

Tradition!

Without attending a “church” and with no face-to-face contact with “church people” (Thank-you Hal Lindsey!), I was saved by the grace of God, through faith in His Son, while in my early 20’s, and soon developed a voracious appetite for studying the Word. A year or so later, after a great deal of research, my fiancé and I started attending the Bible Church where we would be married and become members. It was at this “church” that I began hearing of things like, “orthodox tradition”, “Protestant tradition”, “Reformed tradition”, and the like. At the time, it didn’t trouble me in the least when some of my many questions were answered with, “that’s the traditional view of this passage” or “according to tradition...” etc. After all, the elders – especially the Pastor – were older and wiser in the faith. The Pastor had gone to **seminary**, and he was the **PROFESSIONAL**. The only other “church experience” I knew was that of a kid in the Roman Catholic Church. Compared to the elaborate ceremony and downright pageantry of that institution, the Bible Church was the epitome of simple, biblical Christianity, but after awhile, as I studied more and sat under various teachers and preachers, I found myself re-asking some of my original questions, like:

Why do we do what we do, the way we do what we do?

This time, answers relying on the tradition handed down from so-called Church Fathers, from Martin Luther, John Calvin, and/or the esoteric-sounding “Divines” (cue the angelic choir) were less than satisfying. Appeals to **Church History** began to seem somewhat hollow, as did references to past and present “Church Leaders” (i.e. famous public speakers, authors, TV and Radio personalities, etc.). Thus began a crisis, not of faith, but of the credibility of the System, and of systemic authority. At first I couldn’t get past the question, “What’s wrong with me?”, but the question gradually changed to “What’s wrong with this picture?” You see, every time I asked why...

Why do we practice the Lord’s Supper only on the first Sunday of the month? Didn’t the Apostles share actual bread and actual wine, and not crackers and grape juice? Why do we have this semi-rigid order of service? Why is there virtually no lay involvement in the service? Is it really “church” if all the members do is watch a show? Why are the New Testament descriptions of gatherings so different from what we practice today? Why is there no Scriptural mention of Seminaries, Ordination Councils, Pastoral Committees, or even a hint of hierarchical Church governments, the concept of the ruling pastor, youth ministries, worship leaders, church properties, or any of the hundreds if not thousands of practices and institutions that we take for granted as being necessary to the “Church” today? Why do we have an “altar” when Christ is the final sacrifice for sin? Why? Why? Why?

...the authorities cited were tradition, Church history, and/or other “experts, and yet these same people insisted that Scripture alone was our only source and measure of faith and practice!

The fact is that tradition certainly plays a role in every *institution*¹ that claims to represent the Church today. Take note that I said “*institution*”. If you have a “church building”, pews, an altar, status as a tax-exempt corporation, corporate officers, weekly collections, and a relatively static order of service; if you have a schedule of board meetings, and congregational business meetings; if you follow Robert’s Rules of Order – the list can go on – you’re an institution. These things, and many others, rely on tradition, Church history, “The Church Fathers” or other extra-biblical authority for their existence or practice.

¹ Institution in-sti-tu-tion NOUN: **1.** The act of instituting. **2a.** A custom, practice, relationship, or behavioral pattern of importance in the life of a community or society: *the institutions of marriage and the family.* **b.** *Informal* One long associated with a specified place, position, or function. **3. a.** **An established organization or foundation, especially one dedicated to education, public service, or culture. b.** **The building or buildings housing such an organization.** **c.** A place for the care of persons who are destitute, disabled, or mentally ill.

In future papers, we'll deal with Church history, "The Church Fathers", the Reformers, the Puritans, and more modern authorities, such as popular preachers and professors. For now, we'll just take a look at tradition.

From all the talk of our "Christian Tradition", "Reformed Tradition", "Baptist Tradition", etc., one would get the impression that *tradition*, as a topic, is quite prominent in Scripture. If you have somehow come by this impression (as I did), you are wrong. Rather than giving credibility to the authority of tradition, the Bible has mostly negative things to say about tradition as a whole. In fact, the only sort of tradition that is said to be authoritative is the tradition (really teachings), that are transmitted directly from Paul.

