

One of the characteristics of organized religion is a strong desire to keep the sheep within *their* fold. A common way of accomplishing this goal is to create a legalistic environment where members develop a strong fear to leave. With the passing of time, various denominations within the Visible Church have developed skills to do just that.

Most of them do not encourage congregants to interpret the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to discover its true meaning, as Scripture declares. They claim, either directly or indirectly, that this belongs exclusively to their church hierarchy.

With this deliberate error follows another. Those who hold to it have declared, either directly or indirectly, that their leader is infallible. He is sometimes called spiritual father, your holiness, master, and so forth. This is a total disregard for Jesus' clear teaching on names and titles.

Concerning church services, many have standard written sermons and prayers that are repeated Sunday after Sunday, although there is some variety in the choice of biblical topics and hymns. The Bible tells us that when we preach or pray, our words are to be inspired, and not like the babblings of pagans that appeal to the senses and nothing more.

In addition to these unbiblical practices, some denominations strongly urge their members to abstain from certain foods or fast completely for a determined period of time to obtain God's favour and intervention.

The Bible connects such things directly to the doctrines of demons, because they were designed to be a matter of personal conviction, not of external compulsion. The Apostle Paul warns that Christians should not judge one another based on what they eat or drink and when they do it.