***Culture* versus *Commandment* (and *Christianity*)**

(When How We Were Raised Clashes with God’s Word)

Many of us came from different cultures, both *geographically* by placeand *chronologically* by time. We were “brought up” where there may have also been “culturally accepted” practices that were ***then*** in direct opposition to God’s Word. Obviously, we have to “work through” our *cultural backgrounds/practices* to arrive at obedience to God and His Word. This process may have been difficult at times. For example:

* **Racism-** For some of our older members especially, racism may have not only been “culturally acceptable,” but also “legal” if not mandated. Both ancestrally practiced prejudice and war can produce intense racism, but the NT is clear on the matter, Acts 10:34-35; Gal.3:28. So, will you choose what our parents or grandparents thought and taught over God’s commandment?
* **Polygamy-** Having multiple if not many wives was the “norm” for most of the ancient world, and is still common in some parts of it today. It appears to me that even in the OT, polygamy was *allowed* for a time despite not being God’s *original* or *final intent* for mankind. If polygamy had been God’s *original* intent for man, then His desire for marriage to *“be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth”* surely would have included multiple wives for Adam, cf. Gen.1:26-27; 2:18-24. But it didn’t. Likewise, the *biblical picture* surely would have also included *multiple brides/churches* for Christ,Eph.5:22-32. But it doesn’t. If you had come from a culture practicing *polygamy,* would you choose cultureover God’s will?
* **Immodesty-** In some parts of the world, both *then* and *now,* women commonly go topless and men wear next to nothing (which, by the way, dramatically contributes to the points above and below this one!). By contrast, in some cultures of the *past* and *present,* immodesty is more likely to refer to ostentatious *hair styles,* excessive *ornamentation,* and extravagant *clothing.* In differing cultures, both extremes of *modesty* were/are not only allowed but also expected. However, God’s word forbids both ends of the spectrum, cf. Rom.13:13b; 1Tim.2:9-10; 1Pet.3:1-4. If such were “your culture,” would you abandon it for God’s word, or vice versa?
* **Sexual Promiscuity-** The world apart from God has largely always been sexually promiscuous. At times, sexual promiscuity *prior* to marriage was generally frowned upon by society, but ran rampant with extra-marital affairs *afterwards*. Sexual gratification even became part of pagan “religious” ceremony at some times and places. If this was the kind of world or “religion” from which you came, could you and would you abandon it for God’s way, Rom.13:13a?

Now let’s shift gears just a bit. In our Men’s Bible Study last week, one of the points we discussed had to do with why people were most-often *disinclined* to believe in God, or the Bible as His inspired Word to man. One of the several astute observations put forth was that the Scriptures are ***currently*** in direct conflict with *culturally accepted* practices. In my estimation, this is “spot on.” Consider these *accepted* if not *expected* practices our present culture endorses:

* **Premarital Sex-** Abstinence prior to marriage is *now* viewed as “not realistic,” and contraceptives are readily available to all ages and genders, Heb.13:4. Will you reject *culture* for *commandment?*
* **Abortion-** 13 States & D.C. require no parental notification for minors; in all the other states, a doctor or judge can waive the parental notification requirements for a minor. Will you reject *culture* for *commandment?*
* **Transgender and Homosexuality-** Not only is transgenderism and homosexuality *protected* by law against “discrimination” (which means it is often illegal to say anything *against* them), they are *endorsed* (by statutes of homosexual marriage and its benefits) and *codified* (by required allowances for transgenderism), 1Cor.6:9-10. Will you reject *culture* for *commandment,* or vice versa?
* **Marriage (definition, conduct, divorce, and remarriage)-** It is currently defined, administered, practiced, and absolved however you desire rather than how God ordained, Matt.19:3-9. Will you reject God’s *commands* for marriage in favor of the current *culture?*
* **Child-Rearing and Discipline-** Any form of corporal punishment is *now* labeled “abuse;” and in some cases, it is even legislated as such, cf. Prov.13:24; 19:18; 22:15. Will you reject the wisdom of God’s *commands* for the *culture* of man’s wisdom?
* **Secular Humanism-** We’ve previously had lessons on the current cultures’ mantras to “Follow your heart,” “Do what makes you happy,” etc. Will you reject *culture* of the world for the *commandment* of God, or vice versa?

**Conclusions:**

1. **We all have *cultural biases* and *practices* that must be rejected and overcome to fully believe and practice what *God commands* and *teaches.***
2. **The real question thus becomes “Are we willing to reject our/your *culture* for God’s *commands?”***