

Why Exploring the Bible is Important

Today, I want to tell you a story that will provide a context in which you can better understand why exploring the Bible is so important.

Once upon a time, a professor, a rabbi and a pastor agreed to follow a guideline and explore the Bible. Their names are **Ike Tennison**, **Jeffrey Leynor**, and **Jim Myers**. (that's me). We are the First Exploring the Bible Team. We explored the Bible for over 30 years and became very good friends.

I created the Primary Guideline for Exploring the Bible in 1988:

*My belief system will be large enough to include all facts,
open enough to be examined and questioned,
and flexible enough to change if errors
or new facts are discovered.*

The guideline contained the rules that governed our conversations. **It is one of the most important things that we discovered.**

1. *Each person acknowledged that he has a system of beliefs.*
2. *Each person agreed to include all facts in their systems of beliefs.*
3. *Each person gave the other two people permission to examine his belief system.*
4. *Each person gave the other two people permission to ask him questions about his beliefs.*
5. *Each person was committed to making his belief system as accurate as possible by changing his beliefs if errors or new facts are discovered.*

We had been using this guideline for over a decade before we discovered facts about how the guideline affected the way our brains functioned.

Imagine that you are sitting on top of an elephant. Where do you think you will go? The answer is a no brainer! You will go wherever the elephant takes you.

- The **rider** represents the **conscious functions** of the human brain.
- The **elephant** represents the **subconscious functions** of the human brain.
- The **top priority of the elephant is survival.**
- The **elephant is genetically hardwired** to **process information one million times faster than the rider.**

Most conversations are controlled by the elephant. We just start talking, without consciously thinking about, what we are going to say! When I was speaking, Ike and Jeffrey were listening. I can still hear Jeffrey's tone when he would say, "***Where did you come up with that!***" His comment stopped my elephant in its tracks. My rider became involved. Many times, I didn't remember where I acquired the belief that produced those words, and I told them I didn't remember! **Then we would work together and explore the history of the belief so we could anchor it to a specific time, place, and a Source.** We found beliefs that our elephants had subconsciously added to our belief systems, without our riders even being aware of them!

It is easy to calmly describe those experiences now. But asking a question that challenges someone's trusted belief, in the middle of a "heated and spirited discussion," created a different reaction. The elephant went into survival mode and that triggered **subconscious defense mechanisms with strong emotions.**

These are the moments when the importance of agreeing to follow the guideline becomes obvious. Usually, the one who asked the question will say, "*Please do not forget that you gave me permission to examine and question your belief system.*" Agreeing to follow the guideline creates safe and open environments to explore belief systems; and that is priceless!

I will close with a quote from Dr. David Eagleman's book, *Livewired: The Inside Story of the Ever-Changing Brain*:

"For humans at birth, the brain is remarkably unfinished . . . The flexibility of the brain allows the events in your life to stitch themselves directly into the neural fabric . . . Genetic instructions play only a minor role in the detailed assembly of cortical connections – with twenty thousand genes and 200 trillion connections between neurons, how could the details possibly be pre-specified?"

Just as the plant seeks sunlight and the bacteria seeks sugar, the brain seeks information. It tries to constantly change its circuitry to maximize the data it can draw from the world. To that end, it builds an internal model outside, which equates to its predictions.

Who you are emerges from everything you've interacted with: your environment, all of your experiences, your friends, your enemies, your culture, your belief system, your era — all of it.

Your beliefs and dogmas and aspirations are shaped by it, inside and out, like a sculpture from a block of marble."

Learn how to ride your elephant and feed your elephant Lives 1st information. Please share this information with others in your networks.

Choose Life. Do Tov. Spread Shalom,
Jim Myers, President
Biblical Heritage Center, Inc.