



I. WHAT IS TRADITION?

The handing down of statements, beliefs, legends, customs, information, etc., from generation to generation, especially by word of mouth or by practice.

Dictionary.com

II. HOW ARE TRADITION AND TRADITIONALISM DIFFERENT?

Tradition is the living faith of the dead, traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.

Jaroslav Pelikan

1. Traditionalism and legalism are essentially interchangeable

Legalism is the belief that I can be right with God by fastidiously keeping laws and doing good works rather than relying on His grace to be saved.

Some problems with legalism:

- If I can earn by salvation by keeping rules then I get the credit—not God
- The only way to be justified by law is to keep the whole law perfectly—which I cannot do
- I never know how many good works I need to do in order to be saved

2. Four steps that demonstrate how traditionalism becomes legalism*

- A spiritual truth is represented by a meaningful symbol
- The meaningful symbol is ritualized as a required spiritual exercise
- The rite itself is substituted for the spiritual experience that originally represented
- The perversion of legitimate religious symbols are used to justify sin

II. WHY IS TRADITIONALISM SO DANGEROUS? - MARK 7:1-23

1. Traditionalism makes traditions as authoritative as God's Word (v.1-5)

2. Traditionalism takes the focus off of God and puts it on me (v.6-8)

3. Traditionalism becomes a substitute for God's Laws (v.8-13)

What is so attractive about legalism?*

- **Control:** With legalism I make the rules—not God
- **Conceit:** A legalist can feel superior to others because they keep rules others don't

4. Traditionalism emphasizes outward behavior rather than a real relationship with God that results in inward transformation (v.14-23)

You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one. You do not want a burnt offering. The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.

Psalm 51:17-18 (NLT)