

THE CHRISTIAN APPROACH

I. Traditional Thessalonians Acts 17:1-9

- A. Not all close their ears (vs. 4), but the majority were married to their traditions.
 - 1. I'm not talking about doctrinal tradition delivered by Paul. Paul would even write to the church in Thessalonica to keep the traditions (2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6). We're talking about the traditions of men (Mark 7:1-13).
- B. Why do you believe what you do? Ever hear of the mother who'd cut the ends of the roast beef off before putting it in the oven?
 - 1. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 Amen - but we have to branch out on our own - own our own faith. Step out of the boat, etc.
- C. What a Christian or local body should do with tradition.
 - 1. Some things we do because of tradition (not necessarily bad).
 - 2. Some things we put to the side.
 - 3. However, we NEVER want to allow tradition to get in the way especially if it causes division or is wrong. It has to go.

II. Amused Athenians Acts 17:16-21

- A. These are individuals that always want to hear something new.
 - 1. There are some individuals who, like those in Athens, enjoy hearing "strange things" and would enjoy spending their time in nothing but hearing and doing something new.
 - 2. Warning - all new things become old. If you always need something new you're in trouble. You'll never be satisfied.
- B. Clarity
 - 1. Sometimes it's worth looking at something with fresh eyes, but you've got to be careful.
 - a) Preacher needs to be mindful of audience and not be lazy. However, a preacher shouldn't be judged better or worse because of his level of wit, clever approaches, or because he's trying to be edgy or simply different.
 - b) Singing - it's good to mix in newer songs because it should accommodate all individuals. You can go to both extremes - all traditional hymns or all new songs. Or how you sing - have you ever caught yourself singing and you probably look like the most depressing person in the world as you sing "Joy to the world"? At the same time don't go crazy on anybody - let's try and keep the moonwalking to a minimum.
 - c) Prayer should be thoughtful - try to be genuine in prayer. That may mean you use traditional phrases. That's fine, but let it be genuine. At the same time - don't try and sound different just to be different. Let your prayer come from the heart. Strive for sincerity - not slickness.

III. Balanced Bereans Acts 17:10-15

- A. We need to be eager about God's word
 - 1. It's very hard to be balanced if we're not in the Bible. Then what we view to be balanced (because who doesn't want to be balanced?) is based on our own standard and not God's.
- B. We need to examine to see if it's so
 - 1. That needs to be our goal at first. Not what do you think or how do you feel - what does God say.
- C. Hold to it no matter what
 - 1. There may be some who don't like what you do - they stir things up. Well, let 'em stir. There's nothing you can do about that.
 - 2. Our teachings and practices should be based in God's word and what makes sense for this group. We'll do what lifts up and try our best to keep it balanced and peaceful.