



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

Volume 12

February 8, 2026

No. 6

## Use It or Lose It

Whit Sasser

This expression is often heard in regard to physical exercise, when the idea is being promoted that muscles have to be used in order to insure greater use of them in the future. To fail to do so, will tend to slowly lead to muscular atrophy, a loss of what strength you presently have. But the same principle applies to things spiritual as well.

In Mark 4:24-25, Jesus says, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him." When it comes to hearing God's word, understanding it and then applying it, God warns in so many words, "use it or lose it."

We all have some ability to get to know God and His will. We all have opportunities to fulfil the desires of our heart religiously, but if we neglect to use them, we may end up losing even that which we have. Conversely, the more we put into seeking after God, the more we will get out of it and the more we will be equipped for future success.

Ecclesiastes 12 warns mankind to remember the Creator in the days of youth, before the evil days come and there is no interest. We go through changes in our lives, and some not for the better. One such change may be a degenerating interest in spiritual concerns. Don't let this happen to you. Use it, so you don't lose it.

## "He Didn't Say Not To"

Paul Smithson

Everyone should have reverent respect toward God's authority. We must never be presumptuous concerning anything that we do in our worship or in our everyday life. In word or deed we must "do all in the name of the Lord" (Col.3:17), i.e. by His authority. Thus, what one should do in worship to God is not what one "prefers" but what one is authorized to do in the Scriptures.

Jesus said we "must worship in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). To worship "in spirit" is to worship with the proper mindset and attitude. To worship "in truth" is to worship as the truth directs. If God has not directed (authorized) or forbid a particular thing in His word then we must not presume that it is O.K. to go ahead and do it. Neither should we assume that just because a thing was permitted under the Old Covenant that God approves of it today as we live under the New Covenant (Heb. 10:1-9).

Many people practice things in worship which are not authorized in the New Testament such as the playing of instruments, dancing, burning of incense, etc. saying, "They did it in the Old Testament." But where is the authority for these practices in the New Covenant? Why would one practice these things that were permitted under the Old Covenant and not practice others such as offering animal sacrifices, polygamy, etc.?

The most common religious question asked whenever God has not spoken or authorized a particular thing is: "Why can't we if God didn't say not to." The desire or motivation of this question apparently is that one wants to have as broad a liberty as possible to do as many things religiously as he possibly can. But obviously, if one is permitted to practice a thing just because God didn't order us not to, then such reasoning permits one not only to do the few things God has mentioned

in the Bible , but also the limitless things not mentioned in the Bible. In other words, with this kind of reasoning there is no need for the Bible at all, for then it has no authority as one can do anything he desires.

God's silence is non permissive. One cannot do any unmentioned thing, for one specific thing forbids the thing not specifically mentioned. For example, God's command to 'sing' (Eph. 5:19) excludes to play an instrument, which is not authorized in the New Testament for worship.

Someone may ask, "What good then is the Old Testament?" Though we are not under the Old Covenant and must submit to the authority of the New Covenant, there are many lessons that can be learned from the Old Covenant. One important lesson that is seen many times is the very thing we are discussing-- God's silence is non permissive. For example, in Lev. 10:1-2 we read, "Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord." Notice that the problem was not that they obtained fire from where God had ordered them not to obtain it. The problem was they obtained fire from where God "had not commanded." God had specifically told them what to do, but in their reasoning they presumptuously did something that God had not commanded. It resulted in the Lord consuming them with fire. Again, one cannot do any unmentioned thing, for one specific thing forbids the thing not specifically mentioned.

It is important to remember too, that they were performing an act of worship to God. Just because something is done in the name of worship does not mean God will accept it (cf. Mt. 7:21-29). We must worship both "in spirit and truth" doing "all in the name of the Lord (Jn.4:24; Col. 3:17).

## Intellectual Honesty

Robert F. Turner

While in school I had many discussions with my teachers on the subject of Evolution and like materialistic concepts. I was frequently reminded, "Now Mr. Turner, we must maintain intellectual honesty". To this I agree.

But the Prof. viewed man as having the highest peak of intellect, hence the final judge of truth. To him all authority was, in the final analysis, subjective. I, using my intellect, found reason to believe in a higher power, a greater intellect than man's. With such a faith, it is completely reasonable to expect a revelation of His will. This we have in the Bible.

Since God's will is the product of intellect superior to man's, we can only believe the revelation. To expect to prove, by human intelligence, that which transcends man's level, is extremely illogical. Ultimate authority answers only to itself.

In a choice between man's speculative theories and God's revelation, "intellectual honesty" demands that I accept the latter. Further, I must not compromise, or seek to rationalize God's word in an effort to bring this into harmony with man's theories. To do so is less than "intellectual honesty" -- for it stamps my confession of faith with hypocrisy. Nor are these principles limited in application to atheism. If we truly believe in the all-sufficiency of God's word, with the scheme of redemption and divine pattern for the church revealed therein, we can not lightly regard man's tampering with these things. Many who say they believe obedience to the Lord's commands is necessary, ignore his command to be baptized. Others say they believe in congregational independence, yet they condone and support inter-congregational activities -- and prove themselves "intellectually dishonest".

Once God's Word is accepted as our standard in religion the human intellect is limited to interpretive study. We do not seek to judge the law, or our brother -- save by God's law. We wish to understand the law and obey it (JAM.4:11-12). We call upon our brother to do the same, in order to save his soul (1Ti.2:4). We must be honest with ourselves before we will be honest with God and others. **Plain Talk** April 1965