

## RELIGION OR RELATIONSHIP?

St. Mark 7:1-9

We are living in a day when religion and tradition are destroying many of our local churches. While we recognize the fact that the gates of hell shall not prevail against Christ's church, many believers are not able to reach their maximum potential in Christ because religion and tradition have been a major hindrance.

God's original plan from the beginning was to establish a relationship with man. He created us in his own image and likeness that we may be able to commune with him. He wanted to establish a Kingdom and not just a religious organization. He wants a personal and intimate relationship with his people.

The bible tells us that in the Garden of Eden, God would commune with Adam in a personal way. After Adam sinned, God asked, "*Adam where art thou?*" It was not that God did not know where Adam was positionally, he really wanted to know, why he wasn't in place for their communion.

God is still seeking to have a relationship with his people. But in order for us to have a relationship with God, we have to understand who he really is and who we are in him, or else we will just be people that are religious with a form of Godliness.

### Religion:

Religion is man's search for God.

It is an organized system of doctrine with an approved pattern of behavior and a proper form of worship.

### Relationship:

Close connection by blood or marriage; kinship.

### Tradition:

The handing down orally of stories, beliefs, customs, etc. from generation to generation.

In this lesson (St. Mark 7: 1-9), Jesus rebuked the Scribes and the Pharisees. He actually called them hypocrites. They were filled with a “form of Godliness” that amounted only to lip service. Jesus said it like this, ***“This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.”*** (St. Mark 7:6) He told them that they were very careful to keep their own traditions but that they were unconcerned about the Commandments of God. He also said that they worshipped him in vain.

There are many believers and many churches that live in bondage to tradition/religion to the point that they never really experience the freedom that is in Christ Jesus. Although there are some traditions that we should hold on to, there are many that we should have gotten rid of a long time ago.

The question is: When do you let them go? The answer is: When you realize that in keeping them, you are making the word of God of non effect. You let them go when you realize that they have no scriptural basis. You let them go when you realize that in keeping them, you find yourself not moving forward spiritually because they are unprofitable.

There are churches that are doing such a terrible injustice to their parishioners by insisting that they hold on to things that are totally unprofitable. Doctrines that are man-made and have absolutely no scriptural basis.

#### THE FOLLOWING ARE SCRIPTURES WHERE JESUS REBUKES TRADITION:

But he answered and said unto them, ***“Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?”*** (St. Matthew 15:3)

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. (St. Mark 7:8)

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. (Colossians 2:8)

Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth (Titus 1:14).

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; (I Peter 1:18)

In these last days, it behooves us to have a relationship with God built upon his Holy Word and not after the traditions of men that is based on man-made rules and regulations that have no scriptural basis. If we want to walk in victory and continue to grow in the grace and in the knowledge of God, we must live a life based on the word of God.

Religion and man-made traditions cannot bring us into the realm of spiritual maturity. It cannot produce healing or miracles It cannot produce the anointing or give us peace. We must live and confess the word of God over our lives and concerning our situations and experience the peace from having an intimate and real relationship with our creator. There is no life more noble or no life more amazing than one where we live in a true relationship with God.