

## I'll Do It the Old Way

A few months ago, I had the opportunity to design and build a machine to make a job easier for the production workers in our shop. They have to stamp new manufacturing dates on wheels that they rebuilt and used hand number stamps to do this. Holding a small stamp in one hand, they whacked the stamp with a hammer which left an imprint in the wheel. It was a labor intensive process not to mention the mashed fingers from misguided hammer blows. However, the new machine stamps the wheels automatically and there's no need for a hammer. Shortly after the new machine arrived, I walked through the shop to find "Jim", one of the older workers stamping the wheels using the old hand stamps. "Why don't you use the new machine?" I asked. Jim looked at me and grinned, "I think I'll just do it the old way." Then he proceeded to whack the number stamps by hand, Clank! Clank! Clank!

Just as Jim was resistant to leave the old comfortable way of wheel stamping, many people hold on to parts of the Old Testament. They use parts of the Old Law to justify some religious practice or tradition such as music or observing special days or Sabbaths. However the New Testament states, "*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.*" (*Romans 3:28*). The Old Law was replaced by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (*Romans 8:2*) some 2,000 years ago when the church was established (*Acts 1-2*). We serve God under a better covenant (agreement) and are free from stiff restrictions that the Law of Moses required of those who lived under it (*Hebrews 8:13*). The Old Testament has served its purpose, to bring us to Christ (*Galatians 3:23-25*) but many folks hold on to certain aspects of the "old way".

In some cases there are those who try to take the New Testament and turn it into a strict code or list of rules to which we must strictly adhere to. But Jesus corrected the Pharisees of His day by saying that they were, "*making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.*" (*Mark 7:13*). We are free in Christ through obedience to God through the Gospel (Good News). It is the power of salvation to all who obey it (*Romans 1:16*) and live faithfully under the law of grace. We must accept the fact that Christians live by the Gospel and not by the oldness of the letter (*Romans 7:6*). Leaving our religious traditions behind can be very difficult, but it's something that we must do in order to comply with the commandments of Jesus, the very words that will judge us someday when we stand before God (*John 12:48*).

Jim now uses the new machine to stamp the numbers in the wheels. It took a leap of faith on his part to try something new and improved. We too must continue to grow and experience the whole Gospel, not just a few selected commandments or some we've picked out of the Old Testament. When we practice the Law of Christ, we will see the church continue to grow and more people becoming Christians as we practice the greatest commands (*Mark 12:30-31*).

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