

# Christianity is Not a List of Do's and Don'ts?

by Sebastian R Fama

"Christianity is not a list of do's and don'ts," the speaker said to a receptive group of church goers. He continued: "It is a relationship with Jesus Christ." It is true that we are called into a relationship with Jesus. But that relationship, like any other relationship, requires us to act in a certain way. And with Jesus being God, obedience would be a natural part of it. But obedience to what?

Moments before ascending into heaven, Jesus gave His apostles the great commission. He said: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). Since we know that Jesus taught many things, we can confidently assume that his teachings would comprise a list.

Jesus made other comments that would indicate we need to be aware of a list. In Matthew 5:18-19 we find Him saying: "For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

Much of Protestantism teaches the doctrine of "Assurance of Salvation." That is the idea that a true believer will not be condemned for any sins committed after his becoming a Christian. Combine that with the no rules teaching and the situation becomes even more dire. Human nature being what it is, you are going to have some Christians engaging in sinful behavior without thinking twice. And that would contradict Jesus' command to repent (Matthew 4:17, Acts 3:19). To repent means to turn away from your sins, not be indifferent to them. And a failure to repent, makes salvation impossible (2 Peter 3:9).

It is true that Christianity is not merely a list of do's and don'ts. Having a personal relationship with Jesus is of great importance. Jesus Himself tells us: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Mathew 22:37). And that would be quite impossible without knowing Him on a personal level. Logically then, when one loves God, one desires to follow His teachings. And that would mean using a list.