Below, you will find all of the verses wherein the Hebrew and Greek words are translated "tradition". These words will be defined within the context, where necessary, and then be traced with Englishman's Concordance. Please check my findings on your own: I wouldn't want you to take my word for what you will find.

Concordance Entries - Tradition, Traditions, and Traditional (not found):

NASB Verses With Context

Isaiah 29:13-14

¹³ Then the Lord said,

"Because this people draw near with their words
And honor Me with their lip service,
But they remove their hearts far from Me,
And their reverence for Me consists of **tradition** learned by rote,

¹⁴ Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous;
And the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,
And the discernment of their discerning men shall be concealed. "

This is the **ONLY OLD TESTAMENT** instance of any form of the word "tradition" to appear in the NASB or the KJV Bible. The word, here translated "tradition" is the Hebrew word **מִצְוָה** (mitsvah - Strong's 4687)

OT:4687 mitsvah --

a commandment

- a) a commandment (of man)
- b) the commandment (of God)
- c) a commandment (of a code of wisdom)

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The word appears 181 times, and except for here it is always translated “commandments” (incl. command, commandment, etc., 176 times²), “precept” (3 times in KJV – including Isa 29:13, twice in NASB), “law” (1 time – Jer 32:11) or “ordinances” (1 time – Neh. 10:32).

Of note here is that the passage does not speak favorably of the traditions of His people. He desires that His people draw near with their hearts, but instead they pay only lip service to God. He desires true reverence rather than “tradition” or precepts learned through rote memorization. That these traditions were the product of their “wise men” and their “discerning men” is evident that these are who He singles out for justice on this count (Because...Therefore...). This is an incitement against human wisdom and discernment, of religious scholarship, and its tendency to add to what God has already said in His word.

Matt 15:1-9

^{15:1} Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, ² "Why do Your disciples transgress the **tradition** of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." ³ And He answered and said to them, "And why do you yourselves transgress the **commandment** of God for the sake of **your tradition**? ⁴ "For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.' ⁵ "But you say, 'Whoever shall say to his father or mother,' Anything of mine you might have been helped by has been given to God, " ⁶ he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And thus you invalidated the word of God for the sake of **your tradition**. ⁷ "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying,

⁸"This people honors Me with their lips,
But their heart is far away from Me.

⁹"But in vain do they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' "

Here, the “tradition” (παράδοσις (parádosis – Strongs 3862)) of the religious leaders is set against the actual commandment of God(ἐντολήν entolee - Strongs 1785 (hee entolee tou Theou)).

3862. παράδοσις parádosis; gen. paradiseō s, fem. noun from paradedōmi (3860), to deliver in teaching. A tradition, doctrine or injunction delivered or communicated from one to another, whether divine (1 Cor 11:2; 2 Thess 2:15; 3:6) or human (Matt 15:2,3,6; Gal 1:14; Col 2:8). In Mark 7:3,5, the expression "the tradition of the elders" occurs. The Pharisees delivered to the people by tradition their ancestors' many injunctions which were not written in the Law of Moses. For this reason the sect of the Sadducees rejected them, saying that what was written should be esteemed obligatory, but that which came from oral tradition need not be observed. Thus, Josephus explains the expression "the traditions of the elders" or of the Pharisees. The words of the elders were considered more desirable than the words of the prophets.

Syn.: dógma (1378), ordinance, decree; diatagê (1296), ordinance, disposition; éthos (1484), custom.

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NT:1785 entolee, entolees, hee
an order, command, charge, precept

² Tracing words with Englishman’s is done by Strong’s Number and results are in the KJV.

1. universally, a charge, injunction: Luke 15:29
 2. a commandment,
 - a. universally, Heb 7:16
 - b. ethically
 - α. what God prescribes in the law of Moses, Matt 15:3
 - β. of the precepts of Jewish tradition: Titus 1:14
 - γ. universally, of the commandments of God, especially as promulgated in the Christian religion: 1 John 3:23
- (from Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2000 by BibleSoft)

The Lord calls these religious leaders hypocrites for promoting man-made religious tradition while ignoring what God really wants. They effectively substituted human wisdom for the Truth, as contained in His word, and Jesus equates them with wise men and discerning men of Isaiah 29. In view of this charge against the learned religious authority of the time, would it not be prudent to refrain from the same sort of hypocrisy today?

