

## Call No One Father

by Tricia Berg

*And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and He is in heaven.  
Matthew 23:9*

I think we can all realize that this is not referring to family relationships, but spiritual. The question begs to be asked—why do some people do this today after Jesus Himself commanded us NOT to? Jesus also forbade His disciples from being called Rabbi (teacher) or Master. They were not to seek glory for themselves, but to acknowledge Him as Head of ALL. (Col. 1:18-19, Eph. 1:15-23, 1Tim. 2:5-6, 1 Pet. 5:1-5)

*Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. **They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders**, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. But **you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called masters, for you have one Master, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.**  
Matthew 23:1-12*

Notice that in the passage above, Jesus also criticized how they wanted to appear holy to others by outward appearances, and addressed the problem of adding to His words to make obedience to God too difficult. For example, they had defined how many steps a person was permitted to take on the Sabbath. They made little things into big ones and ignored the important things—the SPIRIT of the law.

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have **neglected** the weightier matters of the law: **justice and mercy and faithfulness**. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. **You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!** "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but **inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence**. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean." Matthew 23:23-26*

In this age, some people are STILL adding to the requirements for salvation. They say that Jesus does His part and we do ours. That is simply NOT so. Jesus FINISHED the work of salvation. (John 19:30, Gal. 2:16, Heb. 7:27) We obey His commands (summarized by loving God and loving our neighbor, which fulfills the entire law when

truly done - Matt. 7:12, Mark 12:28-34, Rom. 13:8-10) BECAUSE we ARE saved—not because what He did wasn't enough. The fact that He rose from the dead was proof that His sacrifice on our behalf was accepted. (Acts 17:30-31, Rom. 1:4)

*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even **when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved**—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:1-10*

No amount of works will save a person, and no amount of effort on OUR part will enable us to please God. We must have FAITH and rely on the power of God in order to overcome temptation and do God's will instead of our own (the way we did before He came to dwell in us). (Heb. 11:6, Jam. 1:12-18, Phil. 2:12-16, Gal. 5:16, Rom. 8:5-9, Eph. 3:16, Col. 1:11, 2Thess. 1:11-12, 2Pet. 1:3-12, Jam. 4:4-10, 1Pet. 5:6-11)

*But now the righteousness of God has been manifested **apart from the law**, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—**the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.** For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are **justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.** This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be **just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.** Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of **faith.** For we hold that one is **justified by faith apart from works of the law.** Romans 3:21-28*

Another practice that Jesus disapproved of was repetitive prayers—again, for the purpose of appearing holy to others.

*"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be **seen by others.** Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, **do not heap up empty phrases***

**as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”**  
*Matthew 6:5-8*

Jesus severely scolded the Jews during the time of His earthly ministry for making their traditions into doctrine. Let's not make that same mistake in this age when we have the benefit of both the Old and New Testaments. Let's show our love for our Savior by treasuring His word and caring more about pleasing Him than others. (Gal. 1:10, 1Tim. 4:16)

*And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, "**This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.**" And he said to them, "**You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!**"* Mark 7:6-9

If we truly want to KNOW God, then we need to READ His words OFTEN (and NO other materials have the authority of Scripture—God is not “editing” or “updating” His Word throughout the ages). We need to take what He said into our hearts and put it to use in our DAILY lives. Then we'll be ready for His return. 🙏

*Indeed, **all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus** will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you **wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*** 2 Timothy 3:12-17

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.* Romans 12:1-2

Written by Tricia Berg, (January 2018), 4 pp. inc. digital scrapbook layout If you have been blessed by this article, you are free to share but do not claim as your own or sell, and do not make modifications and attribute them to me. You can download as many free pdf devotional articles as you wish from my blog: <http://layoutfortoday.blogspot.com/> (The most recent articles are at the bottom of the page after you click on the “free pdf downloads” tab at the top of the page.) You can also read this article there, where the Bible verses should pop up when you hover over the cites.



quickpage, kit: What Truly Matters by Laitha