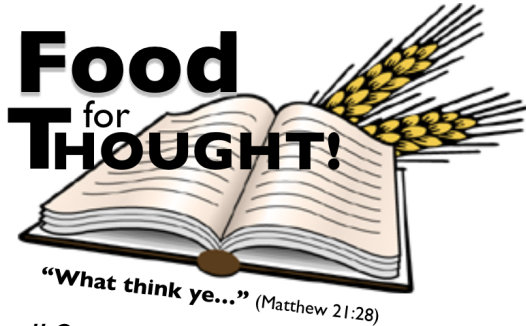


Lifting Up The

STANDARD



“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59:19).



Article # 2

NONE SO BLIND AS THOSE WHO WILL NOT THINK!

Shortly after receiving Christ as his Saviour, Paul referred to David saying he “served his own generation by the will of God” (Acts 13:36).

Paul was a student of the Old Testament Scriptures long before he was saved and probably had a great admiration for David. Now that Paul was saved, perhaps he wanted to pattern his life after David. Paul desired to serve his generation “by the will of God.” Every Christian should desire to be in line with God’s will.

Take Time To Think

In verses two through four, Paul said “I have remembrance.” It is impossible to remember something without thinking. He used the phrase “being mindful,” and in verse seven he speaks of “a sound mind.”

One of the greatest needs in this age of apostasy is for Christians to think. Many Christians are content to let someone else do their thinking for them. To my shame I did this for many years. If my friends in the ministry said it, I believed it. **There were two reasons why I did this.** One, it was easier for me to read a few footnotes in my Bible than to “study” to show myself approved unto God, or to “search the Scriptures” to see if these things be so.

The other reason was, I didn’t want to rock the boat among my friends. At that time, my relationship with my friends was obviously more important to me than my relationship with the Lord.

Warning: Doing Your Own Thinking Can Be Very Costly



It has been my experience that fundamental independent Baptists will quickly be branded by other fundamental independent Baptists if we dare to do our own thinking. If you don’t believe me, go ahead and put in print what you believe about the gap theory. If it goes against the group you associate with, you will be in trouble. **Thinking outside of the box can be scary.** What will my friends think about me?



Recently, while in a discussion with a very well known fundamental independent Baptist preacher, I mentioned what A.W. Tozer said about the subject we were talking about. The pastor I was talking to quickly responded saying, “that man was not a baptist.” Does that mean I shouldn’t quote Jesus anymore?

Philippians 2:5 says, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” When dealing with our responsibilities, we should not be concerned about what other preachers think or what our church members think.



We need to simply determine to find what is the mind of the Lord in each circumstance. Much prayer is needed for wisdom in handling the circumstances that present themselves in the day of apostasy that we are living in. **Isaiah 55:8** says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD." Over the years in the ministry, I have faced many trying circumstances in the local church. Usually the first thought I had concerning how to handle the situation was not the best one. It is necessary to seek the mind of God in every decision.

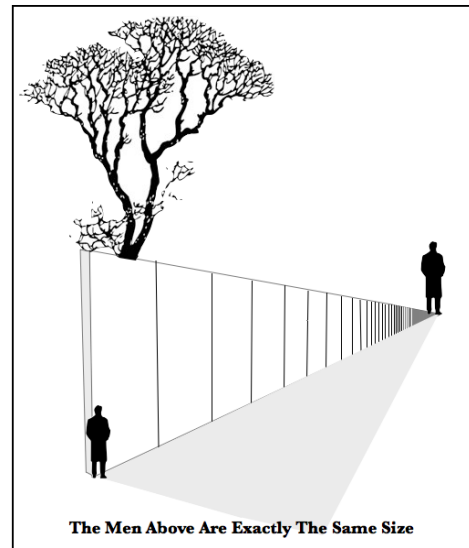
"What Think Ye?"

In **Ephesians 5:10**, we are commanded to be "Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord."

Our perspective of things is often incorrect because our thoughts are affected by the environment in which we find ourselves. For example, the men in the picture at the right are exactly the same size; however, because of the addition of a fence and a tree, they are made to appear very different.

Unless we perceive things from God's perspective, we are going to come to wrong conclusions concerning what is "acceptable unto the Lord."

Again, **Isaiah 55:8-9** says, "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."



The Men Above Are Exactly The Same Size

Things Are Not Always As They Appear
"They measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."
(Second Corinthians 10:12)

At an early age we begin to be influenced by people and by things we come in contact with. Influence affects our thinking and our behaviour. We are influenced concerning political things, religious things, and even what kind of car we drive.

