



TRADITION

Good or Bad?

Tradition...

- It is a part of our lives.
 - National holidays
 - Birthdays & anniversaries
 - Family events
 - Regular activities
- Some view traditions with greater importance/enthusiasm than others
- Traditions are a part of religion and have been since the early history of man

Tradition...

- In this lesson, we want to address tradition from a Biblical perspective
 - Is it good or bad?
 - What does the Bible say about it?
 - How does this relate to our study of authority?
- When is tradition
 - 1) necessary?
 - 2) optional?
 - 3) forbidden?

What is Tradition?

- American Heritage Dictionary
(www.dictionary.com)

1) The passing down of elements of a culture from generation to generation, esp. orally

2) A mode of thought or behavior followed by a people continually from generation to generation (a custom)

What is Tradition?

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3) A set of such customs and usages viewed as a coherent body of precedents influencing the present (heritage)

4) A precept or a body of precepts that are not written in the sacred book of a religion, such as the Bible, but are considered holy or true.

What is Tradition?

- Tradition, within itself is neither good or bad.
- The Bible talks about both. It depends upon the purpose and whether or not it is based upon properly established authority.

What is Tradition?

- Many religions today appeal to tradition for their practices.
- Roman Catholicism holds tradition EQUAL to scripture. *Catholics, on the other hand, recognize that the true “rule of faith”—as expressed in the Bible itself—is Scripture plus apostolic tradition, as manifested in the living teaching authority of the Catholic Church, to which were entrusted the oral teachings of Jesus and the apostles, along with the authority to interpret Scripture correctly.*
www.catholic.com, “Scripture and Tradition” (Tract)

Tradition in the Bible

- The Greek word, παράδοσις (paradosis), is found 13 times in the NT, always translated “tradition”.
1 Peter 1:18 is also a derivative of this same word
- Defined as something that has been handed down, whether orally or in writing.
“The act of delivering over from one to another”
(Bullinger)
“A giving over which is done by word of mouth or in writing” (Thayer)

Tradition in the Bible – improper usage

- **Mark 7:1-13 (Matthew 15:2-6)** Jesus is challenged for His disciples not washing their hands before eating.
 - **2** – they found fault
 - **3-4** - Their traditions explained
 - **6-7** – Jesus quotes **Isaiah 29:13**
 - **8-9** – they laid aside & rejected God's command to hold to their traditions

Tradition in the Bible – improper usage

- **Mark 7:1-13 (Matthew 15:2-6)** Jesus is challenged for His disciples not washing their hands before eating.
 - **10-12** – another example of tradition making a “loophole” against keeping God’s laws. (**Exodus 20:12, 21:17**)
 - **13** – their traditions nullified God’s word. They dismissed or contradicted God’s laws.

Tradition in the Bible – improper usage

- **Galatians 1:14** – Paul’s former life as a Jewish leader put their traditions above God’s laws
(NOTE: He thought he was doing the right thing – **Acts 23:1, 26:9-11**)
- **Colossians 2:8** – traditions of men can “cheat you” of relationship with Christ. These are based on philosophy, empty deceit, and worldly principles.

Tradition in the Bible – improper usage

- **1 Peter 1:18** – we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, based on His word, which is not like corruptible things passed down from previous generations
(Do we let lifestyle crowd out devotion to God?)
- **Matthew 23:4 (vs. 16-22)** – another example of their corrupt “traditions”

Tradition in the Bible – improper usage

- When men change God's laws, by adding, subtracting or reinterpreting what He says, and treating it as if it is authorized and encouraging others to accept it – such traditions are condemned and **MUST** be rejected.

Whether done in ignorance or for selfish motives, it is **STILL** error!

Tradition in the Bible – proper usage

- 1 Corinthians 11:2 – keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.

NOTE: “just as” implying there is a SET pattern.

Tradition in the Bible – proper usage

- **2 Thessalonians 2:15** – stand fast and hold the traditions you were taught, whether by word or our epistle (verbal or writing)
Do NOT let go of God's established pattern!
- **2 Thessalonians 3:6** – withdraw from one who walks disorderly and reject the “tradition received from us”
IS it important that keep God's pattern?

Tradition in the Bible – proper usage

- WHAT traditions was Paul talking about?
 - **1 Corinthians 2:10-13** – that which God revealed through His spirit
- **Galatians 1:6-9** – there is only ONE gospel. To teach anything else should be rejected. Note **vs. 11-12** – not received from man... through revelation

Tradition in the Bible – proper usage

- WHAT traditions was Paul talking about?
- **1 Corinthians 11:23** – “I received from the Lord...”
- * Paul’s oral teachings were not different than his letters!

Tradition in the Bible – proper usage

- Other writers:
- **John 9-10** – to transgress the doctrine of Christ is to not have God. Reject the one bringing a different doctrine.
- **1 Peter 4:11** – speak as the oracles (utterances – meaningful teachings) of God

Tradition in the Bible – proper usage

- Consider also:
- **John 20:30-31** – what is written is sufficient for us to believe and have life
- **2 Timothy 3:16-17** – all scripture inspired of God is profitable to make us complete.
- **Ephesians 3:2-4** – Paul wrote about what had been revealed to him

Tradition -Some applications

- We ALWAYS need to let God's word determine what we believe and practice.
- Colossians 2:6-8, 2 Timothy 2:15, Jude 3 – contend for that faith which was “once for all delivered to the saints”
- God's written word is the ONLY sure standard that WE have!

Tradition -Some applications

- We must NOT let the teachings of men dismiss God's writings.

Do not think more highly of men than we ought – **1 Corinthians 4:6**, do not think beyond what is written.

What is Tradition?

- It does not matter how long something has been taught. Consider:
 - sprinkling for baptism
 - instrumental music
 - “attend the church of your choice”
 - the social gospel – adding works to the church
 - Christmas as a religious holiday

NONE of these are found in scripture, but many assume they are there!

WHEN something is older than we are, we assume it has always been there!

Tradition -Some applications

- Typically, when we appeal to tradition, it is not a one-time action. It becomes a pattern to dismiss anything we do not like.

Tradition -Some applications

- NOTE: There are things we do by tradition that are not wrong within themselves
 - service times and days (Wednesday night, multiple services on Sunday)
 - order of services
- Such are not wrong because we are authorized to determine these factors (generic authority)
- BUT, we CANNOT bind these on others.
- We should NOT let tradition keep us from progressing (e.g., “we’ve always done it this way”)

Tradition – Concluding thoughts

- So, is tradition important?
Yes! We do some things “by tradition” for the sake of orderliness (**cf. 1 Corinthians 14:40**).
- The “traditions” of the apostles and other NT writers are NOT subject to discussion (**cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:13**)
- It is when tradition conflicts/contradicts/rejects God’s law that it must be rejected

Tradition - Concluding thoughts

- We need tradition in our lives.
If the Christian faith is a habit to you, there will be some tradition.
 - IF it is based upon God's word – keep it!
 - IF not, put Jesus first, even before yourself!
- Just KNOW what the origin of your traditions are and act accordingly.

Are you faithfully holding
to the traditions of the
Lord?



Let us pray