

## Got Questions: Should Christians Have Traditions?

**“Without our traditions, our lives would be as shaky as a fiddler on the roof.”**



*The Fiddler by Marc Chagall, c. 1912*

Etymology:

Greek, **παράδοσις**

Prefix, *para* - meaning “across” or “along.”

Root, *dosis* – meaning “gift.”

Latin, **trāditiō**

Prefix, *tra* - meaning “across” or “along.”

Root, *ditio* – meaning “give” or “deliver.”

So, **traditions** are that which we “gift across” or “deliver along” from one generation to the next.

### **Are Traditions Bad for Christianity?**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2:15** So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions (*παράδοσις*) that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.

- Why didn't Paul say, “Stand firm and hold fast to the teachings” or “to the truth” or “to the commands that you were taught by us?”
  - Why did he use the word traditions?

**Mark 7:13** thus making void the word of God by your tradition (*παράδοσις*) that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

- Is Jesus saying all traditions make God's Word void?
  - Is Jesus saying washing your hands before eating is a wrong practice?
  - Is Jesus saying that he expects his followers to have no traditions?

**No one has the right to turn that which is permissible into that which is obligatory.**

- Traditions that are not commanded in Scripture and which are not in conflict with Scripture may be permissible, provided they're not enforced upon people as being essential.

### **What is the Basis of Authority?**

- Does it lie solely in Scripture?
  - Or does it lie in Scripture and tradition?
- If so, then how much tradition and how much Scripture?
  - What should be the preference between traditions and Scripture?

### **Some Helpful Questions to Ask:**

- Is this practice biblical or traditional?
- Is this a personal preference, or should we mandate it?
- Is this a matter of conscience and yielding, or are we making void the word of God by keeping this tradition?



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### Paul Was Very Familiar with Unhelpful Traditions That Had Been Passed Down

#### **Galatians 1:13 – 14**

**13** For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.

**14** And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions (*παράδοσις*) of my fathers.

**Colossians 2:8** See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition (*παράδοσις*), according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:3 – “I delivered to you... what I also received”

#### **Delivered**

**Greek, παραδίδωμι** (*paradidōmi*)

Prefix, para - meaning “across” or “along.”

Root, dosis – meaning “gift.”

**Latin, tradidi**

Prefix, *tra* - meaning “across” or “along.”

Root, *ditio* – meaning “give” or “deliver.”

### The Question, as a Local Church, is not “Will We Have Traditions?”

- But what will be the traditions that we stand firm in and hold to?
  - Because those will become what we pass along.

*“There was never anything so well devised by men  
which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted.”*

- Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556)

