

"Am I Wrong ? "

WmTipton

This is the single most important question any student can ask themselves when confronted by any opposing thought. Without asking this question of oneself, without the ability to scrutinize ones views and compare them with newly acquired data, it is virtually impossible to learn anything from anyone, we would be stagnant in our own thoughts and ideas with very little chance of gaining more knowledge once we had come to any firm understanding about any topic.

It is quite normal, as an intelligent human being, to pose the question to oneself when confronted with an opposing view "am I wrong".

It would actually be the most stubborn and poorest of students who constantly reject the possibility that they might indeed be wrong and don't look at EVERY opposing viewpoint as an opportunity to learn, even if it is only on small point that might even further prove their existing views.

It doesn't mean that they are wrong , but having the ability to ask oneself this question, and then to re-evaluate all the available data to be sure about one's position is a hallmark of an astute student / disciple.

It is a GOOD thing when you are opposed when your reaction is 'am I wrong' because that will keep you constantly learning, constantly working towards the whole truth.

Just because you feel that reaction doesn't mean that you have to accept what the opposition is presenting, not in the least. It just means that you aren't so egotistical and hardheaded as to think that you are infallible.

A good example would be my discussions with a man I talk about elsewhere on this site, David Harrison (sealedeternal on various forums). I have read probably most of what this man has written around the web because I do not fear anything that anyone writes or says regardless of what they believe.

I've spent a lot of time at his website and reading as many of his posts around so that I can compare notes and track down any possible areas where I might be wrong that his material might help.

On the other hand I asked David directly some weeks ago in a discussion where it was apparent that he had not actually READ what I had responded with. His response was something to the extent of "No, I NEVER read your pre written drivel".

This is the very situation that I'm talking about. One of the two of us is interested enough in knowing if we MIGHT be wrong to actually investigate and study every assertion of the other just to make sure.

While the other of us is seemingly either too proud to ask himself if he might be wrong and may actually be worried that the opposing view could show him that he was wrong and not wanting to have to admit to our own ego and pride that we were proven wrong by someone we oppose.

There is a writing from AW Tozer that I'll have to dig up where the basic thought is that opposing views are good to examine because they cause us to test our own thoughts and ideas to see if we might be in error.

AW Tozer

The Root of the Righteous

CHAPTER 7

On Receiving Admonition

3. When reprov'd, pay no attention to the source. Do not ask whether it is a friend or an enemy that reprov's you. An enemy is often of greater value to you than a friend because he is not influenced by sympathy.

IF you are indeed wrong, an enemy will generally be the first to present your error.

The ability to ask oneself 'Am I Wrong', is a characteristic of someone who CAN be taught, who CAN learn and who CAN admit error when they are proven wrong.

"Am I Wrong" is nothing to worry about, nothing to be concerned over....when your views are tested by that question and you learn either that you were wrong or that your views were in fact correct, then you either have come to know more of the truth or you have solidified the truth you already knew.

Don't ever fear feeling that you could be wrong. Don't ever be afraid of asking yourself 'am I wrong'. Instead use those things to the advantage so that they facilitate your learning.

Some people become afraid when they are hit from all directions about what they believe and when that question comes into their minds 'Am I Wrong' they panic.

We have to be careful because false teachers use this reaction they know they cause in others to enforce conformity to their heresies, using fear and doubt, using our God given ability to discern a matter with the intelligence God gave us against us to try to force us to accept what they are pushing without question. Or with question as long as we fall into line.

There is one gospel, ONE. Not two, not three and certainly not hundreds or thousands, but if you look around the world today you'd think that there were literally multiple tens of thousands of different 'gospels' out in the world today. They cannot all be true, can they? There is only ONE gospel truth, no other.

What this means is that there are MANY false teachers out there preaching lies and heresies. Yet how many followers do they have? Many millions to say the least.

These followers are those who could very well have asked themselves 'Am I Wrong', but then instead of making these teachers prove themselves, these followers simply accept things at face value and join the pack...many times to keep from being persecuted to whatever extent.

I have actually run across a false teacher whose site is/was linked at Cadz.net who is the very sort of person I'm speaking about.

His article isn't about teaching truth, it's about instilling fear and then using that fear to force conformity.

What he asks is something like "Are you SURE?"

And then he proceeds, not to try to teach truth, but simply to try to cause even one shred of confusion or doubt in you, using your innate fear of hell (since you as a believer believe in that place) to then tell you that now that you are either confused or questioning, that now you have to conform to his teaching or you are sinning, NOT because you are actually in sin, but because what you are doing is not being done in faith.

The horrible way these false ones use a man's own intelligence against him is sickening.

A man wants to be able to learn and part of that is being able to innocently ask oneself "am I wrong" but in doing so some of these false teachers literally twist even that desire to learn around against you.

When you are opposed it is perfectly natural to question. Without that ability you could never learn anything.

The differences between the good student who keeps learning and those who are tossed about by every wind of doctrine and thus end up in all sorts of godless 'christian' cults are;

1. The good student insists on consistent, contextual PROOF of what is being taught, and;
2. the good student does not allow himself to be taken in by ANY teaching, refusing to even move from his current position, until that proof has been provided. Otherwise this student would literally be hopping around from one false teaching to the next and probably wouldn't even know what to believe.
3. The good student isn't afraid to test all things. To study all things and read anything that opposes his own viewpoint.

4. The good student has his nose buried in the relevant material more often than not so that he can make is OWN informed opinion and not simply parrot what he has heard from another.

5. The good student is ALWAYSs in a state of learning and is never afraid to ask himself "Am I Wrong?".

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Another issue that comes up frequently is 'open mindedness'.

If you're in a discussion with someone and you've passed the 'am I wrong' thing, but now, after many years of study of Gods word you are more of the 'I know' frame of mind, you will inevitably run into these same types of people who try to confuse you to dupe you again...but this time instead of worrying if you are wrong, you will stand absolute for Gods truth.

When these false teachers see this firmness in you, they will now try another tactic of saying you're not being 'open minded' in an effort to get you to let down your guard so they have another route by which to attack and confuse you.

Paul said that even if an angel out of heaven bring another gospel let him be accursed.

This shows us that the SOURCE of the argument is irrelevant. If one of Gods own angels brings us something we can see clearly is wrong, we are to reject it and that angel is accursed for preaching a lie.

Paul also tells us to not be tossed about by every wind of doctrine, and Paul also commended the Bereans in Acts for their being noble minded by hearing the word and then CHECKING Gods word to see if what was said to them was actually true.

This conclusively tells us that its ok to listen to a teacher and that we ARE to check for ourselves to see if what they preach is true and that if we find that it is not then we arent to allow ourselves to be tossed about by that false doctrine, but are to remain firm in the truth.

So in conclusion, its ok to question your views in the beginning, God isnt going to cast you into hell for not understanding something entirely. Thats NOT what Christianity is about.

He also wants us to continue learning His truth, as proven by Paul who says to study to show ourselves approved...rightly dividing the word of God.

When we have learned because we have studied and are firm in what we believe, we owe it to ourselves and God to NOT be 'open minded' as the world defines that phrase, but to be adamant and strong in Gods truth and ONLY if a man can PROVE to us that he is right should we be willing to consider amending our views.