



WEEK 5 - Dogmatism vs. Wonder

OVERVIEW

In the wake of the Enlightenment, as Christian beliefs were called into question, many theologians responded by attempting to create airtight systems of belief, turning the Bible into a codebook and theology into a series of provable facts. Over time, this way of thinking created the fundamentalist movement, which began a wholesale rejection of modern science and philosophy. As a result, much of Christian faith today appears rigid and dogmatic, and the Church has developed a reputation of irrationality. It's no wonder so many reject believers as lacking in critical thinking! If we want to close the credibility gap and reach our lost neighbors, we must recapture the wonder and beauty of a faith built on the mystery of a God far beyond our comprehension. We must become *learners* again, seeking God with all the tools he has given us. And we must open our palms to approach truth with humility, entering into dialogues, not diatribes, with those we long to reach.

We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.

Colossians 1:9-10

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is dogmatism? How does dogmatism compare to wonder?
2. Barry suggests that the credibility gap widens when we hold our beliefs with a tight fist instead of an open palm. In what ways do we hold beliefs with a tight fist? How does this affect our credibility?
3. Read Colossians 1:9-10. What does this passage imply about our knowledge of God and the way we live?
4. When is it okay to not know the answer to a question about the Bible?
5. "I could be wrong", "why?", "tell me more". How would learning these phrases help your faith to be more credible? How can you use these phrases and still have confident hope (Colossians 1:3-6)?
6. How would you describe what it means to have an open-handed posture towards your faith? What kind of impact would this posture have on your own faith, in addition to credibility?

RESOURCES

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