

Need Directions?

Do you remember the big black billboards by the side of the road? Tell the children I love them - God. Don't Make Me Come Down There - God. And Need Directions? - God. The last one reminds me of Moses saying in Deuteronomy 4:1-2 "And now, O Israel, give heed to the statutes and the ordinances which I teach you, and do them." God, through Moses, was giving the people of Israel directions.

But when we are confronted by directions, most of us look for the loophole. If the speed limit is 55, it is OK to do 5 MPH over. If doctor tells us to exercise every day, 3 times a week is OK. If on a 1800 calorie a day diet, a little cheesecake can't hurt. We lose sight of the wisdom of the rule. It's a rule, so we look for the loophole.

By time of Jesus, Israel had come to worship God by attempting to follow the laws. Then problem, however was that they had lost sight of God. All they could see was the Laws. Some of them were basic rules. Don't eat pork; it goes bad quickly. Wash your hands before you eat because much eating was done from a common bowl. But some rules had grown into HUGE ceremonies such as purifying ones self and the bowls and cups. We are told in Mark 7 that Jesus' disciples did not do this ceremony. Following Jesus' instruction, they cleaned their hands, but did not follow any ritual. The Pharisees complain to Jesus and He quotes Prophet Isaiah "*You leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men.*" THIS is what Israel had done. By living by rules, they had lost sight of God.

Jesus came to them, and us, to return our view of God. Jesus came to challenge the system of laws that had lost its way. He tries to refocus the Jews, and our, thinking. Jesus says what we do on the outside will not defile us. What matters is where our heart is.

In Mark 12:28-29, a teacher of the Law asks Jesus which of the commandments greatest. What are God's Directions? And Jesus responds to Love God, Love Your Neighbor, and Love Yourself. Of course Jesus later issues one new, all encompassing commandment: Love One Another. These are God's Directions. Maybe somebody ought to put that on a billboard.

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