

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

On September 3, 2015, we received the following inquiry:

“I have been reading the Watchtower and an article I read said we shouldn't think for ourselves because it is a trap. So am I to believe that I should not think for myself and just do what the elders and [Governing Body] tell me to think? I am confused. I thought that the [Watchtower] was telling me the truth and I believed everything I was reading because it is supposed to be what Jehovah instructs to do. I was taught that it was scripturally based but when I compare it to what the bible says it doesn't match. The meanings are twisted. I was reading my book "What does the bible really teach" and looked up the scriptures and found so many errors. For years I took what I was reading as truth because I believed in the organization. I asked a few elders and was told that I shouldn't be questioning any publications. The way they said it to me was scary because it felt like I was being threatened. I don't want to be disfellowship but I know that's what they meant. What is really going on? How can reading my bible and pointing out errors be wrong?”

To the author, thank you for your email. Your email reveals that you are not as confused as you state. You are clearly using your God-given thinking abilities and are reaching reasonable conclusions. What you call your “confusion” is really your attempt to reconcile common sense with certain Watchtower teachings that are non-sensical. We can tell you that such a reconciliation is futile.

Jesus demonstrated and taught independent thinking. When faced with the rituals and burdensome commands of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus did not acquiesce because certain men in position told him to, nor did he continue rituals that were out of step of love and compassion. He used his own mind and thinking ability, and he reasoned the matters out. How else can a ‘reader use discernment’ unless he is able to think! (*Matthew 24:15*)

Recall the incident when he was being condemned for healing a man on the Sabbath. Jesus reasoned that since a Jew would rescue a bull on the Sabbath, surely Jesus could heal a man on the Sabbath. Of course, the scribes and Pharisees were offended at the audacity of Jesus to “think” and reach a reasonable conclusion that was not in accordance with their burdensome doctrines, and they sought to silence him by killing him. (*Matthew 12:9-14*)

This is the same mindset of the Watchtower leaders and overseers. In essence, what they are saying is: “How dare you think with your own mind! The Governing Body has already done all the thinking for you! If you continue to think, we will have to disfellowship you!” This is why so many intelligent and spiritually hungry Jehovah’s Witnesses suffer from depression. Their God-given intelligence is being suppressed and even oppressed. They are like strong bulls being forced to plow alongside ignorant and less intelligent donkeys. (*Deuteronomy 22:10*) Nothing but frustration can come from such an uneven yoking.

We suggest what the Bible suggests. Follow the example of Jesus as ‘the way, the truth and the life’ (*John 14:6*), and the example of the Bereans who examined the scriptures to make sure of the things you are being taught. (*Acts 17:11*) And remember the counsel of John not to

believe every inspired expression, but to test such teachings to make sure they line up with truth (*1 John 4:1*), and the counsel of Paul not to be led astray by various and strange teachings (*Hebrews 13:9*)

Of course, by doing so, you may be subject to the same type of punishment as was inflicted on those in the 1st century who dared to think with their own minds. They were expelled from the synagogues and treated like lepers which resulted in them losing the association of their family and friends. (*John 9:22; John 16:2*) But they gladly accepted the consequences of confessing union with Jesus which included being baptized into his death. (*Romans 6:3-4*)

No one wants to be disfellowshipped and not many want the stigma of disassociating either. But these are the consequences for those who once subjected themselves to the Watchtower authority by being baptized into the organization. We must all reap what we have sown (*Galatians 6:7-8*) and carry our own torture stakes. (*Matthew 16:24*) We will not be excused from accountability for our own free will decisions. What is most unfortunate is that many Witnesses were baptized as children who were unequipped to enter into a loyalty contract with the Watchtower organization. But they, too, must accept the consequences.

The good news is, when we choose the Christ and his plain and open teachings, we will gain far more than we lose, both in this system and in that to come. (*Matthew 19:29*) All who love truth will have to eventually separate from those who do not truly believe Jesus' teachings, and then allow Jehovah to take us in as his faith sons. (*2 Corinthians 6:14-18*)

We do not envy your position. You will face a dark night of doubt, but if you move forward in faith, you will see the bright light of truth, liberty and freedom. (*John 8:32*) We hope you can find the comfort of the psalmist:

“Though I walk in the valley of deep shadow, I fear no harm, For you are with me; Your rod and your staff reassure me. You prepare a table for me before my enemies. You refresh my head with oil; My cup is well-filled. Surely goodness and loyal love will pursue me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of Jehovah for all my days.” – *Psalms 23:4-6*

All who take the leap of faith and trust in Jesus' plain and open teachings, instead of the babel of men, will find themselves in the Father's house of many, many dwelling places that Jesus has prepared for us where we will dwell eternally. (*John 14:1-2*)

In the meantime, you will be in our prayers and we hope to hear from you again.

“*Elaia Luchnia*”
