

It has been said that if you want to know what kind of a person someone is: ride along while they are driving a car. True nature is revealed on the roadways. One very striking example of the mentality of a person in general is watching them approach an intersection where the traffic lights are out. We have all been through a hurricane or two and have seen this play out in the powerless days that follow:

Green Light Mentality: "I'm going. Others better watch out, no light = green light." These folks have no intention of stopping, and nothing less than a puppy in the road will slow them down, if then.

Yellow Light Mentality: "I'm almost certainly going. But I will slow down and take a quick look, but pretty much just to make sure others see me." These folks are much safer, but not to be trusted.

Red Light Mentality: "I will stop, even if I don't see anyone. I will stop because it is the law, and if no one is going, and if it is my turn, then I will proceed." This is the only approach that obeys the law.

Well, what is true in driving mentality is also true of mentalities with regard to religion!

Title: Red Light Religion

Green Light – "If we want to do it in Jesus' name and we believe it is good for us and Him, we will do it. We will not let anything stop us from doing what we believe to be right."

Yellow Light – "If we want to do it in Jesus' name and we believe it is good for us and Him, we will slow down a bit and take a look at some Bible verse, but just the few we need to support the choice."

Red Light – "If we want to do it in Jesus' name and we believe it is good for us and Him, we STOP. We do nothing, until we have examined the Scriptures and found authority for it. Only God can give the Green!

How many here can see that, just as the case of the intersection, two of these approaches are reckless, selfish and even dangerous, while only 1 is Lawful and keeps us right with God?

Example: **Acts 15:1,5** - Religious Authority Issue:

"Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

Green Light: Judaizing teachers had determined this was right and had pressed it through.

Yellow Light: Certainly some stopped to look at Scripture, but just the OT verses needed to support.

Red Light: (this is God's will and the pattern for Bible study). The Apostles and Elders employed this.

Step 1 – STOP - Do not proceed. Do not approve or disapprove at first. (**Acts 15:1,6,12**)

Step 2 – GATHER - What do we know? (**Acts 15:7, 15:12, 15:13-14,17**) Let God reveal authority.

Step 3 – CONCLUDE – (**15:19,22,28**) – The course of action is now clear:

Green Light – Gentiles are saved in Christ

Red Light – Circumcision is required to be saved

Now you might be saying: "Why are we studying that issue? That issue has absolutely no bearing on us today, as we don't have a problem with Judaizing teachers enforcing the Old Law without Truth." That is for the most part true. But Acts 15 is a case where the sum of its parts is stronger than the whole. You see this is the pattern for "Red Light Authority." The way to find truth FROM GOD!

Religious Authority Issue: *"Women Preachers can Teach and Preach the Gospel"*

Green Light: Increasingly churches reason that wise and articulate women are an addition to our preaching and teaching and are therefore, obviously authorized to lead an assembly in study.

Yellow Light: In an effort to support the plan, some will slow down long enough to add some verses.

Acts 18:24-26 – A woman taught a man the Truth, hence in all areas woman can teach.

Again, this is a verse folks slow down long enough to add and then go the way intended.

Red Light: (God's Will) This continues to be God's Church and God's Design and we must See His Plan.

Step 1 – STOP. Do not do anything yet. Do not support men nor women preaching without study.

Step 2 – GATHER. What pattern has God given for Women in Teaching?

Acts 18:24-26 – This passage indicates her presence and input, but doesn't express if she led that discussion and also is not discussing worship assemblies.

I Timothy 2:11-15 – Women have important roles, but not "authority" roles over men.

I Corinthians 14:34-35 – Context is men who were leading an assembly in study. Women have time and places for asking questions and teaching truths, but it is limited here.

Step 3 – CONCLUDE – There is a demanded Scriptural conclusion, regardless of what we want.

Green Light – Women influencing others through teaching and example.

Red Light – Women teaching with authority over men or leading an assembly.

Religious Authority Issue: *“Musical Instruments are Authorized in Church Worship”*

Green Light: Most in the religious world never tap the brakes. It is good. It praises God. People love it.

Yellow Light: Some who approve it have slowed down long enough to look at Bible verses, but they are usually passages taken out of context and used to support what they want to do:

Psalms 100:2-6 – Instrumental Music in Praise

Revelation 5:8-9 – Creatures and Elders have harps for praise in heaven.

○ These two passages, after brief examination, represent “due diligence.”

Red Light: (God’s will) This is His Church and His Worship and must be done His Way.

Step 1 – STOP. Do not proceed. Add no instrument, or even singing until we find His will.

Step 2 – GATHER. What has God revealed for the Church?

Psalms 100 & Revelation 5 aren’t the complete picture and don’t apply to Church Worship.

Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 14:15; Hebrews 13:15

Step 3 – CONCLUDE – Since I am not doing anything unless God gives the Green Light:

Green Light – Singing Psalms of Praise in Worship

Red Light – Mechanical Instruments in Congregational Worship

Now, this simple principle for study will benefit you in determining the worship God has authorized.

Furthermore, it will help you find God’s will for the work of a local church as well.

But it is not limited to these. How do we determine Doctrinal Truth? What mentality drives that?

Religious Authority Issue: *“Salvation in Jesus only requires that you Believe in Him”*

Green Light: Stay off the roads! Folks are going 100mph with this and don’t even have brakes! It feels right. It appeals to emotion. It draws a crowd. This is a widely accepted teaching, no questions asked.

Yellow Light: Most who believe this have slowed down long enough to add some passages:

John 3:16 – “whoever believes shall be saved”

Romans 10:9-10 – “with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness”

○ Now I must give some credit here. These are contextually sound passages to address the topic of salvation in Jesus. However, this perfectly illustrates why “slow down, then proceed” religion is dangerous. You might miss something! This is incomplete!

Red Light: (God’s Will) Grace and Salvation are from the Lord and are received His Way.

Step 1 – STOP - Don’t teach anything on salvation. Don’t react to emotion nor what you know.

Step 2 – GATHER - The sum total of God’s revelation on a topic represents His green light.

John 3:16 and **Romans 9:8-9** are true, but must be harmonized with **James 2:19**.

And Jesus ALSO taught: **Luke 13:5-9** – Repentance. **John 3:5; Mark 16:16** – Baptism.

Revelation 2:10 – Faithfulness unto Death.

Step 3 – CONCLUDE – Again, the sum total of God’s revelation on Salvation is the only Authority.

Green Light – Belief in Jesus is necessary for Salvation.

Red Light – Salvation without Repentance, Baptism and Faithfulness

Conclusion – Why do some people understand the Truth while others live their whole lives in error? The answer has nothing to do with God. He is perfect and His word has the power to save all men.

The answer is the mentality of the individual. If we proceed without Him, we fail. If we proceed with limited knowledge of His ways, we fail. But if we stop, listen and let Him lead the way, we stand.

Is there anyone here at this traffic light of Salvation in Jesus? You have heard His will,

To believe, confess, but also repent, be baptized in water, and walk in faith.

For those things, through His Son, God has given the Green Light. Proceed Now.