

STUDY 5

Grace in God's Kingdom

- 1. This passage stimulates us to think about traditions. It would be wrong to conclude that traditions are always wrong. But what is wrong is when traditions add burdens or contradict the clear teachings of scripture correctly interpreted. What traditions do you have in your church or Christian community? Are they helpful or useful? Is there a process for reviewing them and changing them?**

Perhaps a good place to begin would be to make a list of traditions. Here are some examples:

- In our church we always meet at 11.00am.
- In our church the pastor's wife always leads worship.
- In our church the children have a separate meeting.
- In our church everyone puts on their very best clothes for Sunday worship.
- In our church we meet in a school classroom.

No church can function without some traditions. Traditions reflect the practical circumstances of the particular congregation and the general culture. The essential thing to think about is whether they are helpful. As soon as they become a hindrance or a limitation, or when circumstances change, it is time for a rethink.

- 2. A Christian has been set free from living under the law. This does not mean that a Christian lives a lawless life doing anything he or she feel like! Explain why? There is more on this important subject in Paul's letter to the Galatians. See <https://bit.ly/SlicesGalatians>**

3. At this stage it is probably not wise to go into great depth. But legalism (living by rules) has been a problem for the church over the ages. It is good for Christians to have a practical understanding of Galatians and Romans - so definitely one for future study.

- 4. What for you has been the most striking point in this study and why?**

As has been said before, responses will vary. It is good to keep the discussion focussed on practical matters, things that will make a difference to they way we live. There are some verses in Paul's letters which give some instruction on what is helpful and what is not (*1 Timothy 1:4, 4:17; 2 Timothy 4:4*).

- 5. Can you think of a situation (either from the Bible or from your own observation) where somebody has behaved in a religious manner and yet this was cruel.**

In the *Parable of the Good Samaritan* the priest passed by on the other side. He was following the religious rules about cleanness. But he ignored the practical needs of a fellow human being who had been beaten and robbed.