

## ***Narrow Mindedness***

Are you narrow-minded? I am. At least, I have been accused of being that way. And I don't think the one making the accusation intended it as a compliment. My dictionary says narrow-minded means "lacking in tolerance or breadth of vision." If I understand that definition, one could be considered narrow-minded for one of two things: failing to see the whole picture or rejecting what he does not consider to be the truth.

There is a physical malady known as tunnel vision. Those who have it can see only straight ahead; peripheral vision is lost. That well describes the first kind of narrow-minded person. He focuses on only part of the truth, ignoring other facts that must be considered.

By this definition we could justifiably call narrow-minded those who believe in salvation by faith only. Such folks typically lock in on a passage that teaches the essentiality of faith, John 3:16 for example. They then act as though that verse is the sum total of revelation on the subject of salvation. Many others ought to be included. There are, in fact, dozens of things to which the Bible attributes salvation.

In your study, always consider all the Bible has to say on a subject. You do not want to be narrow-minded in this sense.

Now to the second kind of narrow-mindedness. If you think about it, truth is narrow. Understanding that is as simple as two plus two. How many truthful answers are there to the equation, 2+2? Only one. There are an infinite number of wrong answers, only one right one. This principle applies in other fields as well.

The narrow-minded person in the second sense acknowledges the narrowness of truth. He would never accept alternate answers to 2+2 as "just your interpretation," nor would he say, "You believe it your way and I'll believe it mine." Such is a mockery of truth.

The application to religion should be obvious. God's word is truth (John 17:17) - knowable truth. "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Questions such as "What is God's moral standard?" or "What must I do to be saved?" or "How should I worship God?" have an infinite number of wrong answers. Each has only one right answer - the one revealed in God's word.

Jesus said, "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

The next time someone accuses you of being narrow-minded, and he means it in the second sense, tell him "Thank you." You have been complimented. Are you "broad-minded" enough to recognize it?

- by ***Frank Himmel***

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## ***Honesty - Truth - Error***

There are many good people in the religious world who are honestly mistaken, but when a man who is honestly mistaken hears the truth, one of two things must happen: he will cease to be mistaken or he will cease to be HONEST. If he does not obey the truth he will no longer be honest. If he does obey the truth he will no longer be mistaken. Honesty and error must separate when truth comes along. No man can be honestly mistaken if he has heard the truth!

- by ***Eugene Britnell***

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## ***Modern Dancing***

In Old Testament times, dancing was a form of praise that did not mix the sexes nor excite the libido. I don't know what that dancing looked like, but I haven't seen any like it lately. Modern dancing is absolutely nothing more than a mimicry of the sex act (a private act reserved for the marriage bed – Heb. 13:4) put to music. If the band were not playing in the background, such movements and positions would be scandalous. The Bible says they are anyway. Listed among the evident works of the flesh is lewdness. Lewdness (Greek *aselgeia*) is defined by Thayer as "wanton acts or manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of

males and females, etc." Apply the latter part of that definition and we could be led to believe that Joseph Henry Thayer was watching the modern dance as he penned it.

Modern dancing is lewdness. Such is improper for a Christian (Rom. 13:13) and will prevent him from inheriting the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:21).

**- by J. S. Smith**

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### ***“Unless You’ve Been There . . .”***

A drug addict pushes back against the friend who is rebuking him and trying to encourage his repentance. “You just don’t know what it’s like. No one can ever understand unless they’ve been there.”

The drug abuser is not the only one to make this argument. An alcoholic often tries this same excuse: so does a smoker, the man hooked on pornography, and the compulsive gambler. All attempts to restore these folks are dismissed with the claim that others who haven’t experienced these issues have no ability to comprehend the problem or offer effective help.

We deny this! A person does not need to struggle with all these same problems in order to know that they are sinful, and that the sinner must repent. A proper interpretation of Biblical truths is not affected by one’s own personal experiences. Wrong is wrong and sin is sin, no matter whether you’ve ‘been there’ or not!

If personal experience provides the ‘key’ to understanding and applying the Scriptures, then the door is wide open to all sorts of misguided interpretations. For instance: A man tries to justify his divorce and remarriage by arguing that his former marriage was so unhappy and unfulfilling. “Others,” he says, “can’t understand unless they’ve been there.” Really? Matthew 19:9 still seems pretty clear on that subject. Certainly a homosexual might claim that others can’t know what he is dealing with. And while he’s right about that sin being hard for others to understand, it does not change the clear condemnation of Scripture (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Or a parent with an unfaithful child argues against disciplinary action taken by other Christians. “You just don’t know because you haven’t been there.” Maybe, thankfully, we have not – but Bible truth remains unchanged (1 Cor. 5:1ff).

This same line of reasoning applies to all sorts of family issues, church problems, and other terrible situations. Even without having personally dealt with every conceivable kind of trouble, we can be “complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another” (Rom. 15:14). Think!

**- by Greg Gwin**