

## **LIFE IS TOO COMPLICATED**

Life is getting too complicated! Computers run everything from gas pumps to automobiles. We even can program our telephone. The list goes on and on. When Moses led his people out of Egypt 3,300 years ago, life was simple. The rules were simple. Follow God. Trust in God. God will provide. They got up every morning to find manna spread out for them to eat. It may have been boring, but it was simple.

At the time of Christ, 1,300 years later, Israel had managed to take something very simple and make it very complex. Israel had become a country of rules. They had 613 laws. They had major laws and minor laws. There were dietary laws which made a lot of sense, such as don't eat pork in a land where it would spoil quickly. There were also laws such as if one is not to work on Sabbath, how many steps can one take. (Israel was using the law to keep alive a faith based on events of long time before.)

In Matthew 22:34-40, we are told that a lawyer comes to Jesus, and asks "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus responds, with NO hesitation, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets." This is, I believe, the first recorded use of the KISS principle, Keep It Simple, Stupid. And God's message IS simple! Jesus was trying to get the focus off the following of the rules and back onto God. He wrote the whole Bible in two sentences. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

So we come to today, 2,000 years after the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. It is a technological age, an age of reason, an age when children are taught from first grade on to question everything. There is nothing wrong with questioning science. Indeed there is nothing wrong with questioning God. But let's not lose sight of the fundamental truths. We

are to love God. We are to love your neighbor. And we are to love ourselves. These can be taken to extremes, of course. But their fundamental truth remains. It's NOT complicated. We live in an age when we have a hard time accepting the simple. Perhaps this is why Jesus tells us that we are to have the faith of a child. They easily accept what they do not understand.

Karl Barth was one of the greatest scholars and theologians of the twentieth century. He wrote volumes on the nature of God and on the meaning and implications of the Bible. One time he was asked by a young reporter to summarize his writings. All conversation around him stopped to hear how he would answer such an impossible question. He replied, "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so"

It really is NOT complicated.

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