

THE WORD OF GOD: CLOTHES, HAIR, TITLES

“Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men”

Glen C. Robertson

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7 Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.
8 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.
9 And He said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition!
Mark 7:7-9 The BIBLE

Introduction

WHAT WE DO ourselves and insist on from others is very often merely a reflection of our own personal culture, or of the culture of our church, or of the culture of our society, or of any one of many possible subcultures, rather than a fulfillment of the commands of God. And in so doing, we often separate ourselves from other Christians and from the unsaved, embitter the saved toward God, and separate the unsaved from the God they would otherwise pursue. And, in separating others from God, we also separate ourselves from God Himself.

5 Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou... .
Isaiah 65:5a The BIBLE

Clothes

FOR INSTANCE, a verse which invokes varied reactions from Christians:

5 The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.

Deuteronomy 22:5 The BIBLE

- Some do their best to obey it; some disobey it altogether, given the modern tendencies to both unisex and ignoring of Scripture and righteousness.



Two conscious efforts at looking ugly and/or masculine!
Is this glorifying to God??

Those who seek to obey God's command in this verse interpret it in various ways. For some reason, some of those seeking to obey God in this verse feel that they must therefore dress ugly, or that they must insist that their women wear only dresses and/or skirts!



Two conscious efforts at self-respect and femininity.
Godly doesn't equal ugly!
And feminine doesn't necessarily equal dresses.

But Scripture definitely does not demand ugly! And, "Attractive," most definitely does not equal, "provocative, or seductive!" The Bible does not specify dresses and skirts; It simply says, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man," or, in other words, "a man's clothing." While modern style still does include skirts and dresses, it now encompasses also a whole lot more! A man certainly would not wear leotards nor a woman's pant suit!; perhaps these might equally constitute, in God's eyes, clothes appropriate for a woman? Yet, generally these individuals and groups insist that anything other than ugly, or else skirts and dresses, is an abomination to the Lord! And, women associated with such groups would generally be completely averse to wearing anything but those pieces of clothing officially endorsed by their groups; the women are often more interested in fitting in with their social group than they are with necessarily following what God expects. These people are adding to the Word of God, giving the Bible their own, private interpretation!

At the same time, often these same individuals and groups are not averse to allowing, and even encouraging, a woman to preach/teach men, or allowing her to speak out in church, despite the Bible's commands otherwise! Thus, they consciously disobey the **New Testament's multiple** commands (I Cor. 14:34-36; I Tim. 2:10-15), while legalistically demanding obedience to an **Old Testament** law, found in only a **single** verse in the **Old Testament** (Deuteronomy 22:5)! They feel that a woman can be right-

eously encouraged to disobey God's **New Testament** commands regarding women, yet rebuked and ostracized by her church and friends for not following one particular verse of **Old Testament law**! They legalistically insist on one single law but are guilty of the whole law by neglecting another! By what stretch of the imagination can one claim to be loving God and His children by this arbitrary rebellion against Him, picking and choosing what they feel should and shouldn't be obeyed, and hurting those who obey God rather than their group's arbitrarily imposed rules?

8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

James 2:8-10 The BIBLE

5 Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou...

Isaiah 65:5a The BIBLE

Often these same individuals and groups will insist that Godliness requires that the Christian wear clothes designed as far back in history as possible! Some groups, such as Hutterites, Amish, Mennonites, etc., insist that Godliness requires clothes designed some hundreds of years ago; one will see them wearing only such garments as funereal black or else gingham/herringbone suits and dresses, straw hats, kerchiefs, suspenders/braces, aprons, long hair on the women, and long beards on the men. As seen in some Baptist, Pentecostal, and Holiness groups, some similarly demand long hair on their women, and short hair on their men, and clothes designed in the early years of the 20th century, or even back in the 19th. Their women will be seen wearing clothes their grandmothers and mothers wore, and often necessarily be absent of makeup. The women will feel that, were they to dress in anything approaching a modern look they would be less than Godly! For some reason they feel that, to be holy, one must look unattractive, citing I Peter 3; but that passage doesn't outlaw a woman's making herself attractive; it speaks merely of excess. In fact, in another context, we're even commanded to not attempt to, "look holy," by neglecting our appearance!