The Local Church Ministry

Our thinking has been influenced to lead us to believe that numbers means success. While this may be so at a ball game, it certainly is not so concerning the local church. Ninety-nine percent of our churches are small churches. Only one percent of the people who attend church next Sunday will be in a large church. A recent survey released by the Barna Research Group of Venture California, reported that the average church attendance in the USA five years ago was ninety people. His survey revealed that black churches put the average up, as they averaged one hundred people while white congregations averaged eighty-five. He reported that in the U.S.A, fundamental churches averaged about seventy-five people on any given Sunday. Obviously, fundamental churches in Canada would average far less than those in the U.S.A. Apostasy is flooding many of our churches today because maintaining a crowd has become more important than preaching the whole counsel of God.



Who Is Influencing What You Think?

An Influence is the ability or power to have an effect on the behaviour of someone. Today we have many large ministries running under the banner of fundamentalism that are influencing people around the world.

“Judge Righteous Judgment”

Before any New Testament instructions were written in what we call pastoral epistles, Jesus commanded His followers to “*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment*” (John 7:24). Jesus asked “*Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?*” (Luke 12:57). We cannot judge anything without thinking.

We might have a pre-conceived opinion about what is *acceptable unto the Lord*; however, an opinion is “*a view formed without facts or knowledge.*” Christians are to make informed decisions based on Scripture.

“So Soon Removed”

Paul said “*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel*” (Galatians 1:6). They were obviously influenced to change their position concerning the Scriptures. That is why Paul continued “*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed*” (V.8,9).

Accursed?

The Greek word translated “*accursed*” is *anathema*. It means to set apart for judgment. It was a temple type of our New Testament church discipline. Strong’s Concordance says *anathema* was to prepare a proclamation that was to be “*hung upon the walls or columns of the temple, or put in some other conspicuous place.*” The lesson is obvious, when we have church problems they need to be taken care of through church discipline.

International Influences

Today, we have hundreds if not thousands of ministries that are influencing Christians. Some of these ministries are scriptural and some of them are far from it. The Christian who does not learn how to think according to the Scriptures is going to go astray. **First Corinthians 2:15** says “*he that is spiritual judgeth all things.*” Jesus said, “*Judge righteous judgment*” (John 7:24). Jesus said, “*Ye shall know (recognize) them by their fruits*” (Matthew 7:16).

Point To Ponder



Accepting the view of the majority can save us from the possible painful results of thinking.

“Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason so few engage in it.”

Henry Ford

“People don’t like to think, if one thinks, one must reach conclusions. Conclusions are not always pleasant.”

Helen Keller

Studying the Bible without thinking is a waste of time.



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Silence Gives Consent

It is not enough to quietly disassociate ourselves from apostate leaders or those who promote unscriptural doctrine. Jude 1:3 says, "it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." The dictionary says to contend is to "state a fact or belief confidently and forcefully."

Stand up and be heard. All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good pastors to say nothing about the blasphemous heresy being promoted under the banner of our so-called fundamental movement. As pastors, we need to withdraw ourselves "from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received," and our people need to know why.

Peter wrote concerning the congregation, understanding and making proper judgments "at the house of God" (First Peter 4:17). The congregation will only be able to "judge righteous judgment" if they have the facts.

Judged For What They Did Not Do

In Ezekiel's day, God was angry with His leaders, not because of what they were doing but for what they were not preaching.

Ezekiel 22:26.

"Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean."

What God Demands

"And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean" (Ezekiel 44:23). Did you read that part where God commanded "they shall teach my people the difference...and cause them to discern"?

Our Mandate In Our Age of Apostasy

Isaiah 59:19 reads, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him." The word standard isn't talking about getting a haircut and acting like a fundamentalist. The Hebrew word is *nuwc*. The same word is translated in Psalm 60:4 where we read, "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth." It refers to letting everybody know where you stand.

Think This Through

Silence in our pulpits concerning the issues we face today, will determine how the next generation will deal with those same issues in the days ahead.

Ezekiel 44:23 says,

"Teach my people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean."

What part of that verse is too difficult to understand?

1. Teach my people.
2. Teach the difference.
3. Between the holy and the profane.
4. Cause them to discern.
5. The difference between the unclean and the clean.

Many pastors are silent concerning the issues. If you are one of them, take a good hard look at the young people in your church and say goodbye.

"To sin by silence when we should protest makes cowards of men."
Abraham Lincoln

