

ARE YOU FLEXIBLE?

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Published On : January 29, 2025

Last Updated : January 29, 2025

The Danger Of Becoming Overly Dogmatic And Rigid With Regard To Our Understanding Of The Holy Scriptures, No One Possesses A Monopoly On God's Truth, Danger Of Stagnation, My Personal Flexibility, Profundity Of God's Word, Deception And Arguing On The Social Networks, Diligently Compare Scripture With Scripture, Led By The Spirit And Having The Mind Of Christ, Desire For Doctrinal And Spiritual Unity In Body Of Christ, Rigidity Of The Scribes And Pharisees, A Willingness To Bend, Maintaining A Proper Balance, Be Persuaded In Your Own Mind, Judged On Our Own Merit, Closing Remarks, Suggested Reading

As I point out in a number of my other Bill's Bible Basics articles, including "Humility in Our Understanding of God's Word" and "My Evolving Theology", for example, one of the wisest things that we as Christian Believers can and should do in order to hopefully avoid falling into Satan's subtle snare of deception, is to not become so overly dogmatic, and so rigid and unbending in our personal understanding with regard to the Holy Scriptures, to the point that we reject anything which may contradict our current understanding concerning the same. We simply must remain flexible.

If we are truly honest with ourselves, we must recognize that none of us can claim to possess a monopoly on the truth. It does not matter how long we have known the Lord, or how long we have been reading and studying the Scriptures. The simple truth of the matter is that we are all still learning and growing in matters concerning our faith. Well, at least we should be. If not, if your spiritual growth has been stunted and you have become stagnant, watch out! Unless you pull out of it, the Lord may have to apply the loving flame of His chastisements to your life, and that won't be comfortable in the least!

But regarding remaining flexible, and continuing to learn and

grow, I can certainly say that this is true in my own life. I am constantly learning new things as I continue to delve into the wonders of God's Word. In fact, oft times when I am in the process of updating some of my older articles, the Lord will reveal new things to me from the Scriptures which I had never noticed before, such as a connection between different verses, for example. It's really quite amazing and inspiring. But this should come as no surprise, because God's Word is just that profound. The authors of the Bible certainly knew this. Consider some of the things they had to say:

"LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep."

Psalm 92:5, KJV

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."

Psalm 139:6, KJV

"Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable."

Psalm 145:3, KJV

"As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all."

Ecclesiastes 11:5, KJV

"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding."

Isaiah 40:28, KJV

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Isaiah 55:8-9, KJV

"Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number:"

Job 5:9, KJV

"Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders

without number."

Job 9:10, KJV

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Romans 11:33, KJV

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

Psalms 119:18, KJV

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

1 Corinthians 2:9-12, KJV

The bottom line is that we must all trust in the Lord, and NOT in our own human wisdom, in order to try to understand the Bible. As the Apostle Paul writes, we must put on the mind of Christ, and not endeavor to understand Scriptural truths with our carnal minds only, because that can often lead to personal deception. If you doubt that this is so, then just consider how much doctrinal confusion exists on the social networks today. It is tragic, and it is sad. The level of arguing and bickering, and personal attacks which occurs between Christian brethren is shameful to say the least. Everyone wants to promote their own doctrines, and prove to others that they are right. That is precisely why I authored my article entitled "Should Christians Engage in Doctrinal Debates?".

So again, it is very important that we are led by the Spirit of the Lord in our understanding. Isn't that precisely why the Lord promised the Holy Spirit to His followers? Did He not say that one of its purposes was to teach them, and to lead them into all truth? As such, it is imperative that we all diligently compare Scripture with Scripture, and rightly

divide the Word of Truth, as we are led by the Spirit. This is made very clear in the Scriptures. Consider the following group of verses which verify these various points:

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Proverbs 3:5-6, KJV

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

1 Corinthians 2:16, KJV

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Romans 8:14, KJV

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

John 14:26, KJV

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

John 16:13, KJV

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Luke 11:13, KJV

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

James 1:5, KJV

"And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:"

John 20:22, KJV

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of

truth."