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

Matthew 6:17-18 The BIBLE

Men:

Men will be seen uniformly wearing always dress shirts and ties, at least in church, in order to look holy. And they demand or require it of their disciples, suggesting that it's required for holiness! God in no place in Scripture says, "Thou must not wear modern or informal clothes, if thou art to be holy!" So in this way these groups are adding to the Word of God, giving it their own, private interpretation, and



separating from themselves and from God, those who would pursue God, but who feel no need to follow this group's arbitrary membership rules!

5 Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou... .

Isaiah 65:5a The BIBLE

These individuals, groups, and upper ranks will usually consider themselves therefore more holy than those who do not follow these arbitrary traditions and practices of their group, and separate themselves (overtly or covertly) from those who do not. Those who do not follow the customs of these individuals and groups will be made to feel less holy, or even, "unclean," and unGodly.

38 And He said unto them in His doctrine, Beware of the scribes, **which love to go in long clothing**, and *love* salutations in the marketplaces,

Mark 12:38 The BIBLE

5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and **enlarge the borders of their garments**

Matthew 23:5 The BIBLE

2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, **in goodly apparel**, and there come in also a poor man **in vile raiment**;

3 And **ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:**

4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

James 2:2-4 The BIBLE

5 Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou.

These *are* a smoke in My nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

Isaiah 65:5 The BIBLE

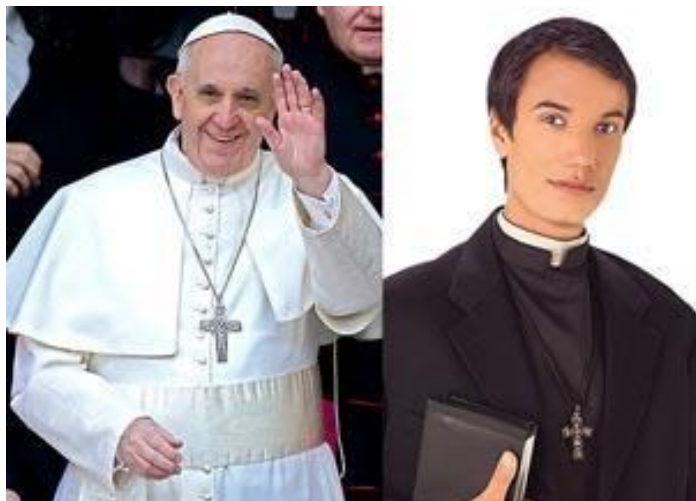
8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.



13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

James 2:8-13 The BIBLE

Despite the commands of Jesus Himself, the clergy has also often adopted a distinctive, sanctimonious set of uniforms by which to distinguish and exalt themselves from the, 'less holy, less sanctified,' laity: the average joe! The Roman Catholic and Orthodox hierarchies regale themselves in the effeminate silken robes and head gear of what might be typical of a little girl's Catholic christening gown! This influences the unsaved to believe that Godliness is the territory of only the weak, womanish, and falsetto-speaking girlyboy. The upper Protestant echelons exalt themselves from the less sanctified riff-raff by wearing collars and clerical/scholastic robes, with incapable gigantic crosses on chains, etc. All this despite the fact that Jesus commanded us:



- 1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to His disciples,
- 2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:
- 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.
- 4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.
- 5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,
- 6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,
- 7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.
- 8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for One Is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.
- 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.
- 10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.
- 11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.
- 12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

Matthew 23:1-12 The BIBLE

In this way these groups are adding to the Word of God, giving it their own, private interpretation, and showing a lack of love toward those who do not comply with their arbitrary rules, or simply exalting themselves above those who they feel are, "less holy," because they dress normally.

5 Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou... .

