

CONTINUING THE “GREEN LETTERS”

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CHAPTERS 59-61, pgs. 266-278

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THE UNFRUITFUL FLAW IN OUR HUMAN CONFIDENCE

We were created by God to be in a synergistic team work with God in having dominion over all creation; He would teach us how to rule through faith, union and communion with Him just as He did with our Lord Jesus

From the Fall on we have acted independently from God believing both our intelligence and capacity to reason were adequate to make decisions equal to God

We were confident that we could know God and truth without God's aid and help; there was not that much wrong with us. This is called, theologically, Pelagianism from Pelagius, a theologian and Christian philosopher of the 5th century AD.

Consequently, we expect that if adequate and accurate information is introduced to average intelligent people it can and likely will result in the immediate application of it by the hearers.

We believe that once grasped an idea or teaching will be retained for future practice because it is a part of our thought system and process simply because we believe it was heard

We are shocked when people who have been taught “properly” do not continue to behave compliantly with what they have been taught or even rebel against it and behave disappointingly, counter to what was taught. We look for fruit among those we taught and finding little or none, we marvel! What went wrong?? Multiple responses follow, most of which are ungodly and forgetful of our total need for God.

We expect immediate results (fruit) when someone has been taught something. We assume that being in the presence of that information expounded by the right person will have dramatic quick results and will make permanent life changes.

We are very man-centered in our approach to life. Life is intended to be lived as God-centered or God-focused, or even more appropriately, Christ-centered, Christ-focused. As long as we practice this man-centered thinking, we will always see ourselves as the standard for the value of a teaching, doctrine or practice. If it agrees with our thought, the teaching will

have great value. We may not make application of it, but we will tout our agreement with such an excellent teaching. If it does not agree with our internal standard of truth, then it will be a heresy to reject. If a teaching does not resonate with something with which we are interested at that moment of time, it will be rejected out of hand as not significant enough for continued thought. Bored, we move on to something a bit more exciting.

On the learner side of this flawed confidence, we think that if we have heard a teaching and can repeat back some part of it or feel some emotional charge for having heard it, we have mastered it. We get it!

BASED ON THIS FLAWED THINKING, WE PLAN AND EXECUTE MASS MEETINGS FOR THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATING LARGE GROUPS OF PEOPLE WITH THE EXPECTATION OF IMMEDIATE RESULTS

Example from our book, The Complete Green Letters: The author brings up the Keswick Conferences or Conventions. These started in 1875 in Keswick, England, by an Anglican and a Quaker. They came to be known as Deeper Life or Higher Life conferences. The teachers expounded good, biblical truth about identification with Christ. They also made a strong appeal to missionary activity in the world. They continue to this day but they are not the same format or with the same purpose as were the first ones. Your author's complaint was that there is too much expectation of fruit from the teaching without much evidence that it happened.

The author's commendation: The material taught was excellent material. The arrangement of the material was logically and chronologically presented. The teachers in the earlier ones were people who knew about the topic they were addressing, they were experienced.

The author's observations of some flaws:

- 1. There is a misunderstanding as to how much TIME it takes to actually absorb these truths before they can be reasonably applied in the learners life. An expectation that a topic as complicated as the cross in the life of a believer being discussed or presented on Thursday with an expectation that hearing it equals applying it is unrealistic. It takes years to grasp and then apply these*

great truths. The liberation these truths bring to the thinking of the hearer is euphoric; but making a practice of it in everyday living is not the same. Applying it when the euphoria is not present is difficult. This is especially true if the believing hearer tries to make this application without the aid of the Holy Spirit. It is then frustrating. The frustration may go on then as failure and rejection of the teaching as impractical and heady. Ch 59)

2. Seeing no evidence of fruit (real application) from the hearers, the speakers change the EMPHASIS to the Spirit-filled life without stressing the need for the cross in the life as the pre-requisite. He sees that many of the speakers were unqualified to speak on the subject of the centrality of the cross since they were inexperienced with it. Therefore they seek to address the filling of the Spirit instead. He sees the EMPHASIS must be placed on the death of the believer at the cross of Christ before one can receive the fullness of the Spirit. This dying is an ongoing work not a once-for-all event. The author sees that the Holy Spirit cannot fill the new life of the believer until the old life is thoroughly dealt with (pg 272, first full paragraph) Ch. 60
3. The author also saw that the selection of speakers done by committees who themselves are not practitioners of the identification truths to be taught at the conference is a flaw. For these conferences, which are not regular Bible studies or prophecy conferences, speakers must be chosen for their knowledge and practice of the material rather than by their popularity. Ch. 60
4. He also noted that a speaker may impact one in the hour of his speaking, but literature is impactful for life in that it can be read at the hearers speed of understanding. The reader can stop at any point in his reading and read it again and again as needed. Consequently, only the best literature should be chosen. This is not always the case. Ch. 60
5. And, of course, the condition and desires of the hearer are of utmost importance. Why is he there? What does he hope to gain from the experience? Ch. 60

6. In chapter 61, the author states what he sees as errors in the conditions the presenters make regarding how to be filled with the Spirit. This is trying to get to the results of the “deeper life” without meeting the truths that lead to it. The speakers are trying to emphasize the need for the Spirit’s filling without bringing the hearer to the point of death to his old life. Without this death, he will be trying to get his “self-life” filled with the Spirit in dedicated service to Christ. This cannot happen. And then he discusses several errors he thinks are present.

Let’s make some general conclusions as to why the flawed confidence in human ability unaided by God’s revelation and illumination will not produce the desired results

1. Our ways are not God’s ways nor are our thoughts His thoughts. Unless He opens our minds and hearts to understand His ways, thoughts and will, we will always only have a partial understanding of them.
2. For a thought to become ingrained as a habit or a regular practice requires time. Our mass meetings are great at giving a large amount of information but are not able to give birth to a habit due to lack of needed time. This requires God to be at work changing minds and giving understanding.
3. The information must be biblically correct and what is needed for the audience. Only God can know enough about a person to know what they need and only He can open their mind enough to understand it.
4. The listener may not be prepared to hear with understanding the material being presented. Prayer is needed to seek from God the proper thing to say and His power to make it understandable.
5. The listener may not have a good motive for being at the information meeting. Prayer for conviction is needed.
6. The teacher may not have a good presentation or the correct material for the audience. Prayer and dependence upon God is a must to make the message clear and for the hearers to have a grasp of it.
7. We should remove from our thinking that immediate results can be expected due to our presentation. Discipleship is the biblical way of encouraging fruit-bearing.