

Nothing But The Word

Jesus asked some religious leaders of his day, “Why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?” (Matthew 15:3). These were not people who consciously determined to break God’s law. It seems they were determined not to break his law and protect it from violation. However, in that process, they made more laws—“traditions”—that not only went beyond God’s revealed will, but induced people to either neglect that will or even transgress it. Jesus said these “commandments of men” caused the people to “nullify the word of God” and “worship him in vain” (Matthew 15:6-9).

Similarly, some professing “Christians” may also be guilty. The history of the church is replete with councils, conclaves, diets, and synods formulating canons, creeds, dogmas, and articles of faith that become tests of fellowship among followers of the same Bible. This is not to impugn motives or criticize objectives. Presumably they were attempts to interpret God’s word accurately to ensure proper keeping, to protect from violation. However, in that process, commandments of men—“traditions”—have caused many to “nullify the word of God” and “worship him in vain.” This seems clear because at least some human traditions disagree among themselves, and with clear teaching in the Bible.

What can we do? We can awaken from our dogmatic slumber, consider the possibility we are wrong, flee the commandments of men, and get back to the Bible. Let our only creed be “nothing but the Word.”