – teaching them.
       1. After baptizing them.
       2. ***“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42).***
    2. **Organization?** – Specified as the church **(cf. 1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 4:11-12**).
    3. **Method?** – not specified. (*Public vs. Private; classes distinct from worship – teaching and preaching aren’t exactly the same*) (Class material; ppt; overhead; chalk board)
15. Worship in Song
    1. Command – **Ephesians 5:18-19; Colossians 3:16** – singing.
    2. Aid or addition?
       1. **Song books** – aid – singing is all that is accomplished.
       2. **Instruments** – addition – now playing is added to singing.
16. Oversight (Autonomy)
    1. Command/pattern – **Acts 14:23; 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2** – Every church, ***“among you”*** – autonomous.
    2. Aid or addition?
       1. **One eldership over several congregations?** – Addition to what God has commanded, and violation of autonomy.
       2. **What of those who have no qualified men?** – Can be scripturally unorganized – Not in God’s will to have other elders oversee a flock not ***“among them.”***
       3. **Plurality** – ***“elders”*** – regardless of a thought of expediency in matters pertaining to efficiency.

**Conclusion**

1. God has given us a pattern to adhere to.
2. In adherence to that pattern, there may be things expedient in carrying out God’s will.
3. However, these matters are only expedient if they are authorized.
4. We must ask the question, “Are they truly aids, or additions?”
5. We must abide in the doctrine of Christ, not adding to or taking away.