

Does Silence of the Scriptures Forbid?

Let me give a popular example of what I am talking about. The New Testament is silent about the use of instrumental music in worship to God. There is plenty of music used in worship to God in the Old Testament but as Colossians 2:14 states, the Old Testament was taken away and nailed to the cross. Since the New Testament says absolutely nothing about using instrumental music in worship services, it is forbidden, because God did not authorize it. Paul said in Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name [with the authority] of the Lord..." However, many people would say adding a piano to worship services is permitted because God did not explicitly forbid it. Which approach do we use when it comes to God and His Word (the Holy Bible)?

Let's take a logical approach to this subject using a grocery list:

I sent my husband to the grocery store with a list. On the list it showed:

- Milk
- Bread
- Butter
- Eggs

Scenario 1: My husband came home with:

- Coke
- Ice Cream
- Cookies
- Potato chips

Did my husband comply with my instructions?

No. He did not get **anything** I explicitly requested. He went to the grocery store but he only got what he wanted.

Scenario 2: My husband came home with:

- Milk
- Bread
- Butter

Did my husband comply with my instructions?

No. He did not get **everything** I explicitly requested. He got some of the items but he did not get the eggs.

Scenario 3: My husband came home with:

- Milk
- Bread
- Butter
- Eggs
- ***Cookies***

Did my husband comply with my instructions?

No. He **added an additional item** that I did not request. –OR–

Yes. He got everything on the list and I did not explicitly forbid him from getting anything else.

Uh oh! Which is it?

Did my silence about cookies forbid him from getting cookies?

Did my silence about cookies permit him to get cookies?

It depends on if I was truly silent or not. If I gave him the list with no other instructions, then I see no issue with him getting the cookies. However, if I gave him the list and told him that:

1. The list was complete and would fully equip him for the grocery shopping task.
2. The list contained all things that pertained to his grocery store trip.
3. He was not to add to the list or take anything from it.

Then what would be the answer to Scenario 3?

The answer would be no. My husband did not comply with my instructions because, although I was silent about cookies, I was not silent about my silence. I was pretty explicit with my instructions and he added an item to the grocery list which was a direct violation of my instructions. I did not have to say, “Do not get cookies” in order for him to be violating my instructions.

Now let’s turn this conversation back to God and His Word:

God gave us a book (the Holy Bible) and in that book it says:

1. It is complete and fully equips me for every good work.
 - a. II Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
2. It contains all things that pertain to life and godliness.
 - a. II Peter 1:3, “as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.”
3. That I am not to add to or take away from God’s words.
 - a. Deuteronomy 4:2ff, “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.”
 - b. Proverbs 30:5ff, “Every word of God is pure...Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.”
 - c. Revelation 22:18, “If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

God may be silent about specific things, like instrumental music in worship, but He most certainly is not silent about His silence! Do not add to His Word. Do not take away from His Word. His Word is complete and provides us with everything that we need to be an obedient child of God. If a word or deed is not in God’s Word then how can it be a good work?