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Having An Open Mind

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It is quite clear that many consider religion ("Christianity" in particular) as a mind numbing experience. Sadly, there may be more truth to this accusation than what they or we realize.

Sometimes this criticism is from those who are atheists or agnostics. These consider themselves "free thinkers" and not bound by the constraints of antiquated religious practices. Yet, when it comes to discussing evidence upon which faith in God is founded, more often than not such minds are closed. Such is not an open mind. Rather, a mind that closes out and willfully ignores evidence (especially when it contradicts their accepted views) is not looking for truth of any sort. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools... And even as **they refused** to have God in their knowledge..." (Rom. 1:22, 28). In a way, religion has numbed their minds.

Sadly, denominationalism contributes to & bolsters this unbelief. First off, Jesus warned that division would hinder belief (John 17:23). Secondly, many denominationalists have turned Christianity into an eastern mystical religion. Whether it is Catholic mysticism or any other denomination - the so called "Holy Spirit" movement has influenced many today. The "experience" of the Holy Spirit is much sought for and touted. You must FEEL God in you. Such people snatch out partial texts that say God dwells in Christians (Rom. 8:9, 11), but overlook HOW God dwells in Christians through His word (Rom. 8:2, 6-7).

Friends, Hinduism & Buddhism believe God dwells in men too. And it is a feeling of peace, holiness, and even an experience of joy. It is "felt" knowledge. I "know" because I

"feel" it. How many denominationalists today "know" they are right religiously because of pious feelings? Pentecostals fall down, cry out, shout gibberish, don't understand one another, much less what they themselves are uttering - and yet they all claim to be "edified" by the experience and assured of their salvation. Mormons, who think they will become Gods and create their own worlds "know" their faith is true because they "feel" it. The United Pentecostals "know" that God is only one person who appeared as the Father, then the Son and now as the Spirit... because they "feel" the truth of it.

Friends, emotions are strong and powerful things. But have you even wondered why God revealed His word in written, text format (2 Tim. 3:16-17)? Is it God's plan and way to bowl us over with a torrent of emotionalism? Does God reveal knowledge or does He tweak your emotions into a constant ecstatic, elated, blissfully exciting state (1 Cor. 1:27)? In Jude 19, the writer speaks of those involved in false doctrine. He says of them, "These are they who make separations, **sensual, having not the Spirit.**" Not only does false doctrine create division, but **it appeals to the sensual.** Friends, the modern movement of "experiencing" God is sensuality. It deceives people into "feeling" righteous, but closes their hearts and minds with emotional fervency. A person who FEELS saved and who has had such an emotionally overwhelming experience is hard to reach with the plain old text. Some even have described the Bible as a "dead letter" due to their "experiences". Shame on them.

But of all people in the world, wouldn't you think "Holy Spirit" filled people would be more than able **and willing** to sit down and discuss scripture? Why is it then that such people turn down invitations to discuss the Bible? So many are quick to say, "I already go to my church"? Or "I believe what I believe." Wouldn't a truly Spirit filled person be eager to talk about the Truth? Constantly in the Bible the Spirit revealed Truth and brought people together to talk about Truth. Why is that different today? Friends, the Holy Spirit has not changed His mind about Truth has he? No, I don't think so. Something is different, but it is not the Holy Spirit (1 Tim. 4:1-2).

Let me conclude by showing the following verses:

"For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10)

"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." (John 4:34)

"And Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures, opening and alleging that it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ." (Acts 17:2-3)

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so." (Acts 17:11)

"Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with them that met him." (Acts 17:16-17)

"No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me." (John 6:44-45)

Do you see what is being emphasized here? The Lord's people should be the most reasonable and open minded of all people

on the face of the earth. Note that I did not say gullible, wishy-washy, or such like. An open mind does not mean a wet noodle. But it does mean an active one, one willing to examine and consider and investigate and discuss.

So, do you have an open mind?

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Door to Door** - every Tuesday at 6pm.
- **Home Bible Study** – Sat., July 8 & 22.
- **Men's & Ladies Classes** - Tues, July 11 @ 7 pm.
- **Business Meeting** – Sun. July 30 @ 5pm.
- **Gospel Meeting** - Ron Roberts, Oct.15-20, 2006.
- **GM in Knoxville** - Doug Hill, Nov. 17-19, 2006.
- **Gospel Meeting** - Jeff Smith, April 15-20, 2007.
- **Gospel Meeting** - R. McPherson, Oct.14-19, 2007.
- **Gospel Meeting** - TBA April 2008.
- **Gospel Meeting** - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

PRAY FOR

Mag Bumbalough, Greg Capps, Sabrina Capps, Thelma Cunningham, Holly Jernigan (Joyce Gardner's niece), **John Ross Key** (Mary Cox's son), **Marci Miller** (Alisa Fletcher's mother), **Monie Petty, Dave Poteet, Rose Taylor, Doris Williams, Wayne Williams** (Doris' son), **Horace Jones** (Doris William's brother), **Ruth Williams** (Betty England's niece), **Robert England** (at home again), **Ocia Bell-Jones & Charlie Jones** (Mother & brother to Doris Williams); **Misty Poteet, Pauline Hickey, Nancy Witaker. Dylan Roberts** (grandson of Marilyn's friend). **Those in Iraq: Jason Zelenak** (Alisa Fletcher's brother), **Cary Matheny.**

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