

PERFECT MAN

A Newsletter Designed to Communicate Truth for Perfection of the Total Man--Spirit, Soul and Body



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DEADLY RELIGION

By Booker T. Dismuke



In many of our churches great emphasis is placed on our bodies, and what kind of things we have to do in order to gain salvation--the clothing a person might wear, or whether they wear makeup or not, and many other bodily concerns. People who push this kind of propaganda suggest that *holy living* displays a holy dress code. This mode of thinking says that if you are holy, you will dress a certain way, and if a person is not dressed according to this so-called *holy* dress code, then, of course, they cannot really be saved.

Although much of the Church has bought into this legalistic thinking, by no means does that make it right and accurate. On the contrary, this kind of thinking comes from **man's futile attempt** to save himself, and/or improve on the work that Christ has done. This is a very important area of concern for the Church. It is critical that we understand where our faith lies--whether in what **we do**, or in the **finished work of Christ**.

The early Church was not unlike the Church today, in that legalistic teachings crept in. **Tradition plays a major role in corrupt teaching.** After the first mission of Paul and Barnabas, they came back to the local Church at Antioch and told of how God had used them, and that the Gentiles had gladly received the Gospel. Shortly after that, Jews who were believers came **teaching** that those Gentiles who had believed on Jesus had to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses in order to be saved. In other words, **even though they believed, they were not saved** unless they became circumcised and kept the law of Moses. This teaching became a real issue for the Church--so much so, that Paul and Barnabas were sent down to Jerusalem to get counsel from the apostles.

This issue is not something that can be ignored or swept under the carpet. These are the kinds of things **we must deal with effectively.** This story is recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Acts. In that chapter, a formula was given to the Church to deal with legalism. This counsel is good for the Church today. After hearing arguments from all sides, the final word from the apostles was sent back to the Church at Antioch in letter form, and with witnesses. This word received from these men of God should be acceptable today. (**For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things . . .**) Acts 15:28.

We must learn not to **burden** the Church with rules and regulations. This includes things that are unimportant and things that take the focus off of the work of Christ. The true greatness of the Church will soon surface when men cease to pat themselves on the back. Any time we are burdened with the concerns of this world and man's ideas of righteousness, we are in lack. The true spirit of creativity stored in us by the Spirit of God can never be released.

It is true that we must keep our souls and spirits intact, not allowing things such as fornication and deceit to consume us. Nevertheless, there is a creativity in each of us that certain traditions of men will hinder, bind up, and eat away. Jesus gave much

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\$\$ Just One Thin Dime..

By Yvonne Dismuke

Several thoughts come to mind as to how thin a dime actually is. Also worth considering-- it's easy to lose when dropped into small places. Even a child prefers to have a quarter because it's size makes it appear more valuable.

Well, how does it sound to have a family of four save ten dimes each per day (\$4.00) toward a family project? After a period of a year, this would accumulate to \$1460.00 + interest earned. A nice sum to contribute toward a vacation, new television, camcorder or other agreed venture. Creative strategies to save corporately for special projects can be enjoyable and helpful in instilling budgeting techniques.

Saving (whether singular or jointly) is essential to enable every home to be self-sufficient. Special saving projects are helpful in getting a special goal achieved. However, reserves are to be established as a subsistence factor. Ten percent of the monthly net income is a realistic contribution for unexpected events (illness, death, loss of employment). Should any portion of these savings be unexpended at the close of a year, consider short-term investment opportunities. The federal reserve of your home is the least expensive form of banking to retain more of the dollar you worked for. A dime can be a start in the direction of ultimately diminishing dependence on the current economic structure as a source of revenue.



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time and dialogue to his followers concerning the traditions of men. If he had a pet peeve, this was it! Even today, it is very irritating to live under the clouds of men's traditions.

"The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say and do not. 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. But all their works they do for to be seen of men": (Matt 23:2-5)

The Pharisees were the strictest of all the teachers and law keepers, but many of their regulations were manmade and not of God. Jesus was very hard on this group because rather than being a blessing to his people, they were a threat, even to their souls; (see verse fifteen in Chapter 23).

It was the spirit in them that was the problem. The Pharisees of old are not our concern, but the same spirit that was in them is present in much of the Church today. *"Teaching for doctrines and commandments of men."* In this twenty-third chapter, Jesus used the term *woe* more than seven times as he addressed their blindness concerning the things of God. Not only is the influence of tradition dangerous for those teaching, but for the hearers also.

Let us become aware that teachings that are not from God are from men; and therefore, very dangerous. In 1 Timothy 4:1-10, Paul recorded a prophecy of tremendous importance. *"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils: Speaking lies in hypocrisy: having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be*

received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

Paul mentions departing from the faith. The faith that Paul is speaking about is God's plan of salvation. Man will be removed from God's way to salvation, and come up with something out of his own imagination. Paul points out several things, among them a very important item: "they will give heed to **seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.**" Conditions for salvation are not in clapping your hands, fasting, nor dress codes. We can be saved while doing these things, yet we could never be, nor do enough "good" to merit Eternal Life.

It is needful to be ever watchful and on our guard against seduction. In Colossians 2:8 Paul writes; *"Beware lest any spoil (rob) you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."* Probably the best way to stand guard against the dangers of tradition, is to be yourself, and listen to your own heart, because this is where the Lord lives. Some people will not like you if you don't follow them and fit into their little mold or pattern of existence. It takes fortitude to resist these individuals and stand, being an example of believers. Verse sixteen continues, *"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days..."* Don't you change just because someone else thinks something is not right. You must make a judgment call from your own spirit. Your creativity is based on your ability to remain free in the spirit.

The apostle Peter was one of those that fell prey to the traditions of men. Paul writes about Peter's episode in the book of Galatians. Peter understood that the Gentiles were accepted of God. They had been given the Holy Ghost just like the Jews, and Peter saw no

difference in the Jew and the Gentile. Because of this understanding, his lifestyle, in certain ways, was like the Gentiles. None of this was a problem for him. However, when certain Jews came around, Peter concealed his actions. Peter's failure to remain vigilant was because of fear--fear of what others would think. This fear caused many of the Saints to walk in hypocrisy. (Gal 2:11-14)

The position that the people of God must take today is the same that the apostle Paul took. In that same chapter Paul said he withstood him (Peter) to the face, because of his actions. Can you imagine that? Peter was senior in the church, however, Paul understood the necessity of **confronting this error, and establishing truth.** In the Church today we have been very passive concerning the traditions of men. Just as John the Baptist said when Jesus started his ministry, *"He must increase, and I must decrease."*

It is high time the Church allowed the Spirit of God to lead her to the place of overflowing, victory, and wholeness; on to that secret place of

Allow the Spirit



to lead...

the perfect man, so that the world might believe on the living Saviour, and that we

might be one in Christ, and him in us. In our churches we sing that great praise "Yes! Yes! Yes!" But let us, from this moment on, sing that hymn with true conviction, and with steadfast intentions. Let us cast our old man upon him, and yield our spirit, soul, and body to the Lord Jesus.

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." (Jude 24:25)