Isaiah 65:5a The BIBLE

Hair

Even regarding hair, these individuals and groups will often sanctimoniously invoke our Heavenly Father's Words in I Corinthians:

- 4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.
- 5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.
- 6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.
- 7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.
- 8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.
- 9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.
- 10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.
- 11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.
- 12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.
- 13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?
- 14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?
- 15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

I Corinthians 11:4-15 The BIBLE

(... But they intentionally leave out "**The next verse, verse 16**" ... ! – see below)

These individuals and groups invoke the I Corinthians 11 passage, to require that men who come into their churches and meetings wearing a hat, remove their hat. Yet, they will ignore the fact that the same passage would ask women to wear a head covering! They will also rebuke a man for wearing long hair, yet will generally say nothing if a woman (in particular an older woman) cuts her hair short! In requiring of the one individual things unScriptural and not required of others they thrust a wall between that individual and the body of Christ. They lessen the likelihood that individual will remain there, become an integral part of the body of the church, pursue Christ, and bless and be blessed! They become a stumblingblock to that person!

- 21 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.

I Timothy 5:21 (NASB) The BIBLE

- 4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?
- 9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

James 2:4, 9 The BIBLE

"The Next Verse, verse 16:"

These individuals and groups invoke the I Corinthians 11 passage, insisting that holiness demands the Christian woman maintain only long hair, and the Christian man, only short. Yet they neglect the next

verse – the last verse in that section of Scripture: the verse that nullifies **their** whole argument!

(... 14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.)

16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God! (*“However, if anyone disagrees with this, the Church of God has no such practice; So, if anyone doesn’t wish to follow this concept, the Church of God has no such teaching; don’t worry about it!”*)

I Corinthians 11:14-15 The BIBLE

Titles

1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to His disciples,

2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

5 **But all their works they do for to be seen of men:** they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

6 **And love** the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

7 **And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.**

8 **But be not ye called Rabbi:** for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

9 **And call no man your father upon the earth:** for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

10 **Neither be ye called masters:** for one is your Master, even Christ.

11 **But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.**

12 **And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.**

Matthew 23:1-12 The BIBLE

We are specifically commanded by Christ to not call anyone, “Rabbi,” “Father,” “Master,” etc.!

Why are we expected by our religious group to call our leaders, “Father,” “Rabbi,” “Pastor,” (Salvation Army’s), “Captain,” “Major,” “Colonel,” etc., when Jesus commanded us not to!?

- and not merely these names. But, in context, Christ is instructing us to not refer to them by honorifics, period! Instead, we have stepped so far away from the instructions of our Lord and Saviour, that we will actually refer to religious leaders by terms such as, “Reverend,” and... “Divine!!” God alone is to be revered; He alone is Divine!

Some people, splitting hairs, will claim that Jesus didn’t prohibit us from calling our pastor, “Pastor,” because Jesus didn’t specifically use *that specific* word here. That is true; Jesus actually used the words, “**Ραββί**,” “**πατέρα**,” and, “**καθηγηταί**” (“rabbi,” “father,” and, “master,”), if He spoke, here, in ancient

(Koiné) Greek. Or, if He spoke in Aramaic, the local language of the time, the Words He used were, "רַבִּי," "אֲבִי" and, "מַלְאֲכִי." So, "Rabbi," "father," or, "master," are merely our English meanings of the Words Jesus used. Similarly, Jesus had nothing against the words, "pastor," "rabbi," "father," or, "master," nor against their Greek and Hebrew equivalents; it isn't the actual, specific, mere *words* that Jesus prohibits. What Jesus was saying was that His children are not to use *honorifics*, or titles of honor (whether they be these specific honour-bestowing words, or others), when referring to His ministers. Because these are words designed to exalt the ministers of His Heavenly Father, Who, *alone*, is to be honoured and praised!

18 And a certain ruler asked Him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? none is good, save One, *That Is*, God.

Luke 18:18 The BIBLE

8 I Am the LORD: that Is My Name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images.

Isaiah 42:8 The BIBLE

11 For Mine own sake, even for Mine own sake, will I do it: for how should My Name be polluted? and I will not give My glory unto another.

Isaiah 48:11 The BIBLE

If money (taking what is not theirs) is what corrupts politicians, it is honour (taking what is not theirs) that corrupts ministers of God. Jesus, not man, gave us this commandment against such corruption. Far be it from us, to dispute what He requires! So refusing to call your pastor, "Pastor," is not dishonouring your pastor; it is honouring your Heavenly Father Who has made that commandment, and Who, alone, is worthy of our praise!

