



## TRUTH VS. TRADITION

Jim Stauffer

Jesus best illustrated this contrast in Matthew chapter 15. He was asked, **Mat. 15:2** *Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.* His reply was, to teach them this tradition they spoke of transgressed God's command and therefore did not come from God but from man. **Mat. 15:3** *And he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?* The obvious question His reply raised was which is the greater transgression?

The Greek word for tradition here, *paradosis*, literally means "a handing down or on", to hand over, deliver", therefore the translation, tradition. Now we all honor certain traditions in life. They usually come from our ancestors. However, if we learn a certain tradition is unhealthy or dangerous we soon recognize the difference between its value and that of the truth. The source of their tradition of hand washing was not the Law God gave Moses in Mount Sinai, but instead traditional instruction from their ancestors apart from the Law. Jesus was teaching them the difference and how the Law should supersede human tradition.

Paul used the very same word when he spoke to the Thessalonians, **2 Th. 2:15** *So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours.* The difference in the usage is the reference he makes. He admonishes them to hold dear the "traditions", the teaching authorized and directed by the Holy Spirit.

Now we understand that the truths of God can be held traditionally by His people but they are not held because our "fathers" gave them to us, but because they came from God to our fathers.

It behooves each of us to know and

understand the sources of the things we believe and hold dear. It is as simple as our everyday challenges in other aspects of life; sorting fact from fiction.

There is no harm in honoring our ancestors by carrying on family traditions as long as they do not, "transgress the commandment of God."

Now this should be helpful to both the Bible teacher and the Bible student. The teacher must show patience and allow the student sufficient space to learn to discern between truth and tradition. Then, there is the other side of the coin. The student must be committed to learning God's word and the respect for it that will cause him to reject any tradition that violates it.

Jesus went further in His teaching on this occasion and made the point that it was not what went into the mouth of a man that defiled him. It was the things that came out of his mouth, that originated in his heart that would defile him. (see **Mat. 15:10-20**)

You see, He pursues His subtle point that the value of the thing believed is what should attract one to follow it.

The writer of Proverbs said, **Prov. 23:23** *Buy the truth, and sell it not; Yea, wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.* There is nothing of greater value than the truth. The apostle Paul recognized that in his personal choices. **Phil. 3:7** *Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ.*

Ask yourself if you can expect to receive the same prize with a lesser price? **Mat. 16:26** *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

# The Psalmist's Soul-Winning Formula

Edward O. Bragwell Sr.

*"Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You." -- Psalms 51:12,13 (NKJV).*

The Psalmist may be saying that if the Lord restores the joy of his salvation then he promises to teach transgressors. Or he may be saying that when the joy of salvation is restored teaching transgressors will naturally follow. In either case, sinners will be converted.

Answers to why we are not converting more to Christ are offered by the dozens. "How to" instructions abound. Several preachers specialize in "soul-winning techniques". "Specials" are held from time to time to consider the matter. Book stores stock books and kits that are supposed to tell us how to make virtually every Christian an effective soul-winner. Yet, all the above combined produce meager results. Even what appear to be spectacular results often turn out to be nothing more than a mirage -- a flash in the pan.

All this somewhat reminds me of a story that I heard several years ago about a company trying to increase its sales. They hired an expensive sales expert to lecture their salesmen on sales organization and technique. Their experienced salesmen and new recruits were required to attend so they, too, could become experts. The expert unveiled his plan. He demonstrated his sure-fire technique. He organized the territories complete with a wall map with pins placed at strategic points to illustrate the salesmen, customers and potential customers. He had refined his program to a fine art. During his lecture he spotted an old salesman sitting over in the corner who was reputed to have been the top salesman for the company over several years. After, proudly and with fan fare, presenting his technique he asked the old salesman if he had any words of encouragement or advice that he might add to what had been said. The old salesman replied, "Yes, take all those pins out of that map and stick them into the salesmen!"

Could it be that our problem in teaching transgressors the Lord's way and thus converting them to Lord is not so much poor methods, materials, and facilities as it is poor motivation with no proper foundation? It may be that the joy of our own salvation is the missing element. Pep rallies and motivational hype on the subject of soul-winning may stir brethren into spurts of action, even producing some results. A sustained effort and lasting results will likely come from one who really knows both the

plan and joy of salvation. Such a one understands what it means to be lost. He knows what it means to be saved. His knowledge is not based on fleeting feelings but on a knowledge of what God's word teaches on damnation and salvation. His joy is not the superficial cart wheel turning, hand clapping, "praise the Lord" shouting variety, but a far deeper joy of thankfulness, knowing that he has been delivered from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. One with such joy understands what it means to no longer be a sinner alienated from God. He understands God's plan of salvation. He understands what the Bible teaches about being a Christian. His joy is produced by that understanding and his knowing that his life is now in harmony with that understanding. Thus, he wants others to know what he knows and do what he has done to be saved -- and is doing to stay saved. His genuine faith in the promises and blessings in Christ produces the joy of salvation that leads him to teach transgressors the Lord's ways so that they can enjoy what he enjoys.

