



The Good News

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Holding God's Commands in Reverence

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When God gave His Law to the children of Israel, He told them in **Deut. 4:2** not to add or take away from any of the commands that He had spoken. We find later, in the New Testament, that the Jewish elders and leaders had done precisely what God had commanded them not to do, commanding obedience to the traditions of men as if they were commandments from God. We find on numerous occasions that Jesus called them hypocrites because they did exactly the opposite of what they claimed to do in following the Mosaic Law. We can see that the scribes and elders of the people became more interested in promoting their own agenda than holding the commands of God in the highest esteem and reverence. People today are not all that different. While we are under a New Law with different commands, people will often go out of their way to justify doing exactly as they want to do, regardless of what God says about it. Consider with me three situations when people of the world (and sometimes even Christians) often decide that they want to add or subtract from what God has said:

Sexual Conduct: God makes His commands very clear through Paul as he writes to the Corinthians in **I Cor. 6:9-11**. Among the individuals that Paul says will not inherit the kingdom, he identifies fornicators, adulterers, homosexuals, and Sodomites. A fornicator is a non-married person who has physical sexual interaction with a married or non-married person. An adulterer is one who is married that has physical sexual interaction with someone other than their spouse that may be married or non-married. As we come to homosexuals and Sodomites, some may ask "What's the difference?" The term "Sodomite" represents those who engage in physical sexual interaction with those of the same gender. The term "homosexual" is defined as "effeminate", or those who act and conduct themselves as if they were the opposite sex (this includes "transgender"). In considering this list, we find that society as a whole sees those who commit these sins as the norm. Society is no longer shocked or appalled by those who engage in these acts. Those that consider this conduct

to be sinful are derided, persecuted, and parodied by most in society and media. And yet, God makes His thoughts clear concerning these sins. In **I Thess. 4:1-8**, Paul makes it clear that "homosexual by birth" is no excuse as we are expected by God to control our feelings and desires to be in submission to God.

Worship: In **John 4:24**, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that those who wish to worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth. The New Testament goes on to command and describe by example (which is the basis of necessary inference) how the church that belongs to Christ is to conduct itself in its worship and work. Yet, there are those that take the elements of worship and turn them into something God never authorized. There are those that turn singing into playing musical instruments, teaching into a woman standing in the pulpit, and the Lord's Supper into a production designed to feed and/or entertain. Churches in the world have embraced organizational doctrines that are never defined in the New Testament, and people all around the world often embrace religion as a matter of convenience and entertainment than the worship and service of God.

Salvation: In **Acts 8:12**, Phillip taught the Samaritans what they needed to know to be saved: details about the kingdom and details about the Son of God. This includes belief (**Mk. 16:16**), repentance (**Acts 2:38**), confession (**Acts 8:37**), baptism (**Acts 22:16**), and newness of life (**Rom. 6:4**). And yet, so many in the world think they know better than God what is necessary for salvation.

In the end, there are myriad different reasons that people will use to justify why they do not adhere to the commandments of God. They do this to their own destruction, as God will not care what excuse they use. God will simply look to see if they were obedient; no excuses involving emotions, lack of knowledge, or "born with" will deliver them, or us, from condemnation. We can do precisely what we want to do: will we obey God or follow the devil and the desires of our heart? The choice is ours...