Notice what their traditions were; they were the tradition **of the elders**, and your traditions. The Pharisees accused Jesus' disciples of transgressing the precepts of their own "divines" and authoritative teachers. Jesus turned the tables and accused them of transgressing the commands of God. Which is the more serious transgression, and which sort of transgression should we be more concerned for today?

Mark 7:1-13

^{7:1} And the Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered together around Him when they had come from Jerusalem, ² and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed. ³(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the **traditions of the elders**; ⁴ and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.) ⁵ And the Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the **tradition** of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?" ⁶ And He said to them, "**Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,**

**'This people honors Me with their lips,
But their heart is far away from Me.
⁷But in vain do they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'**

⁸ "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men." ⁹ He was also saying to them, "You nicely set aside the commandment of God in order to keep **your tradition**." ¹⁰ "For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death'; ¹¹ but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, anything of mine you might have been helped by is Corban (that is to say, given to God),' ¹² you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; ¹³ thus invalidating the word of God by **your tradition** which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.

This is a parallel passage to the Matthew verses we just looked at, but it is presented in slightly more detail. Here we see that there were many different rituals that the elders came

up with, such as the washing of cups and pitchers, etc. Jesus goes on, after this passage, to gather the people and tell them that, “there is nothing outside the man which going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man.” (Mark 7:15). Even the disciples have difficulty understanding this, after all, it is the teaching of the elders that has permeated their worlds all their lives!

1 Cor 11:1-2

^{11:1} Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

² Now I praise you because you remember me in everything, and hold firmly to the **traditions**, just as I delivered them to you.

Here, at last, we find the word “traditions” used favorably! It is the same word as used in the above passages (παράδοσις (parádosis – Strongs 3862)), and conveys the same meaning of a doctrine passed down and communicated from one to another. There is, however, a major difference, if you’d care to look at it. Paul begins with, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.” He goes on to praise them, why? Because they remember Paul in everything, and hold firm to the traditions, but not just any traditions, *the traditions that Paul, himself, delivered to them!* He is not talking about the traditions of the elders. In the first place, Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites for following that tradition, and in the second place, makes it plain in the next passage we will look at (Gal 1:11-17) that his ancestral traditions did him no good at all! Paul, who introduces himself as an Apostle (1:1), and a “steward of the mysteries of God”, (4:1), and who those at Corinth turned to for clarification of doctrine (7:1) has instructed them (11:2) and continues to instruct them (11:17) concerning the doctrine and practice of the Church. He is an apostle, and a writer of Scripture, which, **unlike** even the most scholarly books of EVERY authority since, is “living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Heb 4:12). Paul could deliver traditions to the Church as the “Apostle of Gentiles”, the “preacher [proclaimer, herald] of the Gentiles”, and the “teacher of the Gentiles”. (Rom 11:13, 1 Tim 2:7). Who, since Paul, could honestly have laid claim to these titles? Who could qualify today? No one! “The perfect” has come and the partial has been put away! The Word of God – the **only** book that is “Theópneustos” (God-Breathed - 2 Tim 3:16) – is the **only** reliable source for doctrine and practice! The Corinthians knew that Paul intended *his* teachings to be followed by the Churches, or if they didn’t, he made it unequivocal:

1 Cor 11:16

But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have **no other practice**, nor have the churches of God.

Gal 1:11-17

¹¹ For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹² For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹³ For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it; ¹⁴ and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for **my ancestral traditions**. ¹⁵ But when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased ¹⁶ to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, ¹⁷ nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.

Again we find the same word for “traditions”. Here it is referred to specifically as Paul’s ancestral traditions. Notice that Paul makes it clear that the gospel he preaches is not something devised by man, and that he received it directly from Christ Jesus. The traditions, part of his former life, were of no help to him – only the revelation of the Son availed him anything (cf. Phil 3:1-12).

