

October 17 Answers

- 1) Jesus told the Pharisees: “You are **experts** at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your **tradition**” (Mark 7:9 NASB). The traditions of the elders had originally been put in place as **guardrails** to keep people on the road of **righteousness**. As time passed, the elders emphasized their traditions more than God’s commands, and soon they took **precedence** over the Word. At that point, rather than keeping people on the right path, the traditions **invalidated** Scripture and **guided** people away from God’s will. This teaches us that people have a tendency to **honor** their own rules above God’s Word. If we’re not careful, we can fall into this same trap, and it will lead to what Isaiah said: “This people honors me with their **lips**, but their **heart** is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrine the commandments of **men**” (Mark 7:6–7). The **Gentile** mother with the demon oppressed daughter stands in sharp contrast with the **Jews** who refused to believe in Jesus. Imagine, here was a “**Canaanite** woman,” someone the Jews considered unclean, yet she called Jesus, “Son of **David**,” showing that she believed him to be the **Messiah** (Matt 15:22)! Jesus had just spent months reaching out to the Jews, teaching and preaching in their synagogues, healing their sick, and they had rejected him in **unbelief**. Here, in Gentile country, he ignored the woman’s cry for help, called her a “**dog**,” refused to give her the “children’s bread” (Mark 7:27), and instead of leaving in anger or unbelief, the woman **persisted** in faith. She agreed that the Jews must come **first**, but she added that the Gentiles should **benefit** from their blessings (Matt 15:27). Jesus must have been smiling as he said, “O woman, **great** is your faith! Be it done as you desire.”