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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

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are we 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

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While some traditions are neutral, others are spiritually harmful, 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):

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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).

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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):

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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.

3. What Jesus Taught About Traditions

Jesus warned about the spiritual danger of elevating man-made traditions above God's Word. Religious leaders in His day were guilty of this, and He rebuked them sharply:

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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).

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

4. Paul’s Warning Against Human Philosophy

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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):

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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

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.

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