Col 2:8

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the **tradition** of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

Now we come to a warning about traditions (same word). Paul gives a brief list of things that can take a Christian captive...

NT:4812

4812. **σουλᾶγωγά** *sulagōgēō* contracted *sulagōgō*, fut. *sulagōgēsō*, from *súlōn* (n.f.), a prey (from *suláō* [4813], to strip, rob), and *ágō* (71), to carry away. To lead off as prey, carry off as booty, rob, or kidnap. Figuratively, of the destructive effects of false teachers who rob believers of the complete riches available in Christ and revealed in the gospel (Col 2:8).

Syn.: *diarpázō* (1283), to plunder; *harpázō* (726), to seize, snatch away; *suláō* (4813), to rob; *kléptō* (2813), to steal; *aixmalōteúō* (162), to capture; *aixmalōtízō* (163), to make a prisoner, captivate.

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...in opposition to the things of Christ. These, obviously, are all bad things! They include:

Philosophy 5385. **φιλοσοφία** *philosophía*; gen. *philosophías*, fem. noun from *philosophéō* (n.f.), which is from *philosophos* (5386), a philosopher, friend of wisdom. Love of wisdom, philosophy, which came to mean the doctrine or tenets of the heathen or Gentile philosophers (Col 2:8 [cf. 2:16]; 1 Tim 6:20). The modern definition of the word must not be read into its use in the Bible. Philosophy, as the study of reality, knowledge, and values, is a profitable and biblically supported endeavor. However, this is not the meaning of the word in Scripture. There it carries a negative connotation and refers to quasi-religious doctrines and speculations (e.g., gnosticism) all of which are irreconcilable with the Christian faith.

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Empty deception

Empty NT:2756 *kenos* (ken-os'); apparently a primary word; empty (literally or figuratively):

KJV - empty, (in) vain.

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Deception NT:539 **ἀπάτη** *apát*; gen. *apáts*, fem. noun. Deceit, delusion. In the pass. sense spoken of anything which is deceptive, seducing (Matt 13:22; Mark 4:19; Col 2:8; 2 Thess 2:10). In Heb 3:13 connected with sin, meaning the deceitfulness of our sinful propensities. In 2 Peter 2:13, the word "sin" is to be understood as following the dat. pl. *apátais*, deceivings, i.e., the deceptive involvements of sin. In Eph 4:22,

epithumías (1939), desires of deceit, means deceitful propensities which seduce to sin and lead to disappointment.

Deriv.: *apatáō* (538), to deceive.

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These philosophies and empty deceptions are in accordance with (ΚΩΤΩ) the **tradition** of men. These go right along with the teachings passed down from father to son, the ordinances and precepts that the “fathers” of man-made religion propagate through their misguided disciples. Furthermore, these man-made philosophies, (and the traditions that go along with them) are “according to the elementary principles of the world”. What does that mean?

This "philosophy" is further characterized as coming from the ruling spirits of the universe. There is much controversy over the meaning of this phrase (which appears also in verse 20, and Gal 4:3,9), *ta stoicheia tou kosmou*. The noun *stoicheion* means, primarily, the basic unit of which a series is composed, such as a letter of the alphabet, a basic element of matter, a fundamental principle of doctrine. In Heb 5:12, for example, it means (plural) "elementary teachings," in 2 Peter 3:10,12 it refers to the elements of matter (air, water, earth, and fire, in Greek speculation). In general two possible meanings are seen here: (1) "elementary teachings" either of a Jewish or pagan origin, with various beliefs and ritual (Lightfoot, Moule), which were in sharp contrast to the Christian way of life; this is variously expressed in translations (see SpCL NIV Brc; Phps "man's ideas of the nature of the world," Gpd "material way of looking at things"). (2) Spiritual powers, "elemental beings," of the same species as demons and evil spirits, which were thought to rule the universe in general or the stars and planets in particular (Lohse, Beare; TNT Mft NAB NEB JB TOB). The majority of modern commentaries and translations favor the "elemental forces" interpretation, but it must be conceded (as Moule points out) that as yet no example of the phrase with this meaning has been found in literature contemporary with or earlier than the writings of the NT.