Brethren filled with the knowledge and joy of salvation will find ways (or techniques) to teach others consistent with their own temperaments and abilities and of those they are trying to reach. Their methods may vary widely but their message and results will be the same - the gospel will be taught and sinners will be converted.

It may well be that the best personal work program that a church can develop is to set about to restore that genuine joy of salvation to its membership by building them up in the faith through teaching.

## THE PURPOSE OF OBEDIENCE

God is fitting and preparing us for eternal habitation with Him. In heaven God's will must reign supreme, otherwise confusion and disorder will prevail. In heaven they serve Him (Rev. 7:15; 22:3). Joyful, loving obedience will be there, but it must be learned here. Here we form our characters. God is seeking in His preparatory school to train us in the art of obedience. "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth" (Mat. 6:10). No man can sincerely make that petition to God unless he is willing for God's will to reign supreme in his own heart. No one in heaven will urge that some of God's commandments are non-essential. Such characters will not be there.

**R.L. Whiteside**

# 8 Rules for Bible Study

R.C. Archer

## Introduction

*"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).* Here, Paul tells Timothy how important it is to study God's word. This leads to an understanding of what God wants from us so we can be approved in his sight. The following is a list of rules that should be followed when studying the Bible so that we can divide the word of truth correctly.

### 1. Be objective -- seek the truth.

If we read the bible with preconceived ideas, or with the purpose of proving our own beliefs, we will not find the truth. Paul warns us of the consequences of not seeking the truth:

*"And with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).*

The purpose of our study, therefore, must be to seek the truth.

### 2. Reach a conclusion only after you have studied what the entire Bible says about the subject.

Much error has been taught concerning salvation because people have failed to follow this rule. For instance, some read what the Bible says about faith and conclude that man is saved by faith only. If they would examine all the Bible says about salvation they would find that it takes more than faith alone. (Read Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, 1 Peter 3:21, Acts 22:16.)

### 3. Rightly divide the Bible.

The law of Moses is not binding on us today (Colossians 2:14), therefore, do not look in the law of Moses for the plan of salvation or for our responsibility in this age. If you want to know what to do to be saved, read the book of Acts. If you want to know how to live, read the epistles. If you want to establish faith, read the gospels.

### 4. Determine who is speaking.

Inspired men wrote the Bible, but they sometimes quoted uninspired men. For example, Luke quotes Gamaliel's advice to the Sanhedrin: *"And now I say to you, Keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it lest you even be found to fight against God" (Acts 5:38-39).*

Some have erroneously concluded from Gamaliel's statement that we should not fight error. But, since Luke only quoted this uninspired advice, it is not to be our practice. An inspired man, Jude, instructs us to *"contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3).*

### 5. Determine to whom it is spoken.

God's command to Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac on an altar (Genesis 22:2) is obviously not binding upon us today. Let us make sure that God is talking to us.

### 6. Interpret each passage in the light of its context.

For example, in 1 Corinthians 7:7, Paul says, *"For I would that all men are even as myself"* (i.e. unmarried). Does Paul command that we should be unmarried? A reading of the surrounding verses explains why he made such a statement. In verse 26, he says, *"I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress."* The present distress was the severe persecution that existed then. So, if we just read the context we will avoid many misunderstandings.

### 7. Never interpret a passage so as to contradict another passage.

For example, if we conclude from Romans 5:1 (*"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"*) that man is saved by faith only, it will contradict James 2:24 (*"You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only"*).

To harmonize these passages, we must conclude that man is saved by faith that works. If your interpretation of a passage contradicts another, then you know that your interpretation is wrong.

### 8. Use standard helps in understanding the Bible.

The following things will help:

- A good English dictionary will help us understand the meaning of words today.
- A good Bible dictionary will help us understand the meaning of Bible words.
- A concordance is helpful in looking up passages on the same topic.
- Another translation will help. Comparing the King James Version with the American Standard or the Revised Standard translation helps our understanding.

### Conclusion

The Bible is the greatest book in the world. We can understand it. Let us begin to study it.

**Eph. 2:19** So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

**1Pet. 2:9** But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

### **HOURS OF WORSHIP**

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study  
Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship  
Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship  
Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

**Visitors welcome**

**We conduct in home Bible Studies**

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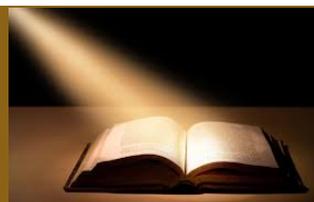
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### **NEWS AND NOTES:**

#### **SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:**

JAN PATRICK, MARY CZIRR, CANDISS CASON AND ALMA BAUMGARTNER. J.R. DANIEL CONTINUES HIS RECOVERY AT HOME WHILE LILLIE KEECH IS RECEIVING THERAPY AT PROVIDENCE PLACE. ANDY AND AMANDA PETERSON WELCOMED SEAN PATRICK INTO THIS WORLD SATURDAY, 2/8/14.

OUR BIBLE CLASS ON SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY IS FINISHING NAHUM AND WILL BEGIN HABAKKUK.



### **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Baptism** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10