

The Doctrines of Men

I love getting to decide things: what's for dinner, what brand of car to drive, where to go on vacation, what TV to buy, what hobbies I like. I, like most people, do not like to be told that I don't have choices. Imagine going into a restaurant and hearing, "Well, sir, you are over 50 so you must order a veggie plate without butter or salt!" No thanks, I'll go to Burger King!

But the wonderful joy of making personal decisions is not what God had in mind when it comes to religious beliefs. **Yes**, God gave us free will to decide what we want to believe. But, as with many other things in life, our choices might not be *correct*.

"Correct," you say? Yes, correct. "Well just exactly who gets to decide what is "correct" in this world?" Frankly, God does. You desire a Ford over a Chevy, beef to fish, fried okra over broccoli? Fine, those are personal choices God gives us. *But God never, from the Garden of Eden to 2023, gave man the right to decide what genuine, biblical doctrines would be!*

Some might ask, "So do you think *you* know what God wants? Isn't that arrogant?" To the contrary. We can, indeed, know what God wants because he wrote in down for us! Like a father's grocery list handed to his son or daughter, our heavenly father gave us a written document we *can* understand. "...when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ," Ephesians 3:4.

God gave us a book we *can* understand, and two parts of that understanding are:

- a. not to go beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6)
- b. not to teach as our doctrines the precepts of men (Matthew 15:7-9).

If we go behind what is written, God's own word defines that as arrogance (read 1 Corinthians 4:6... clear as a bell). If we teach the commandments of men as our doctrines, then we are ignoring Jesus' clear teaching in Matthew 15:7-9.

Sadly, many in the religious world choose to create their own, man-made catechisms, confessions of faith, etc., when God's intent was for us to understand and follow His written word rather than the writings of men.

Today, I will choose chicken over tofu - my choice. Tomorrow I must choose to teach God's word and not the doctrines of men.

Ray Wallace

Further study: Deut. 5:32; Josh. 1:7; Prov. 4:27; 2; ECC 12:13, 14; 2 Tim. 4:1-5.