The interpretation of "elementary teachings about the universe" may be expressed as "those ideas which people have about the universe" or even "widespread concepts about the world." If, however, the second interpretation is employed, then one may speak of "those spirits that rule the universe" or "those powerful spirits in the universe."

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This manner of living, of doctrine and religious practice, has as its source either the basic (faulty) assumptions of sinful man in rebellion against God – which produce animism, polytheism, etc. – or evil spirits whose purpose is to deceive and enslave man while leading him away from God. Surely, if a Christian believed that their philosophies and traditions – as well as the resultant doctrines and practices – came from such a source, they would denounce all of them. In fact, how could a Christian become a captive to such things in the first place, and why is Paul warning Christians about them?

2 Cor 11:13-15

¹³ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.

Paul warns the Church about philosophies, empty deceptions, and man-made traditions because he knew that such deceivers were already at work in the Church during the time of the Apostles!

Acts 20:29-30

²⁹ "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Rom 16:17-18

¹⁷ Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. ¹⁸ For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting

2 Cor 11:12-14

¹² But what I am doing, I will continue to do, that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. ¹³ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

Eph 4:14

¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

1 Tim 1:3-4

³ As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, ⁴ nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.

2 Tim 3:13

¹³ But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived

2 Tim 4:3-4

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

Peter and John warned of the same thing!

2 Peter 2:1-3

^{2:1} But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. ² And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; ³ and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

2 Peter 3:14-17

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, ¹⁵ and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, ¹⁶ as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. ¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness,

1 John 2:18

¹⁸ Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour.

1 John 2:26

²⁶ These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.

1 John 4:1

^{4:1} Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Knowing that these brothers and sisters in Christ, many of whom were taught by the Apostles themselves, were in danger of being deceived by the philosophies and traditions of men, shouldn't we be more than just a little cautious when accepting doctrine and practice within the Church on the basis of "Church Fathers", Church history, and traditions that cannot be supported by Scripture (without reading the teachings *into* the passage, as so many do)? We have already seen that Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, gave instruction to the Churches regarding their doctrine and practice. He taught them the traditions (his own God-inspired teaching) which they should follow, and he expected them to do so? Should we look to any other source than Scripture to answer the questions we have, like "What are we supposed to do when we come together as a church"? In view of the warnings against man-made teachings that we see here, my answer would be an emphatic NO!

2 Thess 2:15

¹⁵ So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.

What are we, as Christians, to hold on to, and what will help us to stand firm? Paul tells the Thessalonians to hold on to some very specific traditions – those which **he** taught them by word and by letter.

In our preaching [KJV for NASB's by word of mouth] may be rendered as "when we were talking to you," or "when we were preaching to you" In our letter may be rendered as "in the letter which we wrote to you." It may, however, be necessary to be more explicit, for example, "in the earlier letter we wrote to you," thus avoiding the suggestion that Paul is referring to the letter he has dictating at that time.

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The Greek simply says, "whether by word or by letter our". This is in no wise speaking of general oral tradition, but specifically references Paul's teaching, as in 1 Cor 11.

Word NT:3056 logos (log'-os); from NT:3004; something said (including the thought); by implication a topic (subject of discourse), also reasoning (the mental faculty) or motive; by extension, a computation; specifically (with the article in John) the Divine Expression (i.e. Christ):

KJV - account, cause, communication, concerning, doctrine, fame, have to do, intent, matter, mouth, preaching, question, reason, reckon, remove, say (-ing), shew, speaker, speech, talk, thing, none of these things move me, tidings, treatise, utterance, word, work.

2 Thess 3:6-9

⁶ Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the **tradition which you received from us**.
⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we might not be a burden to any of you; ⁹ not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, that you might follow our example.

As above, Paul admonishes the Thessalonians to cling to specific tradition (ordinance, precept). The tradition that he wants them to follow is specifically that which they received from him. In fact, this passage goes much further, and could not be clearer.

