

FIVE THINGS THAT HINDER US FROM EMBRACING NEW CONCEPTS

By Penn Clark

What would you say are the biggest hindrances we have preventing us from embracing changes in our theology?

Jesus said the Spirit of Truth would guide us into all truth (John 16:13), but He will not drag us there. He will lead us into a deeper understanding, if we let Him. If we want to continue growing, we will find things in the Bible that are new to us or beyond our experience. Here are five things that will help you walk more openly in what the Lord is showing you:

- 1. Go beyond colloquial thinking.** No one has all the truth, and no one group has perfect understanding of the ways of God. At best, we know in part and prophesy (teach) in part (1 Corinthians 13:9). This is one of the reasons we need to associate more closely with other parts of the Body of Christ. When we are able to get around the Body, here or overseas, we will find things they teach and practice which we did not know about. This can be really helpful in making us more mature or balanced.

Every denomination or movement has teaching and practices that are commonly accepted in those circles. Some are taught and others are caught, but they shape and mold our behavior. It might be a dress code or the way we prophesy, but we all know what is acceptable or not. I call this “colloquial thinking” because, when we step out of that circle and move among other groups, we find out that they do things differently. They may think our idea is strange or new, but to you it is normal. It is what you grew up with and are used to. Even among Amish, some Amish think other Amish are strange because of the shape of their bonnets or buggies. They laugh at certain practices, dismissing them as being odd or strange even though we could hardly discern any difference. Breaking with colloquial thinking takes courage. To subscribe to what the Bible says, over what your group believes, is not easy to do. Yet, if you follow the Spirit of Truth, He will lead you into areas of truth where you have not been before.

- 2. Do not rely on your reasoning.** Jesus asked, “*Why reason ye in your hearts?*” (Mark 2:8; 8:17). This involves leaning on our sense of reasoning, logic, or our strong cognitive powers. This can block the work of the Spirit of Truth simply because it does not make sense to us. Jesus ran into this problem among the Pharisees and Lawyers, who were supposed to be the keepers of the Word. They

knew where every dot and tittle should be, but often missed the spirit of what God was saying. Not only did Jesus confront this all the time, exposing it for what it was, but He didn't go out of His way to satisfy their need to be logical. We see this in the treatment of everyone from Nicodemus to Pilate.

- 3. Sort out what is a reaction from what is a revelation.** Everything we believe comes out of either revelation or reaction. I cannot think of a third thing that would apply to this. Whenever we hold a strong position against something, we need to step back and ask ourselves, "Do I believe this way because the Lord told me or I see it in Scripture, or do I believe this way because of some negative experience I have had or heard about?" This is an important key to being able to accept truth that is new to you.
- 4. Deal with double-mindedness.** James said that a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways and should not expect to receive anything from the Lord (James 1:7-8). It is not that the Lord will never give him anything, but double-mindedness will not allow him to receive it. Double-mindedness blocks our ability to receive. Being double-minded involves trying to hold opposite opinions at the same time. This happens whenever we hear something new, but instead of embracing it as we should, we begin to think what people back home might say about this new concept. We can hear them in our heads, dismissing it, arguing about it, or even laughing at it. So, rather than embracing the truth and obeying it, we let their opinions neutralize us, making us unable to move forward. The trouble is there is no neutral in God. Either we are moving forward or backward, but we cannot stay in neutral. Being double-minded can block the Spirit of Truth because we become stalled by what other people think rather than what He is saying.
- 5. Expect peer pressure.** There are all kinds of peer pressure. There even is a strong sense of peer pressure among pastors. It can keep us from moving forward in the Lord. We might be willing to go down a certain line if the "whole herd" does at the same time, but that rarely happens. Or we would go if we got a signal that it meets the approval of the most critical and controlling people among us, but that may never happen. It would take a rare individual to go against this or have the ability to stand alone in what he believes, if it is not commonly held among us. Jesus walked this way within His own "denomination," but it was not easy.

To read more along this line get my study guide called Five Keys or take the Study Course here.
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