

## Key to understanding 1 Corinthians 11

### What are “traditions”? (verse 2)

“I praise you for remembering me in everything and maintaining the *traditions* just as I passed them on to you.”

1. “traditions” = “authoritative teachings”
  - a. The literal meaning “to give over”
    - i. surrender a city
    - ii. betray or hand over another person
    - iii. submit oneself to another
    - iv. hand down a teaching from another – ancient teachers, Jesus, God himself
  - b. The key is the authority the teaching carries
    - i. The authority of the teaching comes from outside or above the teacher
    - ii. The content of the teaching is a stewardship entrusted to the teacher which the teacher does not have the right to change or adapt to suit himself or his audience
    - iii. Paul and others often refer to the authoritative nature of their teachings:
      1. 1 Corinthians 4:1
      2. 1 Corinthians 11:23
      3. 1 Corinthians 15:3-5
      4. Ezekiel 3:17
      5. Galatians 1:12
      6. 1 Thessalonians 2:13
      7. 1 Thessalonians 4:15
      8. Jude 1:3

2. Not all “traditions” have the same level of authority
  - a. Jesus and the traditions of the Pharisees
    - i. Matthew 15:1-9
    - ii. Mark 7:1-13
  - b. Paul and “human traditions”
    - i. Galatians 1:14
    - ii. Colossians 2:8
  - c. Much of modern Christian teaching is tradition that originates not with Scripture but within the Church itself, or is brought into the church from non-Christian sources
    - i. Baptism and Communion practices
    - ii. Church liturgies
    - iii. Beliefs about the soul, death, the afterlife
    - iv. Traditions are the foundation of actions
3. We must distinguish between “traditions” that originate with God through the Scriptures and those that have other origins
  - a. Those that originate with God we must “surrender to”
  - b. Those that originate with man can be adapted to fit changing times
  - c. Too often we reject God’s teachings but refuse to alter human “traditions”
  - d. When we reject the “tradition”, we will find ourselves (or the next generation) abandoning long-held habits and practices