2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

Acts 17:11, KJV

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

1 Corinthians 2:14, KJV

As long as we all remain spiritually flexible, and do not become overly adamant concerning our personal beliefs and pet doctrines, hopefully, the Lord will be able to continue to enlighten us, and to expand our personal understanding of the mysteries of His Word. Furthermore, remaining humble in our understanding will greatly contribute towards spiritual unity within the Body of Christ, which as we all know, is tragically lacking today, to our own shame. As I mention in a number of other articles, this desire for unity within the Lord's Church was of great concern to Jesus and the Apostles of the First Century. This becomes evident by verses such as the following:

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, THAT THEY MAY BE ONE, as we are . . . THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be ONE IN US: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; THAT THEY MAY BE ONE, even as WE ARE ONE: I in them, and thou in me, THAT THEY MAY BE MADE PERFECT IN ONE; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

John 17:11, 21-23, KJV

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be ONE FOLD, and ONE SHEPHERD."

John 10:16, KJV

"That ye may with ONE MIND and ONE MOUTH glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Romans 15:6, KJV

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all SPEAK THE SAME THING, and that there be NO DIVISIONS AMONG YOU; but that ye be perfectly joined together IN THE SAME MIND and IN THE SAME JUDGMENT."

1 Corinthians 1:10, KJV

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of ONE MIND, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

2 Corinthians 13:11, KJV

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the UNITY OF THE SPIRIT in the BOND OF PEACE . . . That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom THE WHOLE BODY FITLY JOINED TOGETHER and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Ephesians 4:1-3, 14-16, KJV

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in ONE SPIRIT, with ONE MIND striving together for the faith of the gospel;"

Philippians 1:27, KJV

"Fulfil ye my joy, THAT YE BE LIKEMINDED, having the same love, being of ONE ACCORD, of ONE MIND."

Philippians 2:2, KJV

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."

1 Corinthians 14:33, KJV

Concerning our personal understanding of God's Word, let me emphasize again that any degree of extreme rigidity on our part, could make us guilty of the very same things of which the Lord accused the Scribes and the Pharisees of old. As I point out in articles such as the series "The International Jew and the Protocols of Zion", they had made such a god out of their own rabbinic traditions, that when Jesus came along with the truth, many of them fully rejected Him and it, as is born out by the following group of Bible verses:

"And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."

Mark 7:9, KJV

"Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."

Mark 7:13, KJV

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Colossians 2:8, KJV

I cannot say this enough. Our sincere hunger for the truth, through a correct understanding of the Word of God, should be our primary concern and motivation as we study the Bible. We simply should not continue to embrace erroneous ideas and misguided interpretations which have been clearly shown to not be in agreement with the truth which is found in God's Word. We must remain flexible and possess a willingness to bend when it is necessary and appropriate. We must be very careful that we do not idolize or make gods out of our personal beliefs and doctrines. We should not continue to vehemently defend our false ideas, or continue to be rigid and brittle, once we have been shown to be in error. To do so is merely a matter of pride and personal stubbornness.

Does this mean that we should be weak and compromise what we believe to be true? Of course not. After all, there is also a balance to be found in my statements. As we are told in the Book of Proverbs, we should maintain a proper balance in all things, whether it is with regard to our personal beliefs, or with anything else in our lives. Why? Because the Scriptures

inform us that a false balance is an abomination to the Lord, as we can see by the following verse:

"A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight."

Proverbs 11:1, KJV

Therefore, once we have performed a judicious study of God's Word, and once we do believe that He has revealed His truth to us, then by all means, we should firmly stand by what we believe He has shown us, keeping in mind, and tempering our beliefs with the thought that we are only human and prone to possible error. This is precisely the thought which Apostle Paul conveys in his discourse concerning dietary habits and observing holy days, which is found in chapter fourteen of his Epistle to the Roman brethren, as we see here:

"One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

Romans 14:5, KJV

So what we see then is that there is a time to be flexible with regard to our personal beliefs, but there is likewise a time to be rigid concerning them as well, and reaching the proper balance between the two requires the Wisdom of God's Spirit.

In the final analysis, each one of us must live and believe according to our personal measure of faith; because it is according to that, that we will each be judged in the final day. We will not be weighed in the divine balances according to what other people believe, or according to what church or organization with which we happened to affiliate ourselves in this current life. Rather, we will be judged as individuals when we eventually appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. And indeed, we shall all appear before Him so that we might receive our just reward, or else our just punishment, as the following Bible verses make clear:

"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

Matthew 12:36, KJV

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

Romans 14:12, KJV

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

2 Corinthians 5:10, KJV

"Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead."

1 Peter 4:5, KJV

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"

1 Peter 4:17, KJV

With these thoughts, I will bring this article to a close. It is my hope that you've found it informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you'd take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were either mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server. To read these articles, simply click or tap on any link you see below.

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