**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**Why Do I Have To Follow God’s Rules?**

How many of our statements begin with the words, “I think?” “I think” this and “I think” that. We have opinions about everything. “I think lemon ice box pie is the best desert one could eat.” “I think Bo Jackson is the best running back that ever played the game of football.” “I think Apple computers are better than PCs.” But our opinions are not limited to such inconsequential matters as football, deserts and computers. American’s have opinions about everything. How many times have you heard people say things like, “I think people should stop condemning homosexuals and just let people be with whoever they want to be with.” Or “I think a woman should have the right to abort her unborn child if that’s what she wants to do.” Or “I think I should be able to say whatever I want to say, or wear whatever I want to wear and no one should condemn me for it.” Of course, you can begin to see a problem shaping up. What happens when my opinion about the way things should be, run contrary to the rules? A lot of Americans just do not like being made to follow the rules; and they often don’t. There are people who fly down the interstate going 90 miles an hour because no one was going to tell them how fast they can drive. Even when it comes to rules that God gives us, there are a lot of people that balk. Do I really have to accept what the Bible says about the practice of homosexuality? Does God have a right to tell me how I can talk, what I should wear, and who I can sleep with? Why can’t I do what I want to do? Or to put the question another way, why do I have to follow God’s rules? This is the focus of our lesson today.

First of all, we are to follow God’s rules because of who we are. One of the very first things the Bible does is identify who we are at the most basic, fundamental and important level. Genesis 1:26-27 says, *“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”* God created man and woman. I am the product of God’s creative work. He made me. Now that is important for a lot of reasons. It tells us that man is not some grand cosmic accident, but the intentional work of a grand Intelligent Designer. It tells us that man is special. We are made “in His image.” That sets him apart from everything else God made. But the fact that God created us in His image also says something important about our relationship to God. He is our Creator; we are His creation. As such, God possesses inherent authority over us. To put it simply, He has the right to tell us what to do. His position as Creator gives Him that right. Understanding that this is our relationship with God, we then have no right to quibble with His instructions. Isaiah, the prophet says in Isaiah 45:9, *“Woe to him who strives with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' Or shall your handiwork say, 'He has no hands'?”* Isaiah had been writing about how God will deliver His people from captivity by the hands of a heathen king. Some might argue or complain about that. Isaiah says, “Woe to him who strives with His Maker.” He says that this makes about as much sense as clay quibbling with the potter about how he is being formed. That is absurd. When God makes a promise of salvation it is not appropriate for His creatures to argue with Him about it. Once I understand who I am (God’s creation; He made me), then some very basic life principles become crystal clear. First, He has the right to tell me what to do. Second, I’m obligated to do what He said. Third, it is grossly arrogant to think I know better than God how things ought to be and to argue with Him about what He has said. Isaiah 40:6 says, *“Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has taught Him?”* Who directs God? Who counsels Him? No creature is in the position to argue with God. This is a reason I must obey His rules.

But there is still another reason that I can’t just do what I want to do, and that I must follow God’s rules. That is because of what God said. This Creator who made us, and who has the right to tell us what to do, has expectations of us. God did not make us, put us on this planet and then turn us loose to do whatever we want to do. God has always given rules to His creation. The very first couple, Adam and Eve, had rules (Gen. 2:16-17). The Israelites, God’s people of the Old Covenant, were given a law through Moses that was filled with all kinds of instructions about how they were to approach God and treat each other, things they were to do and things they were not to do. God has given us a law too. The New Testament contains God’s rules for all of us. It is filled with instructions about how we approach Him and treat each other, things we are supposed to do and things we are not to do. I’m not free to do whatever I want to do because my Creator has expectations. He has given me rules. Someone may ask, “Why do you Christians make such a big deal about homosexuality. The answer is because God condemns that practice (Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11) Another may ask, “Why do you oppose a woman’s right to abortion?” The answer is God’s word, the Bible clearly identifies the unborn as a living person, whose life is valuable in God’s sight (Ex. 21:22-25; Ps. 139:13-16). Taking the life of that unborn child is the shedding of innocent blood, which God hates and condemns (Prov. 6:16-17). Another may ask, “Why are you Christians so particular about using foul language and wearing modest clothing?” God gives instructions about the way we are to talk (Eph. 4:29) and about how we are to dress (1 Tim. 2:9-10). My point is that God has laid out His expectations for us in His book, the Bible. The problem is that we don’t like what He said; we don’t like the rules. When God’s word is brought to bear on controversial moral questions, people begin to protest, “I think people should be able to live the way they want to live.” “I think you should stop judging people.” “I think…” “I think…” But when people say this, they’ve forgotten who they are. They are created by One far greater than they are. They’ve forgotten that this Creator has expectations of His creatures. He has given them rules to live by. If there is a God who created, and the Bible is His book, His rules, then what I think is irrelevant. As the Creator, God gets to make the rules. It doesn’t matter whether I like them or not. In fact, it is arrogant to lay my “think so” alongside His, much less elevate it above His will. God, as the Creator, has given me His law. My job is to learn it and live it, not quibble with it. This is why I can’t do just whatever I want to do.

Another reason why I must follow God’s rules is because of what is coming. Many people disregard God’s laws and some even arrogantly scoff at His rules, as though God does not care and they will never be held accountable for their actions. But this simply is not true! Judgment day is coming. God has always held people accountable for their violations of His law. Adam and Eve were given a law. They violated that law and were punished for it (Genesis 3). We read in the Old Testament Scriptures of God giving a law to the Israelites. They broke it and God punished them. And God will hold us accountable too. One day we are all going to stand before Christ and give an account of the decisions we have made in this life. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”* We all will be judged according to the things we have done in this body. Paul said in Romans 2:6-11 that God, *“‘will render to each one according to his deeds’: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness--indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.”*  Notice, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish awaits those who reject the laws of God. This is why I cannot do whatever I want to do. There is a day coming when I will be held accountable for my actions.

But there is still another reason why I must obey the rules of God. It is because of who God is. God is not just our Creator. That’s important, but as the Creator, He knows man better than anyone, better than any friend or counselor. And you see, God is a loving Creator. He is a benevolent God. He loves us and seeks only our good. We know He loves us because He demonstrated His love for us in the most dramatic way. He sent His Son Jesus to be the sacrifice necessary to save us from our sins. Romans 5:8 says, *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* And since He loves us, He wants what’s best for us. This love tells us something about His commands. It tells us that every rule, every instruction is for our good. Some people think that God gave us rules just to keep us from having a good time. This is not true. He gave us His law for our good. Concerning the law God gave Israel, Moses said, *“And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day.”* (Deut. 6:24) This is also true of the law of Christ that we are under today. It is for our good. Jesus said if we would leave all for Him, to obey Him, then we would have all we need in this life and in the world to come eternal life. He said in Luke 18:29-30, *“Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.”* What a wonderful promise. There is a two-fold tragedy that results from disobeying God. First, I’m going to be in trouble – eternal trouble – when that judgment day come and I’m held accountable for my actions. And second, along the way to that day, I’m going to miss the wonderful blessings in this life that come to those who obey.

Why do I have to follow God’s rules? Because He is my Creator, He has the right to instruct me, He loves me and wants what’s best for me, and I am going to stand before Him in judgment one day.

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