

Why Some Professed Believers Do Not Advance in Spiritual Learning

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Mat. 15:16 And Jesus said, **Are ye also yet without understanding?**

This question was honestly put to the apostles and for a good reason. Jesus had just gotten through teaching them a lesson about inward corruption vs. outward practices by using metaphor and parable. The lesson should have been apparent to them, but it seems, based on Peter's request, that they hadn't gotten it! But, in their defense here, they had grown up in, and lived their adult lives in a religious culture which made a big production out of appearances. As a result, their viewpoints were probably skewed by that cultural influence. Regardless of how smart or how perceptive they were, they were limited by their frame of reference. Even these select men needed divine help to understand spiritual truths.

In 2015, almost 9 out of 10 adults (88 percent) in the U.S. had at least a high school diploma or GED, while nearly 1 in 3 adults (33 percent) held a bachelor's or higher degree. Yet for all this high literacy level, it is pretty apparent that a vast number of Americans who profess to be believers in Christ do not understand some of the most basic truths in the Bible. This seems like an impossible thing in the face of the education level of Americans and in the face of the fact that the Bible teaches that believers have received an ability from the Holy Spirit to understand the spiritual things that God wants them to understand.

We want to examine from the bible some facts about understanding and not understanding spiritual things and see if we can get to a truth about this great mystery related to the spiritual lack of understanding on the part of professing believers.

I. We want to deal first with the group of religious people who might study the bible, but who would be incapable of understanding anything spiritual from it.

- ◆ **1Cor. 2:14** 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.
- ◆ **Jesus' warning in John** about the fact that those Jews had ears that could not hear and eyes that could not see, and that they could not understand
- ◆ **Paul writes about how the carnal condition rules out learning about spiritual things: 2Tim. 3:2** For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
 - **2Tim. 3:3** Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,
 - **2Tim. 3:4** Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

- **2Tim. 3:5** Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.
- **2Tim. 3:6** For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,
- **2Tim. 3:7** Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

II. Let's deal next with a class of believers who hinder their own spiritual learning by their attitude

- ◆ **1Cor. 3:1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ.
1Cor. 3:2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able.
1Cor. 3:3 For **ye are yet carnal**: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, **are ye not carnal, and walk as men?**
- ◆ **Heb. 5:11** Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing **ye are dull of hearing**.
Heb. 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.
Heb. 5:13 For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.
Heb. 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.
- ◆ **Prov. 1:5** A **wise man will hear, and will increase learning**;

III. Now, let's deal with the class of what are apparently true believers who hinder their own spiritual learning by neglecting the practices that would ordinarily lead them to spiritual learning

- ◆ **2Tim. 3:14** But **continue** thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*;
2Tim. 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the **holy scriptures**, which **are able to make thee wise** unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
2Tim. 3:16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for **instruction** in righteousness:
- ◆ **Mat. 11:29** **Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me;**

Conclusion: For true believers, learning about the things of the Lord is attainable. Growing in knowledge increases our spiritual capacity. But, to learn more about the Lord, there are things we have to do, responsibilities we have to assume. If we don't do those things, don't assume those responsibilities, we will remain babes in Christ; we will remain uninformed about how things work in the Kingdom of God.