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What Are Traditions?

Traditions are customs, teachings, or religious practices that originate from human sources rather than from the Word of God. These are often handed down from generation to generation and can shape how people worship or understand their faith.

While some traditions may appear harmless or even helpful, others can **directly contradict Scripture** and lead believers away from true biblical doctrine.

1. Harmless vs. Harmful Traditions

The Bible doesn't condemn all traditions. There are some traditions that, while not commanded in Scripture, may still be practiced in a way that **honors Christ**, provided they don't replace or override God's commands.

□ Example of a Harmless Tradition: Celebrating the Resurrection

One such example is the **commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ** (commonly known as Easter). Nowhere in the Bible are we

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commanded to set aside one day each year for this celebration.

However, if a believer chooses to reflect on Christ's resurrection with spiritual understanding and gratitude, this is not sinful. At the same time, those who do not observe this day are not in error either.

The Apostle Paul addressed similar matters in Romans 14:5-6 (NKJV):

"One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.
He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord..."

This demonstrates **Christian liberty** in non-essential matters what we might call "**non-salvific**" traditions.

2. Examples of Dangerous or Unbiblical Traditions

While some traditions are neutral, others are **spiritually harmful**,

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especially when they contradict or replace clear biblical doctrine. Jesus often rebuked religious leaders for clinging to such traditions.

□ Example: Veneration of Saints and Eucharistic Rituals

In Roman Catholicism, the **veneration of saints** and the **celebration of the Eucharist as a repeated sacrifice** are practiced widely. However, Scripture is clear that Jesus' **sacrifice was once for all** and should not be repeated (Hebrews 10:10-12).

Hebrews 10:14 (NKJV):

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."

Venerating saints or using statues and icons in worship also violates God's command:

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Exodus 20:4-5 (NKJV):

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image... You shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God...”

This is a form of **idolatry**, even if practiced with religious intent. Worship must be directed to **God alone** through Christ and by the Spirit (John 4:24).

□ **Example: Infant Baptism**

Another widely accepted but **unscriptural tradition** is the **baptism of infants**. In the New Testament, **baptism always follows personal repentance and faith** a conscious decision to follow Christ.

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Acts 2:38 (NKJV):

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ...”

Infants cannot repent or believe, and therefore, **baptizing them contradicts the biblical model**. Jesus did bless children by laying hands on them (Mark 10:13–16), but He did **not baptize them**.

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Mark 7:7-9, 13 (NKJV):

"And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.

For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men...

You reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition...

Making the word of God of no effect through your tradition..."

A specific example He gave was the misuse of the "**Korban**" rule, where someone would declare their possessions "dedicated to God" to avoid helping their parents. This violated the fifth commandment to honor one's father and mother (Exodus 20:12).

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Traditions like these **nullify God's law**, replacing divine truth with religious pretense.

4. Paul's Warning Against Human Philosophy

The Apostle Paul also warned the early Church not to be enslaved by human traditions and philosophies, which are **not rooted in Christ**.

Colossians 2:8-9 (ESV):

"See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily."

Many traditions may appear wise or religious, but they can easily become **a trap** that leads people away from the simplicity of the Gospel (2 Corinthians 11:3).

□ Final Conclusion

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We don't need man-made traditions to live godly lives or to see God. In fact, many traditions hinder people from knowing the truth. Believers are called to live by the **Word of God alone**, not by religious customs that originated with men.

Let us therefore **test every tradition by Scripture**, and hold fast only to what aligns with Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 (NKJV):

"Test all things; hold fast what is good."

May the Lord give us discernment to reject human traditions that oppose the truth, and grace to remain faithful to His unchanging Word.

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