Our Heavenly Father has given us commandment to honour those who minister to us,

17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the Word and doctrine.

18 For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

I Timothy 5:17-19 The BIBLE

- but He has commanded specifically that we are not to use honorifics to do it!

Conclusion

*“Howbeit in vain do they worship Me,
teaching for doctrines the commandments of men!”*

THESE INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND, “UPPER RANKS,” will usually consider themselves more holy than those who do not follow the traditions and practices of these individuals and groups, and they will separate themselves from them. When among them, those who do not follow the customs of these individuals and groups will be made to feel less holy, or even, “unclean,” and unGodly.

7 Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.
8 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.
9 And He said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

Mark 7:7-9 The BIBLE

2 Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from It, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

Deuteronomy 4:2 The BIBLE

32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

Deuteronomy 12:32 The BIBLE

5 Every Word of God Is pure: He Is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him.

6 Add thou not unto His Words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

Proverbs 30:5-6 The BIBLE

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 The BIBLE

In other words, much of what is followed today within religious groups, whether Christian or otherwise, is often not in fact Scripture nor the commandments nor expectations of God, but rather traditions and customs that conveniently skirt what God and the Word of God expect of us!

20 If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as,
21 “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!”

(22 which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men?

23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

Colossians 2:20-23 (NASB) The BIBLE

No obedience to Scripture is in any way able to earn our way into heaven! Only faith in Jesus and repentance from sin are sufficient to get into heaven. But Jesus did say, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." Not even that is a commandment; it is a statement of fact: 'if you love Me, it is automatic that you will be keeping My commandments as a result!' The degree of one's love for Christ will be evidenced, first, in the degree to which they obey His commandments – rather than the commandments and traditions of mere men.

3 And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

4 He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5 But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him.

6 He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.

I John 2:3-6 The BIBLE

The degree to which we love Christ will be evidenced, secondly, by the love that we evidence for others.

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment Is the Word which ye have heard from the beginning.

8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

I John 2:7-10 The BIBLE

Yet, how are we loving our fellow man, or the person in our congregation, if we're teaching him customs rather than Scripture, and commanding that he follow *our* traditions, rather than the Word of God? And how are we showing him the love of Christ if we punish him for disobeying *our* customs and traditions, which are not in fact the Word and commandment **of God?**

46 And He said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

Luke 11:46 The BIBLE

15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Matthew 23:15 The BIBLE

23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

Matthew 23:23-24 The BIBLE

14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

Matthew 15:14 The BIBLE

If we are in fact so enamored of our God, and incredibly desirous of obeying and following His Word we should take a close look at what Scripture does in fact say, and indeed follow that, rather than follow what our religious community or congregation does in the name of God. It is so much easier to follow the crowd than to follow the Lord, and easier to go with the flow, than to go against it. If we're not ready to examine the Scripture and follow what God requires of us from Scripture, rather than from our tradition, we need not look at Scripture and seek to follow it at all, for Scripture will only get in the way of what we want to do. And let's not feel that we are being more Biblical than others if we are ignoring the actual Scripture, to follow the customs and traditions of our religious community! Let's not place any demands on others nor condemn their actions for not being Biblical, if we are not being Biblical in every way, but rather being strict in an adherence to our own arbitrary traditions! If following what **God** wants, in every way, is so important, however, let's be willing to change in ourselves what is unBiblical. And not seek to Biblify our mere customs and traditions!

When we establish artificial barriers to salvation we lessen opportunity for the unsaved to come to Christ, for the backslidden to return, and for the Spiritually immature to, "... come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:" - Eph. 4:13. As a result of our customs and traditions some will feel they can't attend church, much less come to Christ, because our customs and traditions don't appeal to them, perhaps our taste in clothes, or the length of hair we like to see! What a tragedy to have to admit to Christ that others failed to, 'enter in,' to the kingdom of God, because of artificial barriers **we** put in their way! What a tragedy to, ourselves, have to endure the plagues of Revelation simply because we added to Scripture!

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the Words of the prophecy of this Book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the Words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this Book.

Revelation 22:18-19 The BIBLE

9 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.

Mark 7:9, 13 The BIBLE

13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

Matthew 23:13 The BIBLE