The instruction is given as a command that must be followed.

Command NT:3853 parangelloo;

1. properly, to transmit a message along from one to another
2. to command, to order, to charge: with the dative of the personal pronoun, **humin**, 1 Thess 4:11

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In the name of the Lord, we are told to withdraw ourselves, or stay away from EVERY brother who leads an unruly life not in accordance with Paul's teaching.

Keep aloof 4724 **στέλλω** stéllō>; fut. stelô. To set, place, appoint to a position (such as soldiers in battle array). As such, it does not occur in the NT, but it does occur in many deriv. with a prefix prep., especially **apostéllō** (649), send from, and **apóstolos** (652), an apostle, emissary. In its pass. form, **stéllomai**, with the mid. voice meaning, with an acc. and the prep. **apó** (575) following, it means to avoid or withdraw oneself from, shrink back (2 Cor 8:20; 2 Thess 3:6 (**στέλλεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀδελφου**); Sept.: Mal 2:5).

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unruly NT:814 **ἀτάκτως** atáktōs; adv. from **átaktos** (813), disorderly. In a disorderly manner, irregularly (2 Thess 3:6,11).

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The admonition is to avoid the brother – yes, the Christian – who, rather than live in accordance with Paul's teaching, would that not include made-up organizations, rituals, liturgies, and practices that Paul never commanded? Shouldn't that make us at least think twice about it?

Ah, but here it gets even more interesting. Paul says, "For you yourselves know how **you ought to follow our example**" What is he talking about? He's talking about following his example with regards to living the Christian life, and the teachings of doctrine and practice he has delivered to them! Why follow his example? Well, his example is the opposite of those unruly brothers, for one thing.

Disciplined (lit.: not disorderly)

Not NT:3756 ou (oo); also (before a vowel) ouk (ook); and (before an aspirate) ouch (ookh); a primary word; the absolute negative [compare NT:3361] adverb; no or not: (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright (c) 1994, Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, Inc.)

Disorderly NT:812 atakteoo, atakoo:
to be disorderly

- a. properly, of soldiers marching out of order or quitting the ranks
- b. to be neglectful of duty, to be lawless
- c. to lead a disorderly life: 2 Thess 3:7

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For another thing, Paul's example (that he wants them to follow) is of one who, even with all his responsibilities for building and guarding the Church (as an Apostle), worked hard in manual labor to support himself so that he might ask for bread from no one and so that he would not be a burden on anyone. Paul's example, which he pointedly refers to as a "model" for them, was that whatever his right to support, his choice, and his choice for them (he being the model) was that they take no support (let alone a regular salary; allowances for travel, books, conferences, etc.; automobile, medical, dental and life insurance; free housing; free utilities; and retirement benefits).

Model NT:5179 tupos, tupou, ho

1. the mark of a stroke or blow; print: John 20:25 a,25 b
2. a figure formed by a blow or impression; hence, universally, a figure, image: of the images of the gods, Acts 7:43
3. form: Rom 6:17
4. an example

α. in the technical sense, viz. the pattern in conformity to which a thing must be made: Acts 7:44

β. in an ethical sense, a dissuasive example, pattern of warning: 1 Cor 10:6,11

γ. in a doctrinal sense, a type, Rom 5:14

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What does this say about today's Professional Christian? Talk about man-made traditions!

KJV Verses

The King James Version includes all of the above except for Isaiah 29:13 where "precept of men" is used rather than "tradition" (in the same way that the NASB translators do in the Jesus' quotations above). In addition, the KJV includes:

1 Peter 1:17-19

¹⁷ And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

¹⁸ 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;

¹⁹ But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

We have here basically the same word as in the other verses, but with the added prefix (patêr) for father. It's quite clear that this passage is pitting man-made tradition in opposition to the gift of God

by the blood of Christ. The tradition of the Fathers could not redeem anyone from their previous lifestyle. In this respect it's tantamount to saying that false, man-made religion cannot be profitable to save anyone, only the simple, true religion of the gospel is effective.

tradition from your fathers NT:3970 πατροπαράδοτος patroparádotos, gen. patroparadótou, masc.-fem., neut. patroparádoton, adj. from patêr (3962), father, ancestor, and paradídōmi (3860), to deliver. Delivered down from one's fathers, handed down from ancestors, hereditary (1 Peter 1:18, meaning a traditional way of life).

Syn.: archaíos (744), ancient, original; palaiós (3820), old; patrôos (3971), paternal, hereditary; patrikós (3967), ancestral, paternal, from one's forebearers.

Ant.: néos (3501), new, more recent; kainós (2537), new qualitatively.

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conversation NT:391 ἀναστροφή anastrophê; gen. anastrophês, fem. noun from anastréphō (390), to turn up, to move about. A turning about. In the NT, mode of life, conduct, behavior, deportment (Gal 1:13; Eph 4:22; 1 Tim 4:12; James 3:13; 1 Peter 2:7; 3:11); life, as made up of actions (Heb 13:7; 1 Peter 1:15).

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Note: An Englishman's search for Strong's NT 3862 and 3970 yielded no additional verses. In other words, this is ALL that is said about tradition. There is nothing more.

Tradition Viewed as Good or Bad			
Reference	Source of Tradition	View of Tradition	
		Good	Bad
Isa 29: 13-14	Religious leaders		√
Matt 15:1-9	The elders/scribes and Pharisees		√
Mark 7:1-13	The elders/scribes and Pharisees		√
1 Cor 11:1-2	Paul	√	
Gal 1:11-17	Ancestors		√
Col 2:8	Men		√
2 Thess 2:15	Paul	√	
2 Thess 3:6-9	Paul	√	
1 Peter 1:17-19	The fathers		√

So, what have the Scriptures shown us? Let's look at the table above for a quick recap. Hmm, the only times tradition appears to be a good thing is when that tradition is the Spirit-inspired teaching of the Apostle, communicated by him to the Church. That would mean we not only shouldn't attempt to elevate the

authority of tradition to be equal to or superior to Scripture, but we should also be suspicious of traditions with human origins, shouldn't we? Instead, people flock to this denomination, or that assembly, because of the "rich and vibrant tradition", and often the principle reason for staying in one institution or another is how the traditional practices of that institution make a person feel.

The traditionalists would tell you that their traditions, doctrines and practices have risen and grown out of a virtual vacuum. They would say that "Christian Liberty".

1 Cor 10:23

²³ All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.

2 Cor 3:17

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Gal 2:4

⁴ But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.

In other words, we're free to do whatever we want if Scripture doesn't give us instructions concerning something. There are a few problems with this position when it comes to justifying the institutionalization of the Church. First, Scripture does tell us where we are to assemble, how the assembly is to be conducted, who is to participate, what we are to do, and what the purpose of our gathering is, who is to lead and how, etc.. None of these things match up with today's institutional "Churchianity". Second, look at just the verses above concerning our liberty in Christ. Notice anything? For instance, all things may well be lawful, but not all things are profitable, nor do all things edify. Hey, it seems we're not exactly free to do anything any way we want, are we? There are things we must consider, like:

1. Does this practice promote an unbiblical division between brothers (clergy/laity).
2. Does this edify brothers and sisters (or make turn them into a captive audience)?
3. Is this consistent with the character of the Church in Scripture?

There are many more questions we could ask, as well. Lastly, look again at the verses above. Ask yourself, are today's institutional "churches" really expressions of liberty in Christ, or have those "false brethren who had sneaked in to spy our liberty" succeeded in bringing us into bondage? Does Scripture or tradition place us in bondage to a professional clergy? To seminaries? To official boards, ordination boards, missions boards, and other kinds of bored and boring boards? To denominations, synods, conventions, Archbishops, or popes? Does Scripture give any credence at all to the many "fine institutions and traditions" that have sprung up over the centuries in the name of Christ? After hours, weeks and years of study, I'm compelled to answer that, no, it does not. Don't take my word for it; I shouldn't be your authority. Search the Scriptures for yourself.