

CLASS

LESSON NUMBER

273 A

# THOUGHT PROVOKING BIBLE STUDIES



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MY NAME

DATE

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## THE DIFFICULT MIDDLE

- Man & The Middle** Man is most comfortable somewhere between two extremes. (a) He makes compelling arguments for the *middle* ground. (b) Being in the *middle* involves compromise so it is less absolutist, therefore seems more reasonable. (c) Its popular acceptance eliminates most doubts and pangs of conscience. (d) It is thought that the *middle* can only possess the best traits of either extreme. (e) The *middle* ground is viewed as the moderate position and Paul said (Phil 4:5) "Let your \_\_\_\_\_ be \_\_\_\_\_ unto \_\_\_\_\_ men." We believe the *middle* position to be tenable when dealing with expediencies and matters of liberty.
- Absolutism vs Relativism** The former means a rule by absolute standards or principles. The latter is a theory that knowledge is relative to the limited nature of the mind and the conditions of knowing; a view that ethical truths depend on the individuals and groups holding them. Jesus prayed (Jn 17:17), "\_\_\_\_\_ them through \_\_\_\_\_: thy \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_." (a) God's word (Ps 119:160) "is \_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_." God's truth is absolute; man's isn't. Anything not absolute is therefore relative. Read the definitions again.
- The Middle Of Absolutism?** Obviously this is a misnomer and we use it only to illustrate that there is no middle ground when something is obviously completely true or altogether false. Elijah asked God's people: (1 Ki 18:21) "How long halt ye \_\_\_\_\_ two opinions? if the \_\_\_\_\_ be God, follow \_\_\_\_\_: but if \_\_\_\_\_, then follow \_\_\_\_\_."
- When Relativism Applies** Caution: We use the word *relativism* advisedly, not so much to define truth as to assess the *rightness* or *wrongness* of certain things. It is true (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23) that many things are \_\_\_\_\_ (ie: not wrong in and of themselves) but when they are not \_\_\_\_\_ (ie: advisable, suitable) they shouldn't be bound as "*all things \_\_\_\_\_ not.*"
- Autonomy & Choice** Individual free moral agency and the autonomy of the local church exist scripturally because every accountable human is responsible to God for his/her personal life choices and as church members for collective expediency within the local church. That's why the *expediencies* and *policies* of one individual or local church can't be forced on their counterparts. (1 Thess 4:11) "And that ye \_\_\_\_\_ to be \_\_\_\_\_, and to do your \_\_\_\_\_, and to work with your own \_\_\_\_\_, as we commanded you."
- More** One man can't select another man's bride. One church can't instruct another church to repaint their garish pink building. Paul asks: (1 Cor 10:29) "Why is my \_\_\_\_\_ judged of another man's \_\_\_\_\_?" It may be permissible upon rare occasions to *suggest* the suitability of a certain lady as a friend's prospective wife, or even for one church to tactfully *suggest* to another that glaring pink is an eyesore. Note that we use the word *suggest*. It is none of our business if the friend chooses a different bride, or the other church keeps its pink building.

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