**What is this all about?**

**Introduction**

1. We Christians are a peculiar people in many ways (***1 Peter 4:4 – “they think it strange”***).
	1. Our commitment to worship, study, prayer, holiness, sacrifice, etc. and the way prioritizing these manifests itself causes some to wonder why we live in such a way.
	2. Why do we do the things we do, act the way we act, and think the way we think?
	3. Is it merely preference? Tradition? Family business? Assimilation into the family we joined through marriage? Habit (what we’ve always done)? Comfort? Effort to maintain the status quo?
		1. If we were separated from everything and everyone we know in our life, would we still be living the same way in subjection to the NT, or would such take away the reason we do it now?
		2. Something we must each ask ourselves personally.
	4. What is this all about?
2. Many of the Jews were guilty of not grasping what their lives as Jews were all about:
	1. **Romans 2:17** – rest on the law and made boast in God.
	2. **John 5:39-40** – missed the point of the scripture – bringing to Christ (**cf. Galatians 3:24; Romans 10:4**).
		1. Not that they cared nothing about the scriptures, but that they missed the point.
			1. They were diligent students of the OT scriptures, but ironically were not searchers of truth.
			2. They knew the text but did not know what it was all about.
		2. **John 5:41-43** – they rejected the One their law pointed to ultimately because they did not love God – all their service, and what they stood for was disconnected from a relationship with God – they missed what it was all about. (**John 7:17** – not able to receive Jesus’ will because they had not really desired to do God’s will.)
		3. **John 11:48; 12:42-43** – only concerned about their place and nation, not what purpose such ministry and nation served.
	3. So, even though they knew so much about the law, and were diligent to do much of what it said, when Christ who was the whole focus came, they rejected Him, and thus all they were involved in was meaningless.
3. As Christians, members of the Lord’s church, what is this all about?
	1. If we miss this, we miss everything.
	2. It is not enough to just do, or think a certain way, or know certain things. We need to know what the point of it all is for it to have any meaning.
4. Growing to be Like Christ
5. There are things we Christians are (or should be) engaging in on a regular basis:
	1. **Acts 2:42** – things continued in.
	2. **Acts 20:7** – regular assemblies. (**cf. Hebrews 10:25** – not forsaking)
		1. Lord’s Supper and Preaching
		2. Singing – **Ephesians 5:19**
	3. **Ephesians 4:8, 11** – the gifts Christ left for us.
6. Why do we continue to do such things? What is this all about?
	1. Is it just a matter of routine?
	2. Is it ritualistic? (If our hearts aren’t sincerely involved it has become such whether we know it or not.)
	3. When we are kept from these things in a manner beyond our power is it a big deal?
	4. Do such activities amount to anything, or are they mindless, or even simply intellectual?
7. Learning Christ:
	1. Apostles’ doctrine (**Acts 2:42**) – **1 Thessalonians 2:13; Galatians 4:19** – word of God working in you for Christ to be formed in you.
		1. Preaching is of this content, and for this purpose.
	2. Singing – **Colossians 3:16** – word of Christ dwelling in us. (teaching, admonishing)
	3. Gifts Christ left – **Ephesians 4:11-13** – edify in the faith to maturity, Christ being the standard. (NOTE: ***“till we all”*** – this is what it is all about for everyone)
8. Everything we do which comes from and involves the word of God is all about us becoming like Christ.
	1. Not to simply be a “good person.”
	2. **Philippians 1:20-21** – Christ magnified, to live is Christ.
		1. **Galatians 2:20** – by Christ living in us.
	3. Anything not for edification misses the point – **1 Corinthians 14:26**
		1. Edification (building up) to be like Christ – **Ephesians 4:12-13**
		2. **1 Corinthians 14:12-17** – requires understanding (attention, participation, engagement of inward man)
	4. Walking in newness of life – **Romans 6:4**
		1. **(v. 6)** – crucified body of sin.
		2. **(vv. 5, 8)** – united with Christ’s resurrection, living with Him.
		3. **(v. 11)** – died (separated from) to sin, alive to God.
		4. **(v. 13)** – members presented to God for righteousness.
		5. (**v. 19**) – for holiness (complete separation from sin, and consecration to the will of God).
		6. Therefore, to involve self in these matters without fully leaving sin and cleaving to God is to miss what it is all about – **2 Timothy 3:5** – form of godliness and denying its power.
9. Glorifying God
10. We are told the proper response to God’s gift of salvation is to glorify Him – **1 Corinthians 6:20**
11. Growing to be like Christ serves this purpose:
	1. **Romans 3:23** – fell short of God’s glory in sin. (Growing out of sin and into Christ accomplishes glorifying God.)
	2. Christ’s purpose – **John 17:4** – work to glorify God on earth.
		1. Accomplished, not by seeking to do His own will separate from His Father’s, but in keeping His Father’s will – **John 5:17, 19, 30; 7:16-18**
	3. We act the way we act, and think the way we think (as individuals, and as a local church) NOT because it is how we have always done things, or because it is how our ancestors carried themselves, or because it is what WE think is best.
	4. We do it because we are seeking to glorify God by being one with Him – in His will.
12. **1 Corinthians 10:31** – do all to the glory of God.
	1. Context – liberties of eating meats offered to idols, but taking it case by case, and only acting to God’s glory (even if it means forgoing liberties).
	2. Can be generally applied to anything – what are we doing, and why? For God’s glory?
13. **Colossians 3:23** – heartily as to the Lord.
	1. Context – Bondservants obeying masters, not with eyeservice.
	2. Can be generally applied – are we acting in a way that is fitting before God?
	3. Why do we act the way we act at work? School? In our relationships? In public? Etc. – SHOULD BE FOR GOD’S GLORY. (I.e. not simply to be a good employee, student, friend, etc.)
14. Laying Hold on Eternal Life
15. The things we do, or do not do are not a matter of inconsequence. These are not “take it or leave it” matters.
	1. These things have eternal consequences.
	2. If we do not understand that what we do in life is all about our eternal destiny then we will not see a desired outcome – our spiritual endeavors will fail as they are not understood.
		1. We will be more inclined to follow our will if we aren’t thinking of eternity.
		2. **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Colossians 3:17** – eternity and judgment at the forefront of our minds will be the impetus of all the decisions we make as we seek the Lord’s will.
16. Paul’s instruction to Timothy – **1 Timothy 6:11-12** – pursuit of spiritual matters to lay hold on eternal life.
	1. Context – Not a discontented love of money, and the ungodly pursuit of such, but the heavenly focus.
17. Like Paul – **Philippians 3:12-14, 20-4:1** – “one thing I do” – presses forward to the goal of eternal life in heaven.
18. Our perspective on the things we do as Christians should be that we are carefully working out our salvation – **Philippians 2:12-13** – allowing God to work in us toward that end. (**Philippians 1:6** – such is the work He began, and we are letting Him finish it.)
19. If the decisions we make each day, and the regular things we do such as worship, and Bible study, are not done with the goal of laying hold on eternal life then we are missing the point.
20. Learning and growing in God’s will should not simply be something confined to the assembly and regularly scheduled Bible classes:
	1. If our focus and priority in life is on laying hold on eternal life, we will be prioritizing such consumption of God’s will daily.
	2. **Acts 20:32** – word of God able to give us an inheritance.
	3. **1 Timothy 4:16** – when we take heed to God’s word we will save ourselves.
	4. **2 Peter 1:8-11** – we are making our call and election sure, seeking an abundant supply of entrance into heaven.

**Conclusion**

1. It is imperative that we understand what this is all about – i.e. the Christian life.
2. If we are “following Christ” in these forms without an understanding of them and their purpose, we are not truly following Christ – we have become a shell of what He has called us to be.
3. Who we are and what we do is not about the shallow reasons most people do anything, but if we fall into such reasons (tradition, family, habit, preference) then we’re not accomplishing anything more than the rest of the world.