

Doctrines and Commandments of Men

Many things we have been taught from the Bible actually do not apply to us. They were given to God's people in the past, or are written down to instruct God's people in the future. If we rightly divide the scriptures, separating the information given to others from the information given to us, we will focus on the letters written by the Apostle Paul—Romans through Philemon—in the New Testament.

2 Timothy 2:15 (page 1115)

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Some things that are taught in churches are simply things based on tradition or someone's interpretation of what should be done. They cannot even be found in the Bible! The book of Proverbs warns us twice about things that seem right to us.

Proverbs 14:12 (page 622)

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Proverbs 16:25 (page 624)

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man,
but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Knowing this, it is good to take a look at everything we have been taught, especially what we practice at our churches, to see if it is even in the Bible, and if it is, is it something that applies to us.

An internet search quickly shows that almost all churches, in their doctrinal statements, will use the writings of men as well as the writings of God to instruct church members about what God wants from them! Following are some samples.

Catholic Church: The Three-Legged Stool

The three-legged stool of the Catholic Church consists of: Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the Magisterium. Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture together make up the Deposit of Faith, handed down by the Apostles to their successors, continuing down the ages to our own day.

The Magisterium is the teaching authority of the Church which guards, defends and interprets the

Deposit of Faith. The removal of even one of the three causes the collapse of the stool, with the resultant fall of anyone trying to sit on said stool.

The Methodist Church

The doctrines of the evangelical faith which Methodism has held from the beginning and still holds are based upon the divine revelation recorded in the Holy Scriptures. The Methodist Church acknowledges this revelation as the supreme rule of faith and practice. These evangelical doctrines to which the preachers of the Methodist Church are pledged are contained in Wesley's Notes on the New Testament and the first four volumes of his sermons.

Lutheran Church

The ELCA's official Confession of Faith identifies the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (commonly called the Bible); the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds; and the Lutheran confessional writings in the Book of Concord as the basis for their teaching. ELCA congregations make the same affirmation in their governing documents, and ELCA pastors and deacons

promise to carry out their ministry in accordance with these teaching sources.

Presbyterian Church

The first part of the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is the Book of Confessions, which contains 11 formal statements of faith structured as creeds, confessions and catechisms. Elders throughout the denomination, training for leadership, study each of the confessions, its historical origins, and its theological emphases. Their candidates for ministry must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the confessions on ordination exams and before their presbyteries.

Church of Christ

The Church of Christ is an independent Christian congregation consisting of various churches joined together by their distinct beliefs and practices, based on their interpretation of the Bible.

These churches reject all doctrinal writings that do not go along with their interpretations and all religious creeds. They use the New Testament to set their doctrines and practices,

citing examples from the early Christian church in the book of Acts.

Baptist Church

For Baptists the Bible is the sole written authority for faith and practice. Baptists believe that the Bible teaches that only persons who have been born again should be members of a church. This new birth does not come by merely reciting facts about Jesus but by a genuine experience of faith in him.

Baptists come the closest to keeping their beliefs based only on the Bible, still they cannot resist adding their own doctrines. The Baptist church requires that a person be “born again” to join. How does that correspond to what the Bible teaches us?

What did Jesus tell Nicodemus about what it was to be born again?

John 3:3-5 (page 988)

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.** Nicodemus

saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit**, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

The term “born again,” as it is used in the Bible, does not apply to us. The passage, like many in the Bible, defines itself. Being “born again” applied to the Jews who were repenting and being baptized by John the Baptist (water) for their sins, in preparation for the baptism of the Holy Ghost that Jesus would bring (the spirit.)

Since the term “born again” was for the Jews, we have to go to the internet to find out what the doctrines of men say about being “born again” today. BillyGraham.org says that a born-again Christian is someone who has repented of their sins and turned to Christ for their salvation, and as a result has become part of God’s family forever. All this takes place as God’s Spirit works in our lives.

Could you explain that to anyone? Did you see anything about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as payment for our sins in the verse above?

Remember, we do not have to repent of our sins, merely accept Christ's forgiveness for our sins.

Ephesians 4:32 (page 1095)

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as **God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**

We are not saved by being "born again" (as were the Jews in Jesus' day,) but by believing that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (page 1075)

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you **the gospel** which I preached unto you, **which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved**, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how **that Christ died for**

our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Here is what the Bible actually says about church membership today. We are all members of one body, the Church, the body of Christ. Extra membership requirements imposed by people in other churches are doctrines of men.

Romans 12:4-5 (page 1060)

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So **we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.**

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (page 1072-1073)

For as **the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,** whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Let's take a look at what Jesus said about the doctrines and commandments of men. Jesus taught that we cannot live by simply eating. Knowing God's word is as important to live as eating! We cannot live without it!

Matthew 4:4 (page 893)

But he answered and said, It is written, **Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**

Jesus asked the scribes and Pharisees why they put their traditions ahead of God's word.

Matthew 15:3 (page 907)

But he answered and said unto them, Why do **ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?**

They were teaching their own commandments as God's word!

Matthew 15:7-9 (page 907)

Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. **But in vain they**

do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Jesus said that the Jewish leadership had rejected God's commandments and kept their own traditions. This resulted in making the word of God ineffective.

Mark 7:8-9, 13 (page 934)

For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, **Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.**

¹³**Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition,** which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

As you have seen from an internet search, man is still putting out doctrines as equal to, or even more important than, God's word!

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 (page 1065)

And my speech and **my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom,** but in

demonstration of the Spirit and of power: **That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.**

Colossians 2:8-9 (page 1098)

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Titus 1:13-14 (page 1117)

This witness is true. Wherefore **rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men,** that turn from the truth.