

Hindrances to Understanding the Truth

(by Bob Pulliam)

Many people never think about the fact that there are hindrances to understanding things written and spoken. Let's face it; there are some things that some people just do not want to hear. If they wish to continue a relationship with that person, they will misunderstand to avoid the pain of disharmony. Many people want to stake a claim to the Bible having a place in their hearts. When the Bible says something they do not like, rather than reject the Bible, they simply refuse to understand it as it was given. There is more than one reason for people not wanting to understand the Bible correctly. Here are some of the most common reasons:

Lack of Faith in Scriptures...

If you are an atheist, I would see no reason why you would try to apply the effort necessary to properly understand the scriptures. You might read it to try and discredit it; but such is not equal to the task of which we speak. If you do not believe, then you need to see the section on Evidences.

Improper Affections...

Some people love the things of this world more than the truth. Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Mt 6:21) Some people's hearts are set on the world. They want to have heaven, but they do not want what it takes to get there. "Sacrifices" are always things conveniently at hand which do not present any discomfort for them. If something else calls to them, they lay aside whatever service God wants, and go to it with an array of excuses to justify their actions. Jesus also said, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Mt 6:33)

No Expectations of Understanding...

It is possible to understand the Bible. Reading the Bible just to say one has read it is not conducive to understanding. You could read the Bible every year for fifty years and still not understand it. Reading the Bible just to find passages for a personal need also will not lead to understanding. Some scour the pages of scripture for proof text that hold up their favorite doctrines. This does not promote understanding. If one does not seek the intention of the Bible, and study its message, not only with a view of understanding it, but also for personal application, there is little hope of success.

Elitism...

It shouldn't be hard to believe that some people are what they are because it gives them distinction. Such was true in Jesus' day (Mt 23:5-9), and it is true today. Some follow the leadings of their particular denomination because it puts them before the people, and above others. They have been trained in its doctrines, confessed its by-laws, and live by its support. They are interested in the Bible only so far as it serves their means of getting attention and standing above others.

Old Time Religion...

Some people would never think of being anything other than what their ancestors have

been for many generations. But what if their ancestors were wrong? Isn't that possible? One can never understand the word of God when he is lifting traditions up above scripture. Many believe their sincerity in following these "old paths" will be excused if they are wrong. Jesus gave no indication of that:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Mt 7:21ff)

"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me." (Mt 10:37f)

Truth either comes first, or it does not come at all. It is truth that sets free when one will dedicate his life to it (Jn 8:31f).

Conclusion...

Are there hindrances in you life that would keep you from understanding the Bible. Identify them and set them aside. The Bible can be understood, and followed. Do not flavor it's message with your past or the desires of your heart. Savor it's truth and the joy it has to offer in salvation.