

## What?—Why?—Is It Scripture?

We constantly make decisions: decisions about how to do this, where to place (or find) that, what is most important on our to-do list, where we will go and when, etc. If we listed all the choices we make in a day (and our reasons for doing so) we could fill a book. So it is with how and when we study the Bible, pray, worship (privately and corporately), and serve. We are constantly making such choices (consciously or out of habit).

The “why” (the reason) we do what we do matters a great deal. For instance, I may give money to the beggar on the street just to “get him off my back” or I may buy him a meal out of compassion for his need. I may be quiet during the Lord’s Supper because it’s expected and I’m thinking about what I will do later, or I may be contemplating that we are one Body in Christ because of His sacrifice.

Each of us, in every generation, must examine the reasons for doing what we do. We must return, time and again, to Scripture to discern what both our motivation and action should be; not simply do without question what has always been practiced. Consider:

Why do we eat the Lord’s Supper on Sunday morning, rather than at noon or in the evening? Why do we use grape juice rather than wine? Why do we have little square pieces or crackers rather than loaves of bread? Why do we sit in pews facing forward rather than around tables? Why are we served row by row front to back or back to front? Why do we make it a mini-bite and sip rather than a meal? Why do we have men/boys only serving the supper? Why do we have a song leader? Why do we have the order of worship we use? Why do we have four-part harmony rather than just the melody? Why do we all sing at once rather than back-and-forth to each other (antiphonally). Why must we all sing at once instead of having someone sing a song of praise or instruction to the rest of us? Why do we judge preacher, song leader, teacher, those leading prayer or presiding at the table on the basis of personality, presentation, and whether he enthuses me, rather than on whether his words are true and from God?

Enough! You get the idea. Have you noticed what all these things have in common—things that we can get mighty worked up over at times? ***Not one of them is based on Scriptural command!*** They are all in the realm of human opinion and preference.

Now, the point: Unless we are scrupulous in our continued study of the Bible, and in our distinction between our opinions and Scripture, we will always be easy targets for the dissension and division Satan desires. When he gets us to focus on such things rather than on the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, he wins.

Dear ones—Satan must never win! And he will not (cannot) win if we are willing to let our human conclusions be measured (and changed wherever necessary) in the crucible of God’s Word. May we worship and serve in Spirit and in Truth, and love one another even (or especially) when our preferences and opinions are different. To God